

The Reverend John C. Hall  
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March 16, 2019

Testimony In Support of HB 5898  
An Act Concerning Aid In Dying For Terminally Ill Patients

I am writing as a 71 year old resident of Connecticut, and as a retired Protestant Minister of the United Church of Christ. In my long career as a clergy person, I have accompanied many people through the dying process. This ministry has led me also to reflect often, over many years, upon the inevitability of my own death and the many fears that I and others feel as we contemplate what kind of a death we will have. At a certain time in life, most people reach a point in life when they would welcome death as preferable to a protracted period of struggle, sickness, dementia, incontinence, and other burdensome indignities.

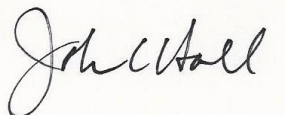
I have also witnessed many times how the medical profession views death as something to be avoided and opposed, and how difficult it is for physicians to cease medical treatment. This medical view has long dominated the end-of-life experience for millions of people, and it is time to move to practices and protocols that allow individuals to have more options for end-of-life care.

HB 5898 is a very modest step in this direction. Indeed, the paperwork and protocols it requires simply for people to have access to self-administered medication that will assist them in dying seems to me, if anything, too onerous. The sequence of acts, requesting the medication twice, obtaining witnesses, and the limited condition of being of sound mind and possessing a terminal illness, etc. all add up to numerous safeguards against the abuse of this option. In fact, the narrow applicability of this proposed law means that it would not be applicable or actionable in the vast majority of cases.

Still, HB 5898 at least takes us one small step in the direction of greater options. I believe that many people will benefit from the simple knowledge that such an option is available, even if they never exercise the option.

I hope you will vote in support of HB 5898. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John C. Hall". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light-colored rectangular background.