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PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

March 16, 2014

TESTIMONY

Submitted by Barbara H. Golden, LCSW regarding

HB5326

As a social worker licensed in the state of Connecticut, I am acutely aware of the painful struggle families go through when a loved one is dying in a state of fear, pain and suffering because they did not have the choice to achieve a peaceful death with dignity. This choice can be made possible by supporting HB5326 so that residents of the State of Connecticut who are terminally ill may choose to receive aid in dying with medications that will allow the patient to choose death when they can no longer tolerate the pain of living.

Unless House Bill 5326 is passed people will continue to suffer needlessly, and continue to endure unrelenting pain. Their families will be forced to helplessly, hopelessly witness the suffering of the loved one, sometimes for months, unable to offer a more compassionate ending. If you speak to these families, as I have, you will see that the suffering does not end with death. It can go on in the form of secondary trauma to the remaining family members who have been listening to the cries for help, listening as their loved one pleaded for mercy, listening as their family member asked for a compassionate end and could do nothing to offer one of the many options to achieve a peaceful death with dignity. This is a demoralizing, depressing and frightening state that can alienate family members from one another because of the tremendous stress caused by seeing someone you love in pain. It may also isolate the one who is suffering because the one who is deathly ill does not want to upset the caregivers or cause the caregivers to feel useless and helpless.

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TESTIMONY

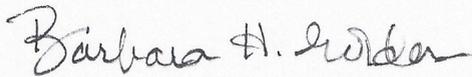
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In the end, pain may push the one who is terminally ill to make an irrational, pain driven, fear driven decision to violently end their own life, leaving the family to cope with their failure to provide a more supportive and compassionate end of life

By passing House Bill 5326, Connecticut can join the other compassionate and humane states on the honor roll of legislatures that are committed to the very human right to choose a peaceful death when one is confronted with a terminal illness. Thank you for your consideration of this very important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara H. Golden".

Barbara H. Golden, LCSW