

March 20, 2018

Dear Co-Chair Steinberg , Co-Chair Gerratana, Co-Chair Somers, Vice Chair Kennedy, Vice Chair Logan, Vice Chair Borer, Ranking Member Srinivasan, and Honorable Members of the Public Health Committee,

Please accept this written testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB 5417, An Act Concerning End of Life Care.

As a retired seasoned HOSPICE homecare nurse and voting resident of Connecticut, I URGE you to please SUPPORT HB 5417. In my many years as a Hospice RN, I saw various end of life illnesses, and the full spectrum of pain, anxiety and fear of dying issues among my patients. Many patients' symptoms were controlled, but not all. For those symptoms not controlled, I feel that this bill could fill that gap if so desired by the patient of sound mind with less than 6 months to live.

I have seen and felt the pain that patients and their families endure as pain/anxiety/fear progressively increases towards the end. Morphine and other narcotics and pain medicines used for these symptoms certainly have some good effects and have their place; however, with the increasingly higher doses needed for symptom control, there can be side effects of decreased awareness and mobility, nausea, increased incontinence and non-effective pain control. Shouldn't a patient be granted the right and choice to end his or her life with dignity and full awareness and not endure progressively higher doses of medications and side effects and other indignities the dying process may bring.

In addition, just because the patient requests this option, does not mean they have to follow through with it if they later choose not to. It is only another tool in the toolbox to ease suffering in the death and dying process.

Furthermore, any medical doctor who does not want to provide aid in dying will not be required to prescribe it. Doctors who do want to provide aid in dying must do the prescribing with another doctor. This would occur after the patient of sound mind makes two requests for this option to end his or her life in this manner.

I for one want to live in a state that has End of Life Care that includes this option of Aid in Dying, so that I may choose not to endure the pain, anxiety, fear and indignities of dying that I have witnessed in so many. I'm willing to consider a move to another state if necessary to affirm my right to choose and I personally know others that feel this same way.

Please consider SUPPORTING this HB 5417. Thank You.

Respectfully,

Sue Kautz, RN

Haddam, Connecticut