

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am submitting testimony in opposition to HB 7015.

Assisted suicide is dangerous because it devalues the lives of the terminally ill, the disabled, and any who are suffering by suggesting the easiest or best solution to pain or sickness is death. It is well known that corporations such as insurance companies will often cover only the cheapest options available. If assisted suicide is an acceptable solution to illness, what is to stop healthcare providers from refusing to cover more expensive treatments and only covering the costs for the termination of a patient's life, regardless of the patient's wishes? This sort of tragedy has already occurred in Oregon, the first state to legalize assisted suicide, where Barbara Wagner received a letter informing her that the treatment for her curable, early stage cancer was too expensive, but lethal drugs would be covered by insurance.

Even if there were safeguards to prevent such outcomes from occurring, assisted suicide is still dangerous because when taking one's own life is viewed as a possible treatment for a terminal illness, there is no reason why it should not be an acceptable treatment for other non-terminal illnesses, especially considering that terminal diagnoses are often inaccurate. Senator Ted Kennedy lived fifteen months beyond his diagnosis, and he did some of his best work during that time. Furthermore lifelong medical conditions, disabilities, and even chronic depression can often create similarly painful scenarios to those of a terminal illness. Hopefully, no one would encourage a person with one of those conditions to end his or her life. Yet, how is it any different to tell a patient that he is going to die anyway, so the best option would be to hurry up and get it over with?

I am not saying that we should prolong life as long as possible; I am saying that allowing someone to die naturally is completely different than actively ending a person's life. I wholeheartedly support pain management and easing a patient's final days (or weeks or months). However, we don't treat a headache by chopping off someone's head; we should not treat an illness by eliminating the sufferer.

Please oppose HB 7015.

Sincerely,

Evan Cogswell

Glastonbury, CT