

**CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**

**HB 7015 AN ACT CONCERNING AID IN DYING FOR TERMINALLY ILL PATIENTS**

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HB 7015 does not support the public welfare. Rather, it promotes individualism without consideration of the common good.

The bill is completely contradictory to the state's interest in preserving life. The most significant example of our state's interest in promoting life can be found in our General Assembly's 2012 repeal of the death penalty. Our state's highest penalty has been changed from death, to life in prison without the possibility of release. Why?

As our Supreme Court recently ruled in In re Cassandra C. (SC 19426), the state has an interest in preserving human life. Cassandra C. is a seventeen-year-old girl who, along with her mother, did not desire treatment for the girl's cancer. Since the state had temporary custody of the girl, the Supreme Court supported the state's decision to seek cancer treatment. Despite Cassandra and her mother's wishes, the court's ruling reflects a state interest in preserving life. See also General Statutes sec. 53a-59a (person guilty of assault in the first degree if he creates a risk of death and causes injury to another under circumstances showing extreme indifference to human life.)

How does physician assisted suicide promote the common good? Our society battles aggression toward life every day. And we all collectively suffer. We do not have to look beyond the borders of our own state to feel the effects of killing. Sandy Hook Elementary. The Cheshire Home Invasion. What about suicide? Think about the high suicide rate among young people. If we condone killing at any level, we are promoting it. Society, especially young people, is told, albeit indirectly, that killing is sometimes OK.

The problem is the subjectivity of deciding when it is OK to kill. Our state government has decided that killing is no longer a viable penalty for even the most violent criminal. Killing oneself is not OK, even if your parent says it is, when you have cancer as a minor. And yet HB 7015 would tell young people killing is OK if you are diagnosed with a terminal illness at the age of 18 or older. The end message would be that life has value, but only under certain circumstances according to certain people. A logical progression of HB 7015 would be a bill permitting the emotionally infirm to pursue suicide. Why is one form of suffering more worthy of an expedited end than another? Is that not discrimination? If one suffering person has the right to physician assisted suicide, why shouldn't another?

Government should serve the common good. Rather than contribute to the confusion, violence and aggression toward life and a healthy society, our laws should assist the suffering in a way that fosters a vital, stable society. Suffering and death are inevitable. Suffering is not worthless. It is difficult, yes. Our laws and our society, especially the medical community, should do all possible to decrease the

suffering of the terminally ill. All possibilities of palliative care should be considered.

The opportunity to ease the pain of a sick patient promotes a healthy society. We all bear one another's sufferings. That is what community is. We are all in this together. Our actions affect those around us. Offering assistance to those who suffer strengthens the health of our society, and restores focus on the common good.

We should not overlook the affect of suicide on the suffering of those family members and other loved ones close to the terminally ill. Suicide, physician assisted or not, has an adverse affect on families and communities. It represents a loss of hope, of faith that others can comfort those who suffer, a loss of value in life up until the last second. It would add to the emotional trauma and instability of a family and, in turn, a society. Losing a loved one to a terminal illness cannot be controlled. Losing a loved one to physician assisted suicide is avoidable.

Seeking physician assisted suicide is an attempt to grab control of a situation which simply cannot be controlled. The death of each one of us is a reality which we cannot avoid. Bravery is facing this unknown. I encourage you to send the message to those who suffer and contemplate ending their lives that they do not walk alone, that their life has value until the last second, and society is here to offer support and comfort in all ways possible.

Our legislature has the duty to enact laws consistent with existing laws, and foster the common good. Support for HB 7015 would contradict the policy of this state in preserving life, as seen in the repeal of the death penalty and the Supreme Court's decision in favor of Cassandra C.'s cancer treatment. It would also weaken

the stability of our society which is already sorely troubled by violence and aggression toward life. Every life has value, no matter what its limitations might be.