

**SENATOR MICHAEL A. McLACHLAN**  
TWENTY-FOURTH SENATE DISTRICT

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March 20, 2018

Dear Senator Somers, Senator Gerratana, Representative Steinberg, Representative Srinivasan, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee,

I am State Senator Michael McLachlan and I stand in firm opposition to House Bill 5417, **An Act Concerning End – of – Life Care.**

This legislation would promote a culture of assisted suicide in Connecticut, and tells citizens that suicide is an acceptable solution to life's hardships.

In states where assisted suicide has been approved, suicide rates have increased. Oregon passed their assisted suicide bill in 1997, and according to the *American Foundation For Suicide Prevention*, one person dies from suicide every 12 hours in Oregon, and suicide is the 8<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death.

What is even more troubling is the rate of suicide among teens in Oregon. In November of 2017, the Children for Oregon released their annual report, which states, "From 2006 to 2015, suicide doubled as a percentage of total teens death (ages 15-19 years old in Oregon... While the rate of suicide among U.S. youth aged 10-24 years hardly budgeted from 2010 to 2013, the rate In Oregon spiked by over 41 percent in the same time frame."

I am concerned that the same will happen in Connecticut. The Legislature should not create the culture of death that will surely come with this proposal. As elected officials and public servants we should be fostering a culture that supports those who are disabled or fighting death (whether they are elderly or sick.) We should encourage them to fight with strength of character and to live the life that they have been blessed to have fully, to the very last breath.

We should not be encouraging them to give up, which is what I fear will happen with this legislation. I also worry that it will open the door for abuse of the elderly and disabled by allowing those around them to influence their decision to commit suicide for their own gain. This proposal lacks safeguards for abuse. Furthermore, there is no way of knowing when the lethal dose is administered, or if it was done so voluntarily. With a lack of safeguards in place there is no way to know if suicide is what the person truly desired or if it is a priority of those around them.

This legislation would also allow aid in dying when a patient has less than six months to live. Doctors are not equipped with a crystal ball. They are human, and they could be wrong when they are telling a patient that they have less than six months to live.

Thank you.

Michael A. McLachlan  
State Senator – 24<sup>th</sup> District

