

From: Bonnell M. Lombardi  
To: Joint Committee on Public Health of the Connecticut General Assembly  
Date: March 18, 2019

Testimony in Support of HB 5898, An Act Concerning Aid in Dying for Terminally Ill Patients.

I am Bonnell Lombardi of 20 Old Litchfield Road, Washington, CT 06793

I submit this testimony in support of the passage of HB 5898. I am testifying on behalf of my deceased wife Rosemarie Lombardi, who had an extraordinary life that was ruined by an unspeakably horrible death in 2009 from pancreatic cancer. I witnessed her unbearable, uncontrollable pain and nausea at the end of her life and her despair the moment she realized that in Connecticut she could not get a doctor's compassionate aid in dying if her suffering became intolerable.

I will have testified three times in support of Connecticut death with dignity bills. So far none has been voted out of committee. It is time for this Committee and the Connecticut General Assembly to vote HB 5898 into law.

I do not want to have look in the mirror again and admit to Rosemarie that Connecticut has once again failed to permit compassionate doctor aid in dying.

The reasons for enacting this bill are clear.

1. The fundamental rights of individuals demand it. It should be the fundamental right of every individual who is competent and terminally ill to have the option of compassionate doctor aid in dying when suffering becomes unbearable.
2. Democracy demands it. The role of government is to carry out the will of the people. Surveys show that a large and ever increasing majority of people in Connecticut want competent terminally ill persons to have the right to doctor aid in dying.

Even the Connecticut State Medical Society has dropped its opposition to such legislation.

3. The absence of evidence supporting opponents' arguments demands it.

- a. The absence of any credible evidence of abuse respecting the compassionate doctor aid in dying laws now in effect in eight states and the District of Columbia refutes opponent's claims about the danger of abuse, such as abuse against the disabled.

- b. Palliative care does not make compassionate doctor aid in dying unnecessary. Videos of Rosemarie's death would end this idea once and for all. The Visiting Nurses could not consistently control Rosemarie's unbearable pain and nausea and when morphine did dull her pain and nausea, Rosemarie kept repeating over and over how horrible her morphine drugged state was.

4. The lack of standing of most opponents demands it. A court will not hear a lawsuit unless the claimant is personally affected by the alleged wrong. Many and probably most of the opponents of HB 5898l will not be personally affected by its enactment and their objections should be disregarded or given little weight.

Certain organizations need to protect their members against participation in compassionate doctor aid in dying against their will. In no other respect could those organizations members be personally affected by HB5898 and thus even those organizations have no standing or right to object to the bill beyond protection of its members.

It is time for you, the members of the Connecticut General Assembly, to set aside parochial politics, to listen to the pleas of people who have actually experienced the pain and suffering of terminally ill loved ones over the opposition of those who have not done so, to look into your own hearts and think about what options you, your loved ones, and the majority of your constituents would want if suffering unbearable pain at the end of life.

Then show your compassion and courage by voting HB 5898 into law.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnell Lombardi