

Members of the committee:

My name is John Barnowski, of Colchester, CT. I am nearly 69 years old, in good health, and of sound mind. I am writing to voice my support for House Bill 5417, An Act Concerning End of Life Care.

I support Bill 5417 although I do not think it offers enough latitude for those at the end of life. Requiring "an incurable and irreversible medical condition that will, within reasonable medical judgment, result in death within six months" is quite limiting. Not meaning to sound flippant: all life is terminal. I understand society's concern for the possibility of irrational or involuntary deaths, but I am more concerned with personal choice in this very significant aspect of life. I am a long-time proponent of death with dignity, and have been expressing my desire to have substantial control of my own demise for decades. I have read numerous accounts of the final days of people who yearned for a comfortable and dignified exit. When the time comes that I truly feel that I am done with life, I hope that legislation is on the books that will allow me to make that very personal decision. I believe there are many people in the world who share this point of view.

Of course, I understand the arguments against euthanasia (which I understand this bill is not about), yet I believe that is what society should ultimately accept as an option for death with dignity. Bill 5417 is a start, but its many qualifications and requirements limit its utility to a very small fraction of possible beneficiaries. Still, it will offer solace and comfort to some and, hopefully, lead to more liberal policies in the future.

Five years ago I wrote in support of House Bill 6645, An Act Concerning Compassionate Aid in Dying for the Terminally Ill. That bill did not pass. I urge you to effect passage of this Bill, this session.

Yours truly,  
John Barnowski