

Testimony in Opposition to HB7015, AAC Aid in Dying for Terminally Ill Patients

Erin Baratta - New Britain, CT

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Chairmen and Members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony regarding HB7015. I absolutely oppose this bill.

I want to focus on the socially devastating ideas embedded within this bill—three in particular—to encourage you to reject this bill.

The first damaging idea is that an acceptable response to suffering is to kill the sufferer.

The second, that it is ok to assist in the taking of an innocent human being's life—that of the sufferer.

Third, that it is ok to cover over this killing by refusing to call it what it really is.

Allow me to elaborate.

First: This bill pertains to a type of physician assistance in killing yourself. That's wrong in itself, and ripe for abuse. But we also know, from observing places like the Netherlands, the grave risk that accepting assisted suicide will lead to involuntary euthanasia—that is, to the outright murder of the vulnerable. Why is that? It's because really the underlying premise is the same in both cases: *Too much suffering? Then kill the sufferer.* And suffering is sometimes loosely defined by proponents of these practices. Passing this bill would embed this hideous idea in our culture, with potentially devastating effects beyond the immediate, tragic suicides.

Second: No matter what you call it, this bill allows someone—a doctor—to assist in the killing of an innocent human being. The patient—an innocent person—kills himself or herself, and the doctor assists in that by providing access to the means. Supporters don't like to use the word killing but that's what taking a life is, whether your own or another's.

The absolute prohibition on deliberately taking innocent human life is a bedrock principle of civilized society. Whenever you allow one category of innocent people to be killed and others to assist, you create a damaging conceptual shift that never stops there. Already we hear of people like diabetics being referred to as "terminal within 6 months" simply because they would die without daily medication, or merely spoon-feeding stroke victims called "extraordinary care" (i.e., that can be ended). This kind of conceptual distortion is increasing when it comes to end of life issues. HB7015 would promote this damaging trend, further endangering innocent lives.

Third: Euphemisms like "aid in dying" and false death certificates are attempts to make us forget that assisted suicide is a type of killing. Death certificates that don't mention suicide/overdose (the real cause of death) are factually false and easily provide cover for terrible abuse. But also, historically, false death certificates are characteristic of people and regimes that do away with innocent people, sometimes in very large numbers. We should be horrified to see false death certificates mandated in this bill. It's a big danger sign.

Embracing euphemism and false documents promotes a culture in which people refuse to call things what they are and, when it involves the taking of life, makes them more liable to ignore or support hideous attacks upon the vulnerable. Astonishingly, we already have people *here* calling for involuntary euthanasia. With an aging population, a profit-driven healthcare industry and other social pressures, these ideas bring real danger of grievous abuse. *Nothing can justify opening us all up to such a danger.*

HB7015 does just that. This bill endangers individuals; it also endangers the whole culture. Making medical professionals complicit in suicides is a terrible idea. Please do not bring this danger to Connecticut. Please reject this bill. Thank you.