

To: Members of the Judiciary Committee

[judtestimony@cga.ct.gov](mailto:judgetimony@cga.ct.gov)

I am submitting testimony in OPPOSITION to HB 7015 "An Act Concerning Aid In Dying For Terminally Ill Patients."

As a citizen of Connecticut, as a past caretaker of a now-deceased, disabled husband, as a retired Registered Nurse, and as a Hospice Volunteer with the Pastoral Care Ministry, I have been interested in the pros and cons of Physician-Assisted Suicide (PAS) each time it has been presented in the Connecticut state legislature.

In each of the roles that I mentioned, I have encountered people with disabilities and terminal illnesses first-hand, and on a personal basis. Additionally, I have made a point of earnestly studying this issue from many points of view, and from numerous accounts of experiences in states that already have PAS, such as Oregon and Vermont.

I have learned that PAS is a treacherous, undesirable "Pandora's Box," with many negative tentacles. A common occurrence is that a patient given a terminal diagnosis of six months, more or less, may wish to pursue further treatment options, but instead feels pressure from family members, and even from his / her physician, to choose the suggested suicide option because of finances, or because of feeling they are a burden all-around. In some documented cases, the patient is handed a "suicide kit" by their physician in the same appointment where they first learn the news that they have a terminal diagnosis. It has also led to elder abuse by an heir, or someone else who would benefit from the patient's death.

Once the door is opened to PAS, there is no end to the push for the next level, such as Euthanasia, and other abuses. Belgium now has "progressed" to a law allowing Euthanasia for children.

From my vantage point with Hospice, I am able to witness state-of-the-art care in the areas of pain management, palliative care, and holistic care. In my capacity with the Hospice Pastoral Care Ministry, I experience deeply personal interactions with patients and their families during this most vulnerable time. What I encounter there time after time are the positive reactions of gratitude and peace. In the case of a patient with no family or friends present, the caring staff and other disciplines rally around that person, providing dignity, love, and comfort on every level. It is in this setting that real and genuine COMPASSION for the terminally ill and the dying are at their finest.

Again, please vote NO to HB 7015 "An Act Concerning Aid in Dying For Terminally Ill Patients."

Thank you,
Eva Cestari rcestari@snet.net
67 Hillcrest Ave.
West Haven, CT 06516
203 933 7141