

**Roberta Silbert, MPH**  
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March 17, 2014

Honorable Members of the Committee On Public Health,

Re: HB 5326 AN ACT CONCERNING COMPASSIONATE AID IN DYING FOR  
TERMINALLY ILL PATIENTS.

I am writing in full support of passage of HB 5326.

The Committee is to be congratulated for moving forward and presenting this bill for a public hearing this year.

We have come a long way.

I first became particularly concerned about the care of terminally ill patients in the mid 70's when I worked in a major New York hospital as a patient/family advocate. Those were the days when doctors did not even want to tell someone that they had cancer and there was very poor pain control and very little of what we now call palliative care. When my own father was diagnosed with incurable cancer my husband and I cared for him night and day until he died at home. He was in tremendous pain. That experience changed the course of my professional life.

I moved to Connecticut to work at the first Hospice in this country for a couple of years, in the early days before there was even a building. I have been privileged to know and care for many terminally ill patients and have sat with many people as they were dying. During that time I also went to graduate school at Yale Medical School and have really dedicated my work to the ethical and legal issues in health care.

Recently I cared for my mother in my home for 4 years. My mother had vascular dementia. When she was considered terminally ill from her disease she went on to have Hospice care until she died in my home in my arms.

All this above was just to say that I feel I am qualified to say that what you are proposing is so needed and so compassionate. Your Bill is well thought out. One could look at it and suggest changes to this or say to you to consider that, but how can one do that when the need you are addressing is so great.

In many ways I have dedicated my life and my work to make up for the suffering of my father and for many other people I worked with. Thank you for what you are proposing. Please believe me that this is the right thing to do.

With respect, Roberta Silbert, MPH