

Testimony submitted to Joint Committee on Judiciary regarding House Bill 7015
An Act Concerning Aid in Dying For Terminally Ill Patients

Submitted by Jean Greenberg of Manchester, CT in **support** of HB 7015

I would like to address the curious fact that the word "suicide" is almost always used by opponents of aid in dying but is always refuted by its supporters. Why is this?

Opponents insist that suicide means taking one's own life, and yes, that's the dictionary definition and it's what happens to people who opt for aid in dying.

But the perception that most of us have of suicide, based on real life, goes beyond the dictionary definition. We see suicide as the foolhardy or desperate act of someone who *would have gone on living* if he/she did not commit suicide. Suicide is committed by people who want to die, and they usually die alone.

By contrast, aid in dying applies to terminally ill patients who *are going to die* with or without taking fatal drugs. And they do not usually die alone; quite the opposite. Moreover, they are emphatically *not* suicidal; they would gladly keep on living as long as possible, especially if their six-month prognosis turned out to be pessimistic. Aid in dying candidates take the fatal medication only when they fear that they are about to become so debilitated that they will lose control of their life and their dignity.

So, if you quote the dictionary definition of suicide and rest your case, you've rested it too soon. If you want to cast aid in dying in the worst possible light and prejudice your audience, you call it suicide. Indeed, that's what its opponents consistently do.

But if you look at how the widely held perception of suicide differs from the terminal illness situation that applies to aid in dying patients, you reject the word, as do I.

Thank you very much for your time and your consideration of my testimony.

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