

Testimony in opposition to SB 897  
An Act Concerning a Patient's Directions  
Regarding Life Support Systems  
February 1, 2023

Senator Anwar, Rep. McCarthy Vahey, and members of the Public Health Committee:

The Family Institute of Connecticut is a Hartford-based organization that represents thousands of Connecticut residents who want to encourage and support families in our state. To that end, we are concerned with the construction of SB 897 which subverts protections previously enacted in the statute.

In particular, this law would upend someone's careful and thoughtful selection of an in-person proxy - the gold standard of end-of-life planning - with a lesser means of giving direction, such as a previously written statement or off-hand remark, even to a hospital or other staff person with an interest in ending treatment. How alarming and to what end? Someone has gone through the process of selecting a health care proxy exactly because they want nuanced and thoughtful decisions made at the end of their life by a trusted person, without being bound to earlier offhand statements or un-considered fact patterns. This bill would flip that careful planning.

Ironically, the very statute this bill seeks to amend has careful exclusions of some hospital staff and administrators and forbids them from participating as health care representatives. But this bill would reverse that protection by subverting a healthcare proxy with a patient's offhand oral remark to even a hospital employee or other caregiver. Why do this to someone who went through the trouble to appoint a proxy? It is cruel and smacks of a preference for cold-hearted and clinical decision-making by financially incentivised staff instead of the intentional and nuanced decisions made by a patient and their proxy.

Because of the confusion this bill would introduce to the end-of-life-care decision making tree and the obvious abrogation of careful patient protections currently in the law, the Family Institute of Connecticut urges the rejection of SB 897.

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President  
Family Institute of Connecticut Action