

Members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Lydia Bennett and I strongly encourage you to oppose HB 5417. The title of this bill sounds appealing because of the words “end-of-life care”, but this bill is not about care, it is about ending life. This brings the question: Is it caring to help our most susceptible citizens kill themselves? It has been stated that the leading cause of suicide is not unbearable pain but depression. Couldn't the choice to die easily become a duty to die for a terminally ill patient who might feel as if they have no value in life? The thought that they are only here to burden us leads quickly to discouragement and depression. Some may think it is compassionate to allow someone who is suffering in this way to prematurely end his or her life, but I disagree.

True compassion is letting them know they are valued by providing physical and spiritual support. True compassion lies in promoting a respect in our society for those with physical difficulties. We as a people must value life. It is in the very fiber and core of our great nation to preserve and defend life. When this most basic, foundational principle –value and respect for human life—is lost, so is a keystone that made this nation great.

Our state laws should have one of two purposes: to protect our citizens from wrong and harmful actions or behaviors, or to encourage and promote right and positive actions and behaviors. Through the enacting of this proposed legislation we are doing more than simply allowing assisted suicide. We are encouraging and promoting death. We must not allow this to happen. Our laws must reflect the intrinsic value of human life. Please oppose this bill and the continuing pressure to open this door towards taking life into our own hands.