

**Testimony of Jennifer Mizzone
In favor of HB 6425**

Members of the Public Health Committee:

My name is Jennifer Mizzone, from Orange, CT, testifying in support of HB 6425.

You might recognize my last name, as ***I am the widow of Mike Mizzone, who testified before this same committee on similar legislation in 2018 in support of aid in dying.***

My proud, loving husband, MMA fighter, union representative, triathlete, felt forced to plead for before this same committee....just a year before he passed...There was no vote. He suffered. And died. It was not at all how he wanted this to go.

He was living with ALS - each day was a struggle, but he fought hard to advocate for aid in dying... his words at the time he testified :

My doctor tells me I have about 2 years left to live, as this disease slowly,

takes everything from me...

I will slowly die of asphyxiation.

There's no cure for what I have. The progression of this disease on my body is inevitable.

It's a constant nightmare.

I am here before the committee in 2021, to let each one of you know, he was right. On both counts.

On July 15th, 2019, struggling for each breath, Mike died of asphyxia and it was a nightmare.

It's important to me, to make sure you know he suffered unnecessarily as the reasonable option of aid in dying was not afforded to him.

You may hear testimony from doctors and healthcare providers that all pain can be addressed by someone who is terminally ill... I have seen first-hand this is simply not the case, in spite of their best intentions.

Mike leaves 5 beautiful kids of whom he loved dearly and each one deeply feels his loss as I do every day. He also leaves behind a legacy of advocacy on this issue which brings me to these points....

- Laws such as this have been on the books for over 20 years now without a single case of abuse proven to be caused by aid in dying.

- In poll after poll, nationally & in states, by overwhelmingly margins, Americans support aid in dying and 10 states have passed the law, most recently Maine and New Jersey.

So I ask the Committee, why does someone with ALS in Orange, NJ have more options at the end of life than in Orange, CT?

I have a deep Catholic faith, and based on my life experience with Mike I often wonder if medical intervention is used to prolong life, then why can't those same interventions be used to ease suffering for a terminally ill, mentally capable person at the end of life?

When a terminally ill person is faced with death as Mike was --- having an option to peacefully end that suffering, is its own form of grace!!

I was with Mike when he came before you in 2018. If he was here today, he would ask the legislation to do their job, and act to ease the suffering of people faced with the same illness he had.

No longer for him but for others.

Please vote in support of HB 6425.

Thank you.