

Testimony of Emily Loveland, UCONN School of Social Work Student
In Support of HB 7015, An Act Concerning Aid in Dying for Terminally Ill Patients
Judiciary Committee

Good morning, Senator Coleman, Representative Tong, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Emily Loveland and I am a UCONN School of Social Work student. I am also happy to soon to be a member of Senator Coleman's Second District in Hartford. I am in support of House Bill 7015, An Act Concerning Aid to Dying for Terminally Ill Patients. This bill is important to me because, as a social worker, I strongly believe in an individual's right to self-determination, dignity, and self-worth.

My grandfather was a stubborn, proud man. Although not terminally ill, until his final moments of life he made sure we knew he was in control of his own choices. After falling in his own home, which he refused to leave as he aged, he made a phone call to my uncle, moments before passing, and indicated that he was going to die, but that this was his choice and he didn't want anyone trying to help him. As difficult as this was to hear, my family rested easy through our mourning, knowing that my grandfather passed on with dignity, self-worth, and self-determination. Reflecting on this story with my brother on a road trip this summer, we smiled knowing that Gramps is up in Heaven on his own accord, just as he wanted to be.

By day, I process medicaid applications for elderly and disabled persons in need of home and skilled nursing care. I speak with these clients and their families and hear the heart-wrenching stories of struggle as these individual's health decline. I understand the complex concept of attempting to maintain as high of a quality of life as possible until it is a person's time to pass.

A high quality life isn't just a place to live, the proper medical treatment, and having services provided. A high quality of life is maintaining the values that every human deserves: these values of self-determination, dignity, and self-worth. My social work colleagues have spoken at length of self-determination. Providing a terminally ill patient the opportunity to make their own choices fuels their dignity. This legislation is necessary to preserve the values that every person has the right to possess. This legislation would help terminally ill patients preserve their dignity and self-worth as they see fit. It is not legislation to assist a person in suicide, it is helping our terminally ill population die with dignity. Therefore, I urge you to support HB 7015, An Act Concerning Aid in Dying for Terminally Ill Patients.