

Moniz-Carroll, Rhonda

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To: JudTestimony

To the Members of the Connecticut Judiciary Committee:

I am submitting testimony in OPPOSITION TO HB 7015. My name is Alexandra Hamar and I live in Sandy Hook.

●THE LAW SHOULD PROMOTE HUMAN LIFE – NOT ASSIST KILLING THE LIVES OF ITS CITIZENS. The whole purpose of government and its laws is to protect the rights – lives and property - of its citizens. Connecticut has always been and should remain a state where its government works to promote and protect the physical and psychological well-being of the lives of its people. Passing a law that promotes the opposite- the death of its citizens - is irrational.

●CONNECTICUT HISTORICALLY HAS ALWAYS BEEN ABOUT PROMOTING LIFE AND AGAINST SUICIDE “ACROSS THE LIFESPAN” OF ITS CITIZENS. Connecticut’s public policy laudably speaks against suicide in the very strongest terms. According to its website, <http://www.preventsuicidect.org/about-us/>, the CT Suicide Advisory Board’s stated “Mission” is to be “ a network of diverse advocates, educators and leaders concerned with addressing the problem of suicide with a focus on [first] prevention, [second] intervention, and [third] health and wellness promotion.”

The CT Suicide Advisory Board’s stated “Vision” is to “to [first] reduce and [second] eliminate suicide by instilling hope across the lifespan and through the use of culturally competent advocacy, policy, education, collaboration and networking.”

The website of the CT Dept. for Children and Families (DCF), provides that “suicidal ideation” in its “young people” aged “10 to 24” is a serious health issue that must be treated, not to be encouraged to be brought to fruition in suicide by the help of the young person’s pediatrician!

(<http://www.ct.gov/dcf/cwp/view.asp?a=2570&q=314514>)

Note there are no caveats in the above mission and vision statements relating to what the “suicidal” person may “desire” at the moment; suicide is seen as a problem and scourge *to be eliminated* (not fostered!); suicide has always been seen as an evil to be combatted (with hope, advocacy, policy, education, etc.) - - not to be promoted by CT’s licensed doctor as a quick and “final solution”!

Also, if you examine the above-websites, they list “risk factors” that have “greater potential” for suicide, and “easy access to lethal methods” is a stated devastating risk factor that promotes suicides. As well-publicized reports in Oregon and the Netherlands demonstrates, once “physician-assisted” suicide is legalized, the rates of suicide only go up! The law teaches, and it is obvious that legalizing suicide and thus making it easier for distressed fellow-citizens to kill themselves will only increase the tragedy of suicide in CT, not reduce it.

●HUMANS ARE NOT PETS TO BE “PUT DOWN”. We “put down” our pets because we don’t want to see them suffer and because they are not human. But human beings are not like dogs or cats; Humans are special unique rational creatures, different from all other living creatures. As rational creatures, human beings do enjoy certain freedoms to make choices to direct our own lives; having such liberty is what makes us human! [A dog cannot not bark; a goose must fly south for winter...] As our Founding Fathers rightly acknowledged in the Declaration of Independence, being human means you have certain unalienable rights gifted by the Creator and a dignity that must be acknowledged and protected. These inherent rights and our human dignity must be upheld and supported through government legislation, not trampled upon by the government. But human liberty is not boundless, and CT’s laws have historically sensibly curtailed human freedom in order to precisely preserve human life (our own and/or that of others). One of the reasons that Connecticut law, for example, does not allow us be served another drink at a bar when we’re visibly drunk is because the law is concerned with preserving our life. This sort of law, of course, reinforces the divine law, which says in a famous iteration “Thou shalt not

kill.” As the majority of CT citizens self-identify as Christian or Jewish, this is the morality of the majority of Connecticut people (which fact is confirmed in public opinion polls which I am sure the Judiciary Committee is well aware).

●DEPRESSED, DISCONNECTED AND UNLOVED PEOPLE NEED HELP-NOT A SUICIDE SHOT OR PILL: As the research has shown, in the rare states and countries where suicide has been unconscionably legalized, people who make this “choice” do so NOT because of pain (which can be controlled by palliative care), **but because they fear burdening their families or becoming disabled.** In other words, the distressed people choosing to legally murder themselves do so out of fear and a fatal lack of trust in the people around them to care for them as they age or become weaker and weaker physically or mentally. Likewise, the APA (American Psychological Association) says suicide is killing oneself, most often as result of “depression or other mental illness...” (<http://www.apa.org/topics/suicide/>)

If the CT Legislature wants to help these most vulnerable, distressed citizens who are mentally ill, depressed, and feel unloved and unwanted, why is it not considering legislation to create or improve programs to address the main risk factors identified (of depression? of fearing being a burden)? Is not the mark of a great society based upon the way it treats the least advantaged and weakest? Is not sacrificial caring for others the pinnacle of human activity? Isn't that what we constantly tell our children by recommending and often requiring as part of their education (including public education), that they need to complete “service hours” -- to spend part of their time, energy and money doing for the poor and the unwanted citizens among us because each of human beings matters? **How does a law making it easier for clearly distressed people (mentally ill and/or clinically depressed and/or coerced due to their circumstances of feeling unloved and being a burden) to kill themselves promote the universal moral value we are trying to teach our children that every person's life is sacred, that no-one should be “left behind” and about the merit of helping such people even at the high cost of sacrificial love?**

●DEBATING THIS BILL THAT HAS BEEN TWICE DEFEATED IN COMMITTEE IS SCANDALOUS WASTE OF RESOURCES AND TAX PAYERS MONEY FURTHER ERRODING THE PUBLIC TRUST IN OUR LEGISLATORS What has changed in Connecticut with respect to our abhorrence to suicide since this sort of legislation was taken up last year or the year before?? Certainly not the continuing stated Connecticut public policy nor the sentiment of the citizenry. Why is the Judiciary Committee wasting valuable time and taxpayer resources to debate a bill that has in essence been defeated resoundingly two years in a row? It is a scandal to continue to bow to outside forces such as the well-funded Hemlock Society/Compassion & Choices to try to insert foreign morality into CT opposed to CT's clear and admirable moral position against the tragedy of suicide. I respectfully ask all Committee Members to vote **NO** on HB 7015.

Thank you and God bless,
Alexandra Hamar