

Testimony in Opposition to HB7015 Connecticut

Nancy Elliott-Former NH State Representative

My name is Nancy Elliott and I am a Team Leader with Euthanasia Prevention Coalition, International. I am a former three term New Hampshire State Representative. I served on the Judiciary Committee, which is where I was first exposed to Assisted Suicide Legislation.

Last year our Democrat led House soundly rejected HB1325, a similar bill to yours, by a vote of 219 to 66. Many expected this bill to pass, but Legislators, some who thought they were for this bill, became uncomfortable as they were educated in the kinds of harm this legislation could cause.

Many of you have been led to believe that it is imperative that you pass this legislation to help people like the young woman from Oregon who recently took her own life. Her situation was sad, but as legislators, you know that to make laws for a small select few is bad law. While this might help someone face a bleak future, it will hurt many more. We must look at the big picture.

In New Hampshire legislators were particularly concerned with the aspect of Elder Abuse. I am sure you have heard much on this, but the fact is that our bill and HB7015 doesn't require a witness at the death. Once the person requests Assisted Suicide, they have put everyone on notice, if anything happens to me, don't ask any questions. If the person is given the lethal dose against their will, who would know. There is no witness at the death. This is a prescription for Elder Abuse especially if the person has money. This troubled our Legislators.

New Hampshire Representatives also had concerns that it would be abusive for medical professionals to suggest that someone end their life. They heard of Kathryn Judson who overheard her husband's doctor pitching suicide to him, making her afraid to leave him alone for fear of coercion.

Our Representatives recognized this legislation is aimed at the disabled. Almost everyone that is able to use this act at that time in their life has a disability. It is not allowed for the healthy. Connecticut as a state would be saying that young and healthy people should be counseled against suicide and those who are less than perfect should be helped to commit suicide and then give immunity to those involved. This is discrimination and committee members recognized it.

They were also concerned that Medical predictions are not always accurate. They heard about the case of Jeanette Hall. She wanted to use the act and was talked out of it by her doctor. She is still alive and happy 14 years later. We all know people that are alive many years later after being given a death prediction. If they use this act, they could be throwing their life away.

Other Legislators were troubled when recognizing that when Assisted Suicide, as in both our bills becomes a medical option, people will be steered toward suicide by insurance companies and government coverage and away from treatment. In Oregon where this is legal, patients have been denied treatment, yet told suicide pills were covered. This leads to a health insurance system for all of us that is not interested healing the sick.

Democrats, Republicans and Libertarians all came together in New Hampshire and voted against this bill once they were educated on the dangers. For these reasons and more, I respectfully ask this Committee to reject HB7015 as we did in New Hampshire. Thank you.