

MARCH 18, 2019

PUBLIC HEARING TESTIMONY

H.B. No. 5898

AN ACT CONCERNING AID IN DYING FOR TERMINALLY ILL PATIENTS

My name is Kim Hoffman.

Every workday I go to the high school I am a social worker at. I work hard to support and guide students and their families through some of the most difficult times so that they may create a life that they want to live.

On Saturday, I played long and hard and won a tennis match. Serena Williams won't be calling me to be her doubles partner any time soon but I was pleased and proud with the win.

(Last month, I pushed hard and ran a 5K road race; I did not win. ...no senior Olympics for me.)

Sunday I spent much of the day recovering from the sheer exhaustion of the tennis match and the week of work.

Today I come before you to share another side of my story, and perhaps you may better appreciate my exhaustion:

My name is Kim Hoffman.

I am a 56 year old, stage IV, ovarian cancer survivor.

In June, 2019, I will recognize 6 years since my original diagnosis. In those 6 years, for the bulk of 4 years I have been, and currently am, on a chemotherapy regiment. There is no cure for ovarian cancer. My treatment is disease management. My oncologist has shared that, barring an unforeseen accident, I will die from my cancer.

For as long as I am able, I plan to continue to live as best as I can. Whether I am comforting a student, playing a tennis match, running a 5K, or making the most amazing vegan meal you could dream of, I will do my best to "show up".

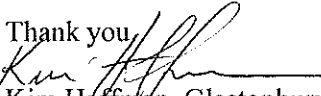
The emotional and physical suffering, and the numbness the emptiness, are what I fear and dread the most about my disease progression. There will be a time when I'm no longer able to "show up" for my life. There will be a time when my body can no longer withstand the side effects of treatment. There will be a time when I won't be able to tolerate the symptoms of my cancer. There will be a time when the only way to manage another day is through palliative care, symptom management. I will be dosed on drugs, not to live with exuberance, but rather to die more quietly.

11 years ago I sat by my mother's side as she suffered through the end stages of her cancer. I held my mother's hand while she begged for the suffering to end. I dried her tears when the morphine just couldn't touch the pain. I held a moist cloth to her lips when she was too weak to drink. Yes, it was traumatic for me, but most significantly, it was traumatic for my mother; a tragic way to have to die.

I would like to have the option to choose to die peacefully. I would like to have the option to end my life before the intense suffering sets in, and before all that is left is a shell of myself, straining through each moment of the day, with no hope of improvement, but endless time to fear the end.

Out of care and respect, I'm implore you to support Bill no. 5898.

Thank you,


Kim Hoffman, Glastonbury, CT.
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