

March 17, 2015

To Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am submitting written testimony in OPPOSITION TO HB 7015.

I believe I am a legitimate objector to “An Act Concerning Aid in Dying for Terminally Ill Patients” as a Registered Nurse who has practiced in the nursing profession for 35 years in multiple practice settings, which include home hospice care and hospital critical care. I have worked with and cared for dying patients and their families, health care providers, and have participated in many health care team meetings, including Ethics Committees. From these experiences, I would like to offer a summary of my objections to HB 7015:

Assisted Suicide is final, all life options are forever removed. At various states of illness, everyone shares a concern about pain, suffering, loss of control, and perhaps being a “burden to others”. Misconceptions, misunderstandings, and fears can rapidly converge to a personal decision to choose death and death is final.

“Right to die” will morph into a “duty to die”. There is a real risk of coercion from others when artificial death dates are set. Legalizing assisted suicide codifies and legalizes societal bigotry on the aged and the disabled. The expectation to die is a real danger to our most vulnerable in our communities - the elderly, the disabled, people without a source of payment or families or both. It is no stretch of imagination to think of situational abuses to promote this “duty to die” in cases of nefarious family financial exploitations or in rationing health care resources.

Physician-assisted suicide violates the Hippocratic Oath, and it violates my Nurse Code of Ethics. Physician-assisted suicide violates the affirmation to “do no harm” of the Hippocratic Oath. I am concerned that this bill violates the obligation I owe my patients, which is proper care for their dying process. This is NOT the same as assisting them in death through suicide.

Providing “compassionate aid in dying “is not what will happen in Connecticut after passing this bill.

Helping the terminally in Connecticut and promote compassionate care means:

- Expanded access to early palliative and hospice care
- Increased funding for home health workers
- Mandatory training for pain management techniques for medical and nursing students

Life is a gift. Life is needs to be respected. Do not allow passage of HB 7015 to become law.

Sincerely,
Denise D. Trottier, RN, MS, WOCN
Farmington, CT.