

Yale SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

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To Whom It May Concern,

As a physician who practices Obstetrics and Maternal-Fetal Medicine in Connecticut, I write in support of H.B. 5148.

In my subspecialty of Maternal-Fetal Medicine I care for women with medical conditions that may be exacerbated by pregnancy or childbirth. Some of these conditions (such as heart disease, propensity for blood clots, and kidney failure) elevate the risk of death or incapacitation for pregnant patients. I also deal with patients who become pregnant after having received a terminal diagnosis (such as cancer or neurodegenerative conditions) that may eventually leave them unable to communicate their medical wishes.

When caring for my high-risk pregnancy patients, it is my and other doctors' practice to discuss and distribute living wills and healthcare proxy forms. One goal is to clarify the patient and her family's wishes about resuscitation. Another purpose is to understand the patient's priorities if the healthcare interests of the mother and her fetus come into conflict.

Given the importance of living wills in my practice as an obstetrician, my colleagues and I were surprised to learn that, during pregnancy, a patient's living will and healthcare proxy form are invalid. In essence, Connecticut is nullifying a best medical practice and substituting its judgment for that of patients and their families. It is unclear to me why pregnant women should not have the ability to make their voice and choices heard through living wills and the appointment of healthcare proxies. All other patients have the right to control their medical care—why should a pregnant patient lose this right when she falls unconscious?

I have the privilege of caring for women during one of the most important phases of their lives. While the majority of women experience pregnancy and childbirth without issue, some women are not as lucky.

Please consider the desires and wishes of pregnant women by passing H.B. 5148. Pregnant women deserve the right to participate in their own medical care, and to act as mothers by making medical choices for their unborn child.



Sincerely,

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