



State of Connecticut  
SENATE

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March 18, 2015

Senator Coleman, Representative Tong, Senator Kissel, Representative Rebimbas, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am State Senator Michael McLachlan and I stand in firm opposition to **House Bill 7015, AN ACT CONCERNING AID IN DYING FOR TERMINALLY ILL PATIENTS.**

This legislation would promote a culture of assisted suicide in Connecticut, and tells citizens that suicide is an acceptable solution to life's hardships.

In states where assisted suicide has been approved, suicide rates have increased. Oregon passed their assisted suicide bill in 1997, and since 2000, the rate of suicide among Oregonians has increased every year. In 2012, the suicide rate was 41% higher than the national average.

I am concerned that the same will happen in Connecticut. The Legislature should not create the culture of death that will surely come with this proposal. As elected officials and public servants we should be fostering a culture that supports those who are disabled or fighting death (whether they are elderly or sick.) We should encourage them to fight with strength of character and to live the life that they have been blessed to have fully, to the very last breath.

We should not be encouraging them to give up, which is what I fear will happen with this legislation. I also worry that it will open the door for abuse of the elderly and disabled by allowing those around them to influence their decision to commit suicide for their own gain. This proposal has no safeguard for abuse. Furthermore, there is no way of knowing when the lethal dose is administered, or if it was done so voluntarily. With a lack of safeguards in place there is no way to know if suicide is what the person truly desired or if it is a priority of those around them.

This legislation would also allow aid in dying when a patient has less than six months to live. Doctors are not equipped with a crystal ball. They are human, and they could be wrong when they are telling a patient that they have less than six months to live.

I hope Connecticut follows in the footsteps of Montana, where on March 16<sup>th</sup>; the Montana House passed a bill that would include physician-assisted suicide within the current state law that prohibits "aiding or soliciting suicide."

Humans are given the gift of life. People like me who hold strong convictions in their faith believe that it is not our duty, or within our ability, to control the beginning or end of our life. With this legislation, individuals will decide when their lives end. No one, including the government, should ever intend to cause their own death or assist in the taking of another's.

Thank you.