

To the Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am submitting testimony in OPPOSITION to HB 7015. There are many reasons that this bill should be opposed. One reason is to protect the lives of the vulnerable. As only one example, there is considerable evidence that people with mental illness and depression are given lethal drugs in Oregon, despite the claims of proponents that these conditions disqualify a person. What is to say that that would not also happen here in Connecticut?

Vulnerability does not only stem from one's health and mental state, but also from one's economic state. Financial pressures already play far too great a role in many, if not most, health care decisions. Direct coercion is not even necessary. If insurers deny, or even merely delay, approval of expensive, life-giving treatments that patients need, patients will, in effect, be steered toward assisted suicide, if it is legal. For example, patients Barbara Wagner and Randy Stroup, Oregonians with cancer, were both informed by the Oregon Health Plan that the Plan won't pay for their chemotherapy, but will pay for their assisted suicide. Though labeled a free choice, for these patients, assisted suicide is a phony form of freedom.

It seems to me that assisted suicide is a slippery slope that we cannot afford to go down. Though one might say that it would be offered only for those truly suffering, we can be sure, as history has shown us in many other situations, that there will be abuses and many people will lose their lives unnecessarily.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Laura P. DiDominizio