

H. B. 5417 End-of-Life Care

Public Health Committee

Testimony in support

Chairs and Members of the Committee,

It is common for terminally ill people to take their own lives. However, because it is illegal in Connecticut to assist in a person's suicide, the ill person will often keep their intentions secret from even their closest of loved ones to protect them. When the act occurs, it is lacking in compassion and dignity. The family and loved ones are often deeply traumatized and psychologically scarred.

Bill H. B. 5417 concerning end-of-life care, will enable terminally ill people and their families to deal with end-of-life care with dignity and compassion. The bill encourages the patient to disclose their intentions to their next of kin (Sec. 9 (1)). The patient and their family will be able to discuss end-of-life issues openly without fear of civil or criminal liability. The amount of trauma and grief will be reduced. The act, if performed, can be performed with dignity and compassion.

I have experienced two instances where end-of-life issues were involved. In both cases, there was a total lack of dignity and compassion.

A close relative of mine took his life because of terminal cancer. He succeeded in eliminating the pain and the burden he felt that his wife endured from caring for him. However, he did the act in secret and left us all confused and traumatized. The scene was devastating.

A long-time friend of mine lost both of her parents in a simultaneous murder/suicide pact due to their terminal illnesses. She and all of the members of her family were unaware of their parents' plans. I spoke with her recently, recalling the event from more than a decade earlier still brought her to tears.

I would like to point out that both of these events involved guns. Perhaps bill 5417 will help reduce gun violence.

Please pass H. R. 5417 and bring dignity and compassion to end-of-life in Connecticut.

Thank you,

George Unser

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