

Barbara Quintal

HB 5326

Good morning, Public Health Committee Co-Chair Senator Terry Gerratana and Co-Chair Representative Susan Johnson, and all the other members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Barbara Quintal, and I live in Darien, Connecticut. I am writing electronic testimony to voice my profound opposition to HB 5326, “An Act Concerning Compassionate Aid in Dying for Terminally Ill Patients,” which would legalize physician-assisted suicide in Connecticut. I oppose this bill because, contrary to the bill’s title, assisted suicide is absolutely *never*—and can never be—the compassionate care which any patient needs. Real compassion requires finding ways to alleviate patients’ pain, but enabling patients to take their own lives via assisted suicide is no sort of “care” whatsoever. Authentic care means that we try to reduce or eliminate someone’s pain, *not* that we seek to eliminate the person’s life itself! Furthermore, legalizing assisted suicide would for certain have severely far-reaching consequences—since enabling and allowing assisted suicide could easily turn into *mandating* assisted suicide for any person who is deemed “too much of a burden” by doctors, families, or society. And it goes without saying that this would be an utterly intolerable injustice! The disabled and handicapped—both physically and mentally—would also be put in extraordinary danger by this,

as would every other vulnerable population of society, and that also is entirely unacceptable. In our country which prides itself on respecting the life and dignity of every member of society, such assisted suicide or, indeed, perhaps in the future, such *enforced* suicide, would be the ultimate antithesis to our most basic American values, the ultimate antithesis to every human being's fundamental right to life. Surely as the state of Connecticut and as our country, we are far above the hideous injustice of ending the lives of the sick and disabled and calling that some sort of "treatment" or "compassion." True compassion and treatment require that we give caring attention to every patient's needs and that, above all, we unconditionally respect every person's dignity; and that involves, first and foremost, respecting and promoting every person's right to life at all times. Let us courageously oppose any and every measure to legalize assisted suicide so that we can remain true caregivers dedicated to protecting the life of every patient and every person. I sincerely hope you will vote to reject HB 5326 and any other attempt at legalizing assisted suicide. Thank you.