

Dear members of the Public Health Committee,

I am strongly opposed to HB 5417. Life is beautiful and should be cherished and valued until natural death. My biggest concern is that a class of people will be deemed worthy of killing under the law. Connecticut wisely removed the death penalty from its statutes. Why are we now going to say that it is acceptable for medical professionals to prescribe lethal medication to the most vulnerable segment of our population (the elderly and the disabled)? It makes a mockery of the Hippocratic Oath ("do no harm"). Whether consciously or unconsciously people with diseases like Alzheimer's or Dementia will begin to feel or be treated as if they were a burden. Life is never a burden. Life is beautiful. Legislative efforts will be better spent on Palliative Care and increased access to hospice.

Several years ago I watched my mother die of Dementia. It was painful. She no longer recognized me as her son and she was bedridden. Through the care of my father and visiting nurses aides. I watched something truly remarkable happen. She radiated a light of the Divine spark that had always been her strength throughout life. She was surrounded by love and touched everyone who came in contact with her. Her suffering drew forth a goodness from others rarely seen in this life. People are not commodities. Who can accurately predict when a person will die? Who is it to say that one illness or disability is more deserving of death? Where is the line drawn once the door is opened to Assisted Suicide? Children? the depressed,? those whose medical care are becoming a financial burden?

My mother taught me that life is beautiful even in the distressing disguise of illness. To end one's life through lethal medication is not compassion and someone who is under emotional distress is not capable of making an informed choice. Thank you for your time and your attention.

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