

Susan A. Hart 5326

My testimony is **written-only** as I am unable to attend the hearing.

Honorable Members of the Public Health Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 5326, An Act Concerning Aid in Dying for the Terminally Ill.

It is time. Time to provide an option to those who are terminally ill so they can die with dignity, on their own terms. I watched the prolonged suffering of three immediate family members, my mother, sister, and aunt, as they battled a disease that wasted their bodies, brought on pain, and robbed them of any quality of life that they once knew. I stood by helpless with other family members and friends as we struggled to ease their pain. I know in their hearts they would have supported this legislation and in their memory, I ask you to consider the same.

The option to terminate one's life in a similar situation should be made available to all. When you have a terminal illness which has taken control **OVER** your body and robs you of personal choice and with its consequences, your dignity, the ability to end the pain and suffering on your own terms gives back a sense of control and allows one to die on one's own terms.

My sister Sherry, a vibrant young woman and mother of two, given her terminal status had come to terms with it better than we family members. She had planned her final "party" as she called it and gathered friends and family to see her on what she thought would be the final weekend of her life. She had calculated this date based on what her doctors had told her and prayed for that to be true. The date came and went but the suffering and pain only intensified with time. She wanted out but there was no legal way to bring an end to her life. I remember to this day and it was over 17 years ago what it was like to stay with her in that hospital room overnight and watch and listen to her suffering. Why must we prolong the inevitable? Her quality of life was totally unacceptable to her. Sherry would have chosen to "go out" on her own terms and have control over the one final thing that her cancer allowed her to control.

This bill includes checks and balances to ensure that the end of life choice would not be used inappropriately. And for sure this choice is not for all, but it does provide peace of mind for others. I hope and pray that this bill passes in CT. I seriously have contemplated moving to a state that has legalized an aid-in-dying-bill when my time comes.

Thank you for your consideration of this emotional and necessary issue.

Sincerely,

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Retired teacher and family member

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