

TO: CT Judiciary Committee

RE: Opposition to HB 7015 – An Act Concerning Aid in Dying for Terminally Ill Patients

I am Sandra Noel, resident of Southington CT, currently a researcher at UCONN Center on Aging, newly retired from Congregational Care Ministry at Bethany Covenant Church, served as a chaplain at UCONN Health and retired several years ago as IT professional from Aetna. Yes, I know both worlds - the sacred and the secular and oppose HB 7015 on both levels.

I urge a strong vote against HB 7015. It needs to be taken off the docket once and for all. For whatever name it has had over the years, I have been and continue to be strongly opposed to HB 7015's content and intentions. I am appalled that this "Constitutional State" founded in 1636 by my Kelsey family along with Thomas Hooker, could even think humans have a choice over the issue of death. This state was founded on the value of every human life until the time God took that life away. I stand on those principles that Rev. Hooker and my ancestors put forth, abided by and died for.

Theologically, I oppose HB 7015. Simply, only God (whether one believes in the God of the Bible or not) can control when it is time to die, not humans, since we all are His creation, whether we want to admit it or not. Just because laws make it so people can kill unborn children, does not mean we can allow a human, already born, to make that choice. Dying is not about "ending it all to be free of pain", it is a process of life that we all must journey through. That is the theory of hospice.

As a researcher at the Center on Aging, we deal with not just those over 50, but anyone of whatever age struggling with terminal and/or debilitating illnesses. My opposition includes:

1) Objectively, we find there is quality of life in those end-of-life struggles. To deny a person that right to that struggle is to have them die without dignity and with unresolved issues, or have family members and/or friends not be given a chance at resolving broken relationships, guilt issues, restoration on all levels and most of all forgiveness on any side. These are the things that happen in dying processes to every human being. It is not our call to deprive either a terminally ill person or their family/friends that right during those last, no matter how painful or hopeless, times. It is sacred work happening.

2) By considering this bill, needed and necessary research does not happen. I can foresee research funds being cut when the application is to the terminally ill. This is unethical and can impact outcomes for yours and my lives. Can you imagine what would happen to cancer research if we did not carry the research all the way through a dying process? There may no longer be a reason to research a cure. And there definitely wouldn't be a reason for furthering palliative or hospice care. What then do we teach our doctors and nurses about the dignity and preservation of life? What do we teach our children and grand-children about the sanctity of life?

Oppose HB 7015. All life, no matter how hopeless it seems, is valuable to someone and no one, not even the ill, has a right to take that away!

Sandra L Noel , M.A. Spiritual Gerontologist
105 Pattonwood Dr
Southington CT 06489