

Maggie Karner StatmentAgainst Physician Assisted Suicide  
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I am a patient with glioblastoma brain cancer--the same diagnoses as Brittany Maynard. I know what it's like to experience all the shock, and depression that comes along with that news. The difference is that I want to fight this disease..for myself and for those to come.

To this day my doctor won't give me a timeline for my survival because we all know medical opinions can be wrong, leading to people who give up on treatment and causing them to lose good years ahead of them. With hope, I'm participating in a new clinical trial at Yale, hoping to find a cure for glioblastoma brain cancer--if not for me, for someone who will follow me. You see, my doctors and I believe in the critical doctor-patient relationship of trust so that patients know their lives are valued and worth living, every moment, every day.

Physician assisted suicide may sound like it provides choices for individuals---but instead, it's actually taking choices away from people, by radically weakening the promise of care and support at the end of life for terminally ill patients, like me. Current laws against assisted suicide are in place to protect the weakest among us and we need these safeguards.

Escalating healthcare costs and a growing elderly population leaves us searching for alternatives to expensive long-term medical care. But when health insurance coverage is in flux for millions, discussion of legalizing doctor assisted suicide seems ill-timed and downright scary. There is simply no way to experiment with suicide and craft loophole-free safeguards that protect everybody...especially the most vulnerable--people with disabilities, the elderly, and those with mental illness.

I have terminal brain cancer and frankly, I'm not looking forward to how my disease will progress. If we endorse patient suicide as our statewide policy for dealing with pain and the financial burdens at end of life--we'll embrace a whole new ethic that confuses compassionate medical care with a prescription for death.

Because this proposal to legalized physician-assisted suicide isn't about me or any other individual; it's about **all of us--together-- as a society**. Physician assisted suicide is not a

private or personal act...it involves much more than just the patient. It includes doctors, pharmacists, and the State which we hold to protect and safeguard the most vulnerable. I believe we're better than that. Instead, let's put our best Connecticut minds toward developing great pain management techniques, and early and easily accessible palliative and hospice care.

This is a very personal fight for me. I find that my brain cancer--or what I can or can't do--doesn't define my value as a person, but provides me opportunities to share the innate value that every person brings to our society and our families--whether infirmed or able. My brain may be cancerous, but I still have lots to contribute as a strong woman, wife, and mother while my family and friends can daily learn the valuable lessons of caring for me in my last days with real compassion and real dignity.

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