

Dear Committee Members,

As a practicing physician and practicing Catholic, I implore you to oppose Bill 5326 - Physician-Assisted Suicide. As a physician, I help the sick seek answers, get the right treatment, and protect the singular life s/he has. I do not subscribe to the notion of taking away a person's life because I am able to write a prescription to carry out an act that is tantamount to murder. This bill will bind and force the hands of physicians who are called to preserve life - not hasten demise. Ordinary people make bad decisions every day that they come to regret. Sick and dying patients are prone to poor-decision-making simply because of their circumstances (ie, psychological guilt, shaky finances, fear). Deciding to end one's life for any reason, therefore, may become the default "easy solution" for those who actually need more compassionate care and human contact - not less. Have you ever thought about ending your life? If so, are you not glad to still be alive? There is no dignity in death because death is finite. There is, however, dignity in dying - and it is the dying process where assistance is desperately needed. The dying (and their families) need to know that they are cared for to the end. To know that you are safe and cared for satisfies the need for dignity. To die by way of a sanctioned drug-overdose is nothing more than that. Society cannot afford to believe that we have power over death because this very concept devalues the meaning of life and life itself. This legislation if passed is telling me and every other person in CT that our lives do not count. It tells me that convenience matters above all. I'm certain that it was not convenient for Jesus to get nailed to the cross. I'm certain that the lives of the impaired, weak, and vulnerable will be targeted. I'm certain that the society will devolve into more self-righteousness and self-absorption. I would urge you to explore mandated and universally accessible palliative care legislation. As a Catholic, I believe that life is a precious gift from God. I will not kill. I will not degrade human life more than the disease itself. As a physician, I attend to the sick and dying who look to and trust me and my colleagues to protect them. Show your constituents that you believe in (end-of-life) care - and not euthanasia - by opposing Bill 5326.

Sincerely,
Victoria G. Reyes MD
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