

March 18, 2015

Dear CT Judiciary Committee,

I am writing today to emphatically oppose Raised HB 7015. The CT legislature should not pass a law that extols death as a solution to anything. To do so would be to deny hope and cast a pall of cynicism over health care in CT.

It is a lie that death is the only way out of suffering for the terminally ill or severely disabled. There are palliative care measures that adequately understood and employed can alleviate pain while waiting to die a natural death. Our legislative efforts would be better employed to support and promote such care.

It may seem to some that a person should be free to choose the time of their inevitable death instead of lingering and waiting for it. I fear this law could lead to the exact opposite, taking freedom away from patients instead of granting it. Once death is governmentally condoned as an option the sick and the disabled no doubt will be coerced to choose it. Coerced by insurers who refuse to pay for care when death has been deemed inevitable, or greedy heirs eager to keep an estate from being consumed by end of life care expenses.

I am also deeply troubled by the message such a law sends to people in pain of any kind. It is a hopeless stance. It offers death as a solution. It screams, "just do me a favor and leave the planet because I don't have the time or energy to love you and support you in your pain." Assisted suicide supports the bigotry of ageism and ableism. It inescapably says, "Your life does not matter."

It would be a gravely sad day for me if my home state chose to legalize death as a solution to life challenges. I can't speak more emphatically against Raised House Bill 7015.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Valerie Byrnes", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Valerie Byrnes