

“Testimony in support of HB 5326 - An Act Concerning Compassionate Aid in Dying for the Terminally Ill”

February 24, 2014

Compassionate Care at End of Life ... My Life, My Death, My Choice

Public Health Committee at PHC.Testimony@cga.ct.gov

As a person of faith I have struggled all my life with different decisions that would align my heart with my faith. Whether or not to use birth control, whether or not to give advice on abortion, whether or not to take drugs or heal myself in other ways.

So many thoughts go into our choices. But it is our choice in the end how we handle the way of our life. Until I sat at death beds and heard the cries of people all ages to let them go in the final days or weeks of their lives I never would have understood. But now I understand how sacred the end of life choice can be for people suffering in pain from devastating illness and disease ravaged bodies.

This is a very personal and sacred choice that all people should have in order to plan the last days of their lives and relieve the self suffering and the suffering of family members.

That is why for my personal choice and for the many that I have served and will serve in the future I stand up for the aide-in-dying legislation.

I invite anyone who is opposed to this bill to consider making a visit to a nursing or hospice care facility. Or speak with a friend or family member who agonized at the bedside of a loved one who begged to be taken off life support and then watched as the person lives out their final days in extreme pain and or starved to death. This is torture for me and others to watch and I personally do not want to be kept alive with an extra ordinary measures.

I am not alone with the polls reporting that 68 percent of voters in Connecticut also support end of life choice. More and more Americans are demanding choices at the end-of-life, including aging baby boomers and their children who are caring for them. Compassion & Choices is pressing for a bill in 2014 that makes aid in dying one of the standard of care, end-of-life medical practices available to physicians and to patients in Connecticut.

Legislation allowing a mentally competent, terminally ill person to request and self-administer a prescription that allows them a humane, dignified death on their own terms is supported by the ACLU of Connecticut.

There are now five states where the right to choose your own, peaceful death is affirmed either by legislation, popular ballot or a judicial ruling. This year, at least three more states will be considering aid-in-dying legislation for their citizens and more will do so in 2015.

Let's make Connecticut the next state. I am urging you to support an aid in dying bill this year. Consider writing to your legislators about supporting this legislation.

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