

## Moniz-Carroll, Rhonda

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**From:** Elaine Pelizzari <homeiswhereourcamperis@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2015 8:40 PM  
**To:** JudTestimony  
**Subject:** Testimony in OPPOSITION to SB 668

Testimony in opposition to SB 668.

My name is Elaine Pelizzari. I am a 40 year old, stay at home mother, to three beautiful children, in Torrington CT. Professionally I hold a Bachelors degree in Science and have held positions in pharmaceutical, marketing and healthcare industries prior to becoming a stay at home mother at the age of 37. Personally I was born in CT and have been married for 18 years. We chose Connecticut early on as the state where we wanted to raise our children. I suffer from epilepsy and the most common progressive nervous disorder called essential tremor. March is essential tremor awareness month so I will focus my testimony on how SB 668 "aid in dying" will negatively impact those who suffer from chronic, debilitating, illnesses.

Unlike epilepsy - essential tremor is not life-threatening - but it can be extremely embarrassing. I have uncontrollable, moderate to severe hand shaking, facial and leg twitches. Just recently I had to give up exercising because the severity of the tremors afterwards was scaring my children. Tremor frequency and severity increases as the person ages and I have begun to wonder what my future holds. Treatment options and research funding for essential tremor are limited - because it's a disease of inconvenience and will not kill me.

While I will not die from essential tremor, it has sometimes made it hard to live. Every day is a test of ingenuity, perseverance and self-esteem. Activities such as eating, dressing and just typing this testimony cause frustration that can lead to stress worsening the tremors. Tasks that should move quickly and easily take a great deal of time and for a goal oriented high achiever like myself this can be extremely difficult to endure. Dental visits, personal care, eating out and even passing through airport security all take special preparation and planning.

I frequently think about two of my children who have inherited essential tremor - how they will be judged throughout their lives for shaking limbs before they even have a chance to speak. No matter how much education they have, no matter how much they prepare, think positive, or practice their breathing exercises - this will always be their cross to bear. It is one of those illnesses that just make you wonder why. Why does essential tremor exist and how can I go through my entire life like this.

I happily go on because I have the support of my family, my friends, my faith and my doctors. Society has told me that even on the most difficult of days I live in country where the Doctors are bound by the Hippocratic oath and my life has value - right up until the very end. When we as a society decide that it is more "compassionate" to kill a human being than allow them to carry the burden of a life with illness - we have certainly taken a turn down the wrong path. A path where I start to feel very uncomfortable about what might be ahead.

The idea of a culture that embraces suicide as an alternative "choice" - is sending the completely wrong message to those with chronic debilitating illnesses just trying to get by. People who are living on the edge - not terminally ill - but dependent upon the support of an ethical and moral society. People with chronic depression, the elderly and even teenagers who may see the shift in our culture towards government sanctioned suicide as just the nudge they need to take matters into their own hands. I'm very fortunate to have a support system in place - many are not as lucky.

I beg you - Instead of killing people - lets talk about expanding existing end of life services, hospice and palliative care. Lets take action to protect those who are the most vulnerable in our society. Lets grow in a direction that values life in all its forms.

Thank you for your time

Elaine Pelizzari