

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to you out of my deep concern for the need to act in a medically compassionate way at the end of one's life. After a 2 yr career in Clinical Genetics, I worked as a Physician Assistant for 25 years. Beyond my professional role as a clinician, I volunteered in hospice at the bedside of countless individuals for a decade and wrote my PhD dissertation on the time of dying in 21st century America. Suffice it to say that my professional and personal background has been focused on providing the very best medical care and psychological support that I could to alleviate the suffering of my patients.

I was fortunate to work with many people sharing their stories as they entered into the phase that we will all enter, the phase of dying. We all know that being healthy, living in a healthy body is merely a transient condition at best, and a condition that some of our fellow humans never have the good fortune to experience. We also know that each and every one of us will pass on from this life, that our human body will age, become frail, and eventually die away.

In my work over the last 4 decades, I have become intimately familiar with both *good* deaths and terribly bad and pain-racked deaths. Those of us in the medical fields know that our ability to control pain, particularly at the end of life, is inadequate in so many cases. It is my opinion that the option to create one's own exit strategy from this life is the ultimate gift that we can give someone.

I know that I would want to have that choice available to me. I am a healthy 62 yr old woman, for now. And I hope to live a good long life and ultimately die quietly and painlessly in my sleep. But I also know that this scenario is not necessarily the way my life will end.

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We all live with an ever present fear of death. Wouldn't it be just a bit more compassionate if we knew that our own death didn't need to be filled with such terrible pain and suffering?

I ask you to please allow compassionate end-of-life care to become the law of our state. Please support HB 5417.

Best,

Carol Rizzolo
Guilford, CT