

March 15, 2019

To Members of the Public Health Committee:

I am submitting written testimony in OPPOSITION TO HB H.B. 5898:

I believe I am a legitimate objector to “An Act Concerning Aid in Dying for Terminally Ill Patients” as a retired Registered Nurse who has practiced in the nursing profession for 35 years in multiple practice settings, which include home hospice care and hospital critical care. I have worked with and cared for dying patients and their families, health care providers, and have participated in many health care team meetings, including Ethics Committees. From these experiences, I would like to offer a summary of my objections to H. B. 5898:

1. Assisted Suicide is final, all life options are forever removed.

At various states of illness, everyone shares a concern about pain, suffering, loss of control, and perhaps being a “burden to others”. Misconceptions, misunderstandings, and fears can rapidly converge to a personal decision to choose death and death is final.

2. “Right to die” will morph into a “duty to die”.

There is a real risk of coercion from others when artificial death dates are set. Legalizing assisted suicide codifies and legalizes societal bigotry on the aged and the disabled. The expectation to die is a real danger to our most vulnerable in our communities - the elderly, the disabled, people without a source of payment or families or both. It is no stretch of imagination to think of situational abuses to promote this “duty to die” in cases of nefarious family financial exploitation's or in rationing health care resources.

3. Physician assisted suicide violates the Hippocratic Oath, and it violates my Nurse Code of Ethics.

Physician assisted suicide violates the affirmation to “do no harm” of the Hippocratic Oath. I am concerned that this bill violates the obligation I owe my patients, which is proper care for their dying process. This is NOT the same as assisting them in death through suicide.

4. Providing “compassionate aid in dying “is not what will happen in Connecticut after passing this bill. I believe this bill abandons the terminally ill people it purports to assist.

To really promote compassionate care, the public health committee could advocate for:

- Expanded access to early palliative and hospice care with a focus on client-centered advocacy
- Increased education in understanding palliative and hospice care for all health care providers through the continuum of health care environments, including home health workers
- Mandatory training for pain management techniques for medical and nursing students in our medical and nursing schools

Life is a gift. Life is needs to be respected. Do not allow passage of H. B. 5898 to progress through legislation to become law in this state of Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Denise D. Trottier, RN, MS, WOCN
Farmington, CT.