

I am here to urge you to support HB 5898. This legislation could have saved my late wife years of excruciating pain and suffering.

I met Pat when she was a 19 year old Nursing student, she became a dedicated Registered Nurse, wife and Mom of three kids. She was energetic and hard working, always putting others first. We were married for 43 years and together for 45.

But, as Rheumatoid Arthritis ravaged her body all that changed. Over the last 25 years, her health steadily declined until she was totally disabled. She underwent numerous complicated orthopedic surgeries. We saw all the best doctors at John Hopkins in Baltimore, Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City and in CT at UCONN, St. Francis and Hartford Hospital.

But by mid 2015 her Rheumatology MD declared that her condition was terminal. All efforts to stop or slow the spread of RA throughout her body had failed. Nothing more could be done except to rely on ever increasing doses of oxycodone and oxycontin to try to control the pain. I had already retired early to be Pat's 24/7 caretaker, but now that role expanded exponentially.

At this point we began serious discussion of how to end her pain and suffering. I was unable to even consider anything violent or illegal. We discussed moving to another state where End-of Life legislation was in effect. By the time we determined this course of action, Pat was way too sick to travel, much less move and our debate continued. We discussed the possibility of overdosing on oxycodone pills, but were unsure if this would work. We were in a very real dilemma.

Eventually Pat suffered a serious fall and was rushed to Middlesex Hospital. Due to her compromised health there was little that could be done. She was moved to the Hospice unit where she finally ended her suffering.

Now I want to tell you, every one of you, that the suffering I witnessed Pat go through was beyond what I have words to describe. If you had spent a day, or even an hour in my place you would have witnessed pain and suffering that no human should go through. I have such guilt that I could do nothing to help her. But you can! Please, please show some compassion and approve this legislation. It is my sincere hope that nobody should ever have to suffer like my wife did and need to avail themselves of this option. But we should have a choice available.

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