

## Testimony Against H.B. 7015

Good Day, Chairman Coleman, Vice Chairman Doyle and all members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Mary Beth DeSantis and I am a resident of Trumbull, CT. I have written this testimony to ask you to OPPOSE H.B. 7015, AN ACT CONCERNING COMPASSIONATE AID IN DYING FOR TERMINALLY ILL PATIENTS.

I am not an expert in the area of assisted suicide nor have I ever been involved in providing testimony for an issue of public concern such as this. I am an ordinary resident of this state – a wife, a mother, a concerned daughter of an aging parent with health problems and a volunteer. It is through my volunteer work last year that I first became aware of the push to legalize assisted suicide in CT.

Since then, my concerns about legalizing assisted suicide in CT have increased. Apparently, this is the case in other states across the country too. People are becoming more educated on the horrific dangers of assisted suicide and they have rejected approximately 140 similar bills in over 25 states. In our own State of Connecticut, the most detailed and recent (2014) polling shows that 55% of its residents oppose the legalization of assisted suicide.

Much has been written and said about the perils of legal assisted suicide. To mention a few:

- Assisted suicide is a deadly mix with our broken, profit-driven health care system. On January 10, 2015, Susan Campbell of the Connecticut Post wrote, “Passing a death-with-dignity law is especially pertinent in Connecticut, which is aging rapidly. According to the state’s Commission on Aging, by 2030 Connecticut’s over-65 population could grow by 64%. They’re calling this a “silver tsunami.”
- Assisted suicide is extremely dangerous to people with a wide variety of disabilities.
- Pain is rarely the reason people request assisted suicide; most are concerned about loss of autonomy, decreasing ability to participate in activities that make life enjoyable and loss of dignity. Palliative sedation is legal in all 50 states to handle pain issues.
- Suicide requests from those with terminal illness are usually based on fear and depression.
- The supposed safeguards in states with legal assisted suicide (Oregon, Washington, Vermont) don’t really protect patients. For example, if a doctor refuses to authorize the suicide drugs the patient or family can “doctor shop” for someone who will. Also, patients are not protected when there are family pressures, either financial or emotional.
- There has been documentation in Oregon, of patients’ termination of treatment

for cancer, followed by the offer to write a prescription for the suicide pills – cost approximately \$100.

- Many key organizations oppose the legalization of assisted suicide.
- International models, particularly in the Netherlands, show that assisted suicide will not be limited to a small, targeted group. Euthanasia is now becoming legal in other countries posing a risk to those who are not just terminally ill but people with depression and children with disabilities.

Last year, I considered it good fortune that someone had taken time to inform me the Public Health Committee would hold a hearing on H.B. 5326, the bill to legalize assisted suicide in CT. After attending that hearing it didn't take long to figure out that TRUE compassion for our terminally ill citizens lies not with the promoters of the bill but with those who endorse expansion and increased funding for hospice, comprehensive, expert management of pain and other symptoms as well as family and caregiver support.

I'm asking you to stop this nonsense now! Please oppose H.B. 7015 and encourage others to do so too.

Thank you for your time.

Mary Beth DeSantis  
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