

Moniz-Carroll, Rhonda

From: Leslie Wolfgang <lesliewolfgang@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2015 9:14 AM
To: JudTestimony
Subject: Testimony in OPPOSITION to HB 7015

I am writing to OPPOSE HB 7015, "An Act Concerning Aid in Dying for Terminally Ill Patients." Connecticut can do better than assisted suicide for our elderly, sick and terminally ill. Let's improve access to early hospice care (CT ranks 50th), more funding for home health care (more jobs!) and supplemental training for doctors in pain management and care.

- **No prosecutorial abuse in CT.** In Connecticut, there are no people writing from their jail cells because they aided patients at the time of their death. We have medical, hospice and palliative professionals that understand the "double effect" whereby causing someone to die as a side effect of addressing end-of-life pain is not illegal. Our judges and prosecutors have wide discretion and there has not been one case of prosecutorial abuse in that regard.
- **We do have elder abuse.** According to The New Haven Register (9/6/14) [As Connecticut Population Ages, Elder Abuse Rises](#) we do have a lot of elder abuse in this state and many wealthy seniors ripe for maltreatment, fraud and worse.
- **And doctors make mistakes.** The 3rd leading cause of preventable death in our country is medical error including misdiagnosis. We have an entire malpractice industry testament to the fact that doctors can be incompetent, but also malicious, biased and subject to all the other imperfections of the human condition. As with the rest of the population, we must not permit them to assist suicide.
- **There has been abuse.** Advocates allege there has not been one case of abuse reported from Oregon. This claim is based on the official reports issued by the Oregon Health Authority. The reports are based on *self-reporting by doctors* not required to be present at the time of death, so, according to the Oregon Health Authority they may not be used to "detect or accurately comment on issues that may be under reported." – i.e. cases of abuse. They also call those doctors' reports all possible "cock and bull stories." There have been independent reports of abuse including the case of Barbara Wagner - turned down for cancer medication but offered assisted suicide instead, among others found here <http://ctmirror.org/2015/03/06/op-ed-assisted-suicide-would-be-fraught-with-problems-and-abuses/>.

Oregon report:

<http://public.health.oregon.gov/ProviderPartnerResources/EvaluationResearch/DeathwithDignityAct/Documents/year17.pdf>

Reports of no abuse are "cock and bull stories":

<http://public.health.oregon.gov/DiseasesConditions/CommunicableDisease/CDSummaryNewsletter/Documents/1999/ohd4806.pdf>

Thank you for your consideration.

Leslie Wolfgang

Waterbury