

## **Candy Buebendorf**

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March 19, 2018

Public Health Committee  
Legislative Office Building Lobby  
Hartford, CT 06106

**Re: Raised Bill H.B. No. 5417**

To Members of the Public Health Committee:

I write to **support** passage of H.B. No. 5417, An Act Concerning End-of-Life Care.

Understandably Connecticut has exercised caution and proceeded very slowly on this issue. It is a complicated issue, one that requires a number of safeguards to protect all parties involved in such an important decision. I supported this idea in 2015 when the bill reached the Judiciary Committee, and support the additional requirements since that time. I applaud your caution; however now it is time to pass this legislation.

As you are well aware, five other states and Washington, D.C. have laws in place that allow terminally ill people to decide the timing of their own deaths - an increase from three states since the 2015 bill. In fact, Oregon's law has been in place since 1994, over 20 years. Oregon is a model for how Aid in Dying can work successfully in a manner that both honors individuals' decision-making and protects medical professionals and family members from legal ramifications. H.B. No. 5417 includes good elements that address both of these.

Provisions in the bill that help ensure a rational decision are important, especially the required "waiting period" of fifteen days following a patient's initial request to her/his attending physician, and the requirement that two impartial witnesses attest that the patient is in no way being coerced into making the request. Additionally I am pleased that the bill includes proof of Connecticut residency which should help avoid attracting patients from other states.

Most important, this bill gives patients a choice consistent with the explanations in the bill itself in defining palliative care:

(11) "Palliative care" means health care centered on a seriously ill patient and such patient's family that...(C) facilitates **patient autonomy**, a patient's access to information and **patient choice**...

It is hard to believe that hospice organizations apparently oppose this bill, since a fundamental tenet of hospice care provides for a patient choosing the best death possible given one's unique circumstances and outlook.

H.B. No. 5417, An Act Concerning End-of-Life Care, is a compassionate bill, consistent with your job as legislators which is to make laws in the best interests of the people. People with a terminal illness deserve compassion and choice.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C Buebendorf". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Candy Buebendorf