

Co-chairs Gerratana, Somers and Steinberg and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee:

My name is Donna Grossman; I am from Windsor. I am testifying in support of proposed House Bill No. 5417, *An Act Concerning End-of-Life Care*.

My mother died in 2014 at the age of 86. For most of her life, she was an intelligent, hard-working, fun-loving woman. I was in my 50's before I ever roasted a turkey because Thanksgiving was always at her house. In her mid-70's, she developed Parkinson's disease. She eventually sold her own home and moved in with my sister. While Parkinson's slowed her down, for years she was still able to enjoy cooking and visiting with her family, especially her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and her friends at the Senior Center.

That changed when she developed Alzheimer's, likely related to her Parkinson's. We were forced to move her into her own apartment in an Assisted Living facility, which quickly devolved into her moving into the facility's Memory Care Unit. She was miserable and often talked about wanting to die. Her buxom Italian figure turned into skin and bones. Even though they got her up every day, she developed horrendous bedsores. Soon, the Memory Care unit was unable to care for her, and we had to move her to a Nursing Home. By this point, even though my sisters and I visited at least weekly, and I would often bring at least one of my grandchildren, she didn't know who we were. She would smile at the little ones, but her smile was the same as the smiles of all of the other residents; she had no idea they were hers. She rarely spoke. She sat in her wheelchair staring off into space. She eventually developed a urinary tract infection. Because she didn't have the wherewithal to even complain about it, this infection eventually killed her.

While life is precious, that is not living. We humanely euthanize our pets when they are suffering. I admit to a tinge of jealousy, amongst the tears, when I watched my vet euthanize my cat. I know that if I start down my mother's path, I will kill myself before I get to where she was. I would certainly prefer the help of a doctor to buying a gun and blowing my brains out. But I will not exist as my mother did at the end of her life. She didn't deserve that, and neither will I.

Please vote yes on H.B. 5417 and thank you for your time and attention.

Donna Grossman