

Dear CT representatives,

On April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013, at 50 years of age, my mother died; which I have come to accept. Yet nearly two years later, it is the way my mother died that still gives me bone-chilling flashbacks to the nights I spent sitting beside her rotting body.

After a fall on Friday April 19<sup>th</sup> my mother went to the emergency room because she was experiencing leg pain. After speaking with the attending physician, she agreed to undergo surgery to move blood clots found in her legs. Consenting to that surgery was the last choice my mother made regarding her life and untimely death.

On Saturday, April 20, my mother returned from the surgery in poor condition. Her heart was suddenly operating at 10%, she was intubated and receiving 100% oxygen, both of her legs had poor circulation and all of her vital signs suggested her health taken a turn for the worse, even though she had been in good health just two nights before.

In the next 36 hours, I was told my mother had no more than 24 hours to live, twice. Yet, on Monday my mother's condition steadily began to improve. She started to control her blood pressure on her own. Circulation returned to one of her legs. She was only receiving 80% oxygen and on Tuesday an MRI of her brain revealed that she hadn't sustained any brain damage. She was as mentally sharp in the hospital bed, as she was when I saw her a week before. On Wednesday, we were told that my mother would come home and make a full recovery; she just needed to amputate the leg that hadn't regained circulation.

Yet when my mother made it to the Operating Room on Thursday morning, we were told that she developed gangrene while in the Intensive Care Unit, and it had progressed so far up her leg that they couldn't perform the amputation. All she could do was let the infection ravage her body until she died.

As the gangrene ran through my mother's body, I could see and feel her pain. I stayed by my mother's side through her last nights. My nights weren't spent looking lovingly into her eyes. To the contrary, I made sure she's was heavily sedated so that she didn't feel the bandages pull her skin from her body or smell the scent of her flesh fill the room. It was then, I saw that the morphine drop proved given as palliative care was insufficient. Every four hours when they changed her bandages, she was awoken out of the drug induced sleep.

I will never forget the look of horror and defeat on my mother's face when we told her how she had to die. When she wasn't heavily sedated or the morphine wasn't stronger than the pain, her eyes bulged out of their sockets as her senses reminded her of her impending doom. The smell of her rotting flesh, her inability to move her legs, or her bowels, the crippling pain that came when she accidentally allowed her arms to touch the other, infected parts of her body-were all reminders that there was nothing she could do about her life or death.

At this point, I wanted my mother die. Not because I didn't value her life—at 50 years of age, she'd done so much. As a first generation college student, six weeks shy of graduation, I would have given my soul to have my mother live. But I loved her too much, to let her endure such pain on my behalf. She deserved to die in peace, not in pieces.

I share this with you because I firmly believe that palliative care should not be the only option. We should love our loved ones enough to let them choose how we remember them and how they remember themselves.

I share this with you because I don't want anyone to ever experience life as my mother and I did during her final days of lie.

I share this with you because it is in your power to make a peaceful death possible for everyone in this state. I urge you to support House bill 7015.

Please feel free to contact me if you'd like to discuss this matter further.

Thank You

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