

Peter Wolfgang, President
Family Institute of Connecticut Action
Testimony in opposition to SB1076



My name is Peter Wolfgang and I am the President of Family Institute of Connecticut Action. I am asking you to oppose S.B. 1076, AN ACT CONCERNING AID IN DYING FOR TERMINALLY ILL PATIENTS.

Connecticut Judge Aurigemma determined in Blick vs. Office of Div. of Crim. that “aid in dying” is “assisted suicide” according to Connecticut law and the normal use of language. The supporters of this bill try to distinguish it from “assisted suicide” but call it what you like, the results will be the same. In Canada, they call their assisted suicide “Medical Aid in Dying (MAID)” and their MAID system, to quote one previous supporter, is “quite horrific” and is in the process of being expanded to “mature children” even without parental consent and people with mental illness. Some have begun a Twitter campaign #IamthefaceofMAID to show how they have been targeted.

Assisted suicide has been rejected in Connecticut for the past 10 years because when legislators and people scratch the surface, they realize it is actually a terrible idea. This year the advocates have added layers of complicated “safeguards” to their bill. The bill is cumbersome and few doctors and patients would follow it. But advocates don’t care because we know from experience they will be back to claim the safeguards are barriers anyway and should be removed. In the meantime, we will have lost forever the biggest safeguard we have against suicide in Connecticut, an absolute ban in the law and culture.

In my written testimony I've listed states where advocates now demand that the safeguards are too restrictive and must be removed. I'll summarize by quoting Kim Callinan, CEO of Compassion & Choices . . .

“There are too many regulatory roadblocks already! . . . The most obvious is the waiting period Lawmakers should also consider extending prescribing privileges to nurse practitioners and reducing overly cumbersome reporting that deters doctors from practicing.”

“The current process for qualifying medical aid in dying . . . is so cumbersome and time-consuming it prevents too many people from accessing the law.”

In summary, the restrictions in this bill are a ruse because Tim Appleton and the whole Compassion & Choices gang will be back, again and again, to remove them later. I urge you not to fall for their bait and switch.

STATE INITIATIVES TO REMOVE “SAFEGUARDS”

In 2021, California legislators expanded the assisted suicide law by passing Bill SB 380 which: Reduced the mandatory 15-day waiting period between the two oral requests to 48 hours, attempted to force doctors who oppose assisted suicide to make a referral and eliminated the requirement to review the law after a sunset period. There has also been a legal challenge to expand their “aid in dying” to include euthanasia.

The Hawaii legislature legalized assisted suicide in 2018. Hawaii is currently debating House Bill 650 to remove protections in their law.

In 2018, Oregon expanded the definition of terminal illness to include treatable illnesses, like diabetes. In 2019 that state waived the 15 day waiting period and there is now an assisted suicide clinic and suicide tourists in Oregon.

Vermont lessened their waiting periods for assisted suicide, removed a requirement that a doctor actually examine a patient and now permits assisted suicide via ZOOM.

Washington: last session there was a bill that would have removed safeguards. Similar in style to what we experience here in Connecticut to pass assisted suicide, there is a nearly identical campaign to expand it in Washington.