

Moniz-Carroll, Rhonda

From: Rev. Norman W. Gowdy <enway@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, March 14, 2015 5:09 PM
To: JudTestimony
Subject: Bill 7015

Dear Members,

I am a 67-year old man who was infected with HIV in 1981, became sick with it in 1987, and ultimately progressed to AIDS in 1990. My health since then has been "poor" at best.

Primarily owing to HIV/AIDS, I have been hospitalized 9 times since 2013; the last few times, the medical professionals, physicians and nurses have told me that "it was a close call". I have hospitalization-caused MRSA, as well as asthma, COPD, prostate cancer, cerebellar degenerative disorder, HIV encephalopathy, balance and gait problems requiring a rollator (rolling walker) or cane, peripheral neuropathy, sleep disorder, chronic migraines and complex headaches. The amount of medications I take would stagger most minds.

All of these together, mixed and separately, are enough at times to cause someone to wish to commit suicide. Indeed, I had made suicide plans in 2012, when the combined pain of so many conditions was unrelenting, but I became bed-bound and nearly comatose. I called and asked a close friend to come by and proofread my obituary. Her and her husband's responses were strong enough, and so compelling, that I consented to instead go to the hospital via ambulance. That stay was a lengthy one, but I have been fighting to remain viable ever since.

So, I know some of the thinking, physical and mental states which might predispose a person to wish to have final control over how their life ends. Naturally, being of sound mind when crafting this provision is paramount. It may be a wish to avoid a lingering situation, which might cause a major financial impact that survivors cannot afford, to avoid a period of extreme pain, or to avoid the indignities which the death process might entail. Finally, it may be out of consideration for relatives and friends, bearing witness to a protracted process of unknown duration.

I hope you collectively will see the wisdom of enacting this bill.

Rev. Norman Gowdy

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"Let us become the change we seek in this world."
- Mohandas Gandhi