

My name is Maribeth Abrams and I support SB1076.

I'd like to tell you about my friend Kim Hoffman, a CT resident who died last year from cancer.

About 15 years before Kim passed, she watched her own mother die from cancer. At the end, her mother was on hospice and had access to very strong pain medication... BUT she also happened to be one of those people whose cancer pain is not alleviated by meds, and as a result, she spent the end of her life screaming out for someone to please, do anything to end it.

Kim was VERY close to her mother, and she was traumatized by the feeling of helplessness that anyone would feel while standing by as their mother begs for something that we just can't give.

And so, years later, as Kim's own life neared the end... from the same disease that her mother had... her fears increased that the same thing would happen to her... and that her wife would then bear those scars that come from standing by while your loved one dies in pain.

Kim's fear was understandable. Her own challenges with cancer pain were similar to her mom's. Pain meds didn't work as well as her medical team hoped, and she even went through a nerve block procedure just weeks before she died... but that also didn't work.

And so, for the final two years of her life, Kim fought for medical aid in dying in the state of CT. In fact, she died while the bill was being debated right around this time last year.

Would Kim have actually used the medication if it were available? I think that's irrelevant. The point is... is that if Kim knew that the prescription was available, then the fear and anxiety that permeated her final weeks of life could have been replaced with emotional comfort, knowing that if the pain became too torturous, she could end her life in a peaceful manner.

Kim lived a life of service to others, with a commitment to peace and non-violence in a manner that many people talk about but don't actually do. She loved life. And after eight long years of activity fighting her disease, she deserved the one option that would have made the most difference in her life.

To conclude, maybe you can't imagine ever choosing medical aid in dying for yourself. But that's not what this is about. It's not about what we think we might want for ourselves in the future, and not about our religious beliefs either.

It's about compassion... for others.

It's about imagining what our mothers and fathers might want when their time comes. Or our brothers and sisters, or our friends. Like Kim.

Please... vote YES to SB1076.