

Testimony Against HB 5326 March 5th 2014 Hartford LOB Public Health Committee

My name is Karen Banks. I am an RN and I live in Newtown, CT.

I am strongly opposed to the HB 5326 entitled An Act Concerning Compassionate Aid in Dying for Terminally Ill Patients. This bill is actually one on assisted suicide, but guised in a clever title.

Rather than focusing legislation on helping the terminally ill to kill themselves, we should be striving for compassionate care of the dying person through a wider use of hospice care, palliative care and mental health care as well as respite care to provide relief for caregivers.

I was here last year to give testimony against HB 6645 which was a very similar bill although focused on physician assisted suicide in its title. I did not get a chance to speak since the hearing went on so very long, however, my strong opposition to un-natural death remains consistent.

Despite factors in the current proposed bill to try to prevent coercion, there is always the possibility that the fragile elderly and those individuals with special needs who are terminally ill may be made to feel that they are a “burden” to family and/or society and therefore may sign documents to bring about their death, when in fact they do not wish to kill themselves.

I believe that you also are fooling yourselves if you think that this is not a bill on assisted suicide by inserting the following language in Sec. 16. (a) of this bill, which reads... “Nothing in sections 1 to 17, inclusive, of this act, authorizes a physician or any other person to end a patient’s life by lethal injection, mercy killing, assisting a suicide or any other active euthanasia.”... Prescription of lethal doses of drugs by a physician or any other person is indeed a vehicle for facilitating killing and is assisted suicide.

I was pleased to have our legislators repeal the death penalty two years ago, yet find it very troublesome and contradictory that you persist in proposing a bill to allow ill individuals to kill themselves! Something seems to be quite wrong with the thought process here. Criminals cannot

be killed, yet the terminally ill may snuff out their own life.

Please. If you are proposing any death sentence, let it be for this bill or any similar one in the future.

Thank you and I look forward to your vote to defeat bill 5326.