

Dear Public Health Committee Members:

As a resident of the State of Connecticut, I am writing to you in opposition of HB 5326, An Act Concerning Compassionate Aid in Dying for Terminally Ill Patients. This is poor public policy and should be voted against and never made law.

While this Act may appear compassionate on its face, it is not. This bill will open up the possibility for vulnerable groups of our society to be at risk. Once we open up the door to this type of medical care (I use that term loosely), we are walking down a slippery slope that can be used to the advantage of those in power or control of a someone, whether it be financial support or mental or emotional abuse or even the disabled (Down's Syndrome children, Mentally Ill, etc). Any person who is vulnerable or dependent on another for some type of care, can be at risk if it can be claimed that they would be better off dead than alive, after all it's more compassionate. And who will draw the line? Doctors only? What if lawmakers decide a certain segment of society should no longer exist? And you will say, this can't happen. But we know it has happened in human history and what will keep us from going down the same road?

Doctors should be protecting and saving life, not legally be allowed to kill patients.

Isn't that really what this bill is in favor of, under the guise of compassion? Isn't it contradictory to allow "assisted-suicide" but not allow suicide? What really is the difference? The bottom line, is the death of a loved one. Why should we not let nature take its course and allow our loved ones to die naturally? With the advances in medical care and palliative care (and hospice care), there is much we can do for our terminally ill loved ones and perhaps it will allow family members to mend family disputes, give or ask for forgiveness, bring families together, share family memories, bring reconciliation, etc. While this may not be the case in all families, shouldn't we err on the side of life?

One of our family members has stage IV brain cancer, diagnosed 33 months ago. What if we had given up on her, given her a death sentence months or years ago, and decided for her, that she does not need to live because she can't drive, she can't work, she will become a burden to take care of? We would not have enjoyed Christmases with her, birthday celebrations, visits with her siblings, seeing her walk in the Brain Tumor Walk at UCONN for 2 years, seeing her daughter graduate college and her meeting our adopted son. I could give your more examples. We have had so many reasons to celebrate that we would not have had otherwise if this bill was law and we decided it was more compassionate to "aid her dying"! While it has not been easy for us to see her suffer, we do know that there will be a time when the cancer will return.

We don't dwell on it and we hope it's many years off. However, we are thankful for our time together and when it does get to that point, we will give her the best care we can as a family. Will it be a burden - yes in some ways but no in other ways. But isn't that what love is and what love does? We care for each other and help each other through their burdens and challenges. We will be there for her and her family! We will pray with her and them and when it's her time to go, we will say goodbye. We will sacrifice to give her last days comfort and compassion. That is love and compassion for those who are terminally ill and dying.

My husband and I have been appalled to see the devaluation of life, as if, we view a person's life in a utilitarian way. What does this member of society contribute, if anything? Do we really care that little for the most vulnerable of our society, the

disabled (wheel-chair bound, Down's Syndrome children, mentally ill), elderly and terminally ill? In our technologically advanced society, do we not have other means to help these most vulnerable populations? I think we do! And if we need to do more in advancing that part of medical care, then let's focus on that issue rather than on killing segments of the population that are in severe pain and terminally ill. We were especially troubled by the passage of the law in Belgium to euthanize children. What are we coming to? We have professors at Princeton and other universities supporting infanticide. While it is a free country, espousing these values actually devalues human life. This sounds so like Germany decades ago. Have we not learned? We must never forget what happens to those that are marginalized and vulnerable or determined to be unfit by a society. We cannot look the other way.

Please ponder Abraham Lincoln's quote: "America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we falter and lose our freedoms, it will be because we destroyed ourselves."

Isn't "Aid in Dying" a loss of freedom? We cannot let this happen in Connecticut. You must vote No on HB 5326! Or I fear where we will be headed as a State.

Sincerely,  
Nicole M. Peck  
Colchester