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Testimony in Support of HB 7015
March 18, 2015

I am Rev. Jeanne Lloyd, of Canton, CT. I am here in support of **H.B. 7015: An Act Concerning Aid In Dying for Terminally Ill Patients**. I will speak today of my father's death last year. His name was Col. (retired) Elwood Alon Lloyd. As his only child, I cared for him in our home for the last eight years of his life. I believe we, as a society, have been misled about the purpose of hospice services and their reason for existence.

First, pain management is by definition the management of pain. We need to stop deluding ourselves that escalating amounts of toxic medication at the end of life provides for a peaceful death. It ignores the most obvious fact that for many, death is a physically painful process and that hospice services are not the panacea many suggest. The recent study titled, *"Suffering At The End Of Life Getting Worse, Not Better"* in Kaiser Health News proves my point. (<http://kaiserhealthnews.org/news/study-suffering-at-end-of-life-getting-worse-not-better/>)

Though he suffered pain for 3 ½ months before his death, my father, being of sound mind, and a decorated veteran, refused to take morphine, because the drug (not the disease) made him confused and sleepy. He wanted to be awake and alert to what remained of his life. And, so he suffered, because he had no alternative. It is not truly an informed choice to suggest that the drugs offered by hospice services lead to a peaceful death. Let us not continue to mislead the public by suggesting otherwise.

Second, once a patient is diagnosed with a terminal illness hospitals are quick to dump the patient into hospice services, regardless of medical complications. We are held hostage by a public policy that romanticizes extending the life of a dying patient in the home or elsewhere, so that cost efficiencies may be reaped and insurance reimbursements obtained. Those in opposition to this bill worry that patients may be manipulated into choosing death sooner. I contend that people are already being manipulated by a public policy that encourages the medical system to extend life and prolong suffering in order to receive reimbursement.

My father gave his life to this country, and is now buried at Arlington National Cemetery with my mother. He deserved a choice that provided him the opportunity to die with dignity and without pain. Everyone does. As a country we should not be condemning people who are terminally ill to services that merely prolong suffering for the sake of maintaining a huge medical system. To continue doing so is morally bankrupt.

Thank you.

Addendum: My father's story

On November 27th, a day before Thanksgiving, Dad decided “no more.” He then proceeded to wait for death. But it did not come quickly. The change in our routine felt, at times, like a free fall. Days filled merely, significantly, with simply responding to Dad’s ferocious fevers. Left unchecked, his cancer sent his body into fevers that would rapidly climb to 104°F, nearly everyday. I will spare the reader the details of some of the struggles we went through with various physicians, the treatment options dismissed by them, and, the treatment options dismissed by Dad. Though others may elect to go into a nursing home at the end of life, my father and I promised one another that he would stay at home with us. We had thought that, with hospice, it would be manageable. And, so, what had been the hospital’s job (to bring down and control the fevers) became our job, along with all the other responsibilities of caring for someone so gravely ill. Dad could not escape the cycle of suffering to which he had been condemned by those who glibly said hospice was the answer. He continued to suffer in this way for another three months. He openly expressed his frustration that death wasn’t coming sooner and could not understand why he had no other options. We were all in a liminal zone, where it was difficult to return to one’s old routine, and impossible to move on to the next one. Those were months of deep suffering for all of us.