

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF  
HB 5417: AN ACT CONCERNING END-OF-LIFE CARE  
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE  
MARCH 19, 2018

This statement represents my own personal views.

**I SUPPORT HB 5417: AN ACT CONCERNING END-OF-LIFE CARE.**

I am in favor of this legislation for two reasons: 1) it provides mentally competent, terminally ill patients the right to control how they face death at the final stages of their illness, increasing their autonomy, and alleviating their fears about end of life suffering; and 2) the requirements outlined in the bill prevent abuse and ensures that a decision to request end of life medication will be the patient's decision alone.

Regardless of whether or not you choose to pass this bill into law, people will continue to take the end of their lives into their own hands. Unfortunately, without a controlled option this often becomes an act of violent desperation. The Journal of the American Medical Association published their 4-year study on the effect of gun control laws<sup>1</sup>. The pertinent piece of information in the article for the matter at hand is that of the 121,084 firearm related fatalities between 2007-2010 inclusive, the vast majority, i.e., 73,702 were suicides. By comparison, "Medical Aid in Dying" deaths reported during this same time period number 320. Perhaps if there were a controlled option like "Medical Aid in Dying" throughout our country, many of the people who chose to use a firearm to end their lives, would have sought out help from their care givers and instead found counseling that may have lead to different, non-violent outcomes.

Imagine someone you love is dying of a terminal illness. Would you rather see them surrounded by loved ones and go out peacefully? Maybe holding the hand of the spouse they adore? Or would you rather come home one night and find their brains splattered all over the walls?

It is unclear to me what is motivating the opposition to this bill. Why aren't they doing anything to prevent overwhelming amount of firearm suicides rather than letting terminally ill suffering people chose to end their own lives on their own terms. Upon reflection, I can only conclude that it is yet another way that certain members of our society feel they have the right to control others. Unfortunately, it is usually the helpless and desperate that get controlled. Which is why our democratic form of government needs to intervene.

This is simply a matter of choice. If you are against abortion, don't have one. If you are against gay marriage, don't marry someone of the same sex. If you are against "Medical

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<sup>1</sup> <http://archinte.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1661390>

Aid in Dying” while you are suffering in agony at the end of your life, don’t ask your doctor for a prescription that will help you hasten your inevitable end. At the very least, these CHOICES should be available to an open, enlightened, and democratic society.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that there are no arguments against this bill that are supported by facts or evidence. And indeed, the opposition to this bill is a misguided effort fraught with misinformation, fear-mongering, and outright lies.

For these reasons, I respectfully encourage the members of the Public Health Committee to vote in favor of HB 5417.

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