

Greetings:

From birth, a human's decisions are shaped by myriad external agents and made for them since they cannot do so for themselves. Choices are made based on medical factors, a parent's behavioral philosophy, a family's religious beliefs and educational values. Then, society takes over: educators, peers and influential authority. This continues until a person is considered, first by parents, then courts and finally by reaching adulthood, to be able to responsibly make individual choices reflecting their own beliefs about their own life.

In adulthood, self-determination informs choice. Where will I live, work or attend school? Who do I love and how? What are my religious beliefs? With whom will I spend my life? Will I marry who I love? Can I?

Compassionate aid in dying provides for and protects the individual freedom for competent adults to make their own choice about, perhaps, the most vital matter in life they will ever consider: how they will die and when. Compassionate aid in dying insures the legal protection for a person to have the right to the last measure of control, self-respect and dignity they may ever have – should they choose it for themselves.

I'm not the only Connecticut citizen who has watched a loved one suffer through months of a painful terminal illness, slowly and surely losing qualities of personhood, self-determination and self-respect that normally make a life worth living. Let individuals decide for themselves what they want for their bodies at this final stage of life. Passing compassionate aid-in-dying legislation **does not coerce** or force a person to make any decision they do not want, but empowers competent, medically diagnosed terminally ill persons the ability to make the extremely personal choice of how they wish to live out the final days of their life.

Please vote in SUPPORT of HB 5326, and thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

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