



CONNECTICUT CATHOLIC PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONFERENCE
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TESTIMONY
Opposition to
H.B. 6425 "An Act Concerning Aid in Dying for Terminally Ill Patients"
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Public Hearing
February 26, 2021

The Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference is the public policy and advocacy organization representing the Catholic bishops in Connecticut. The Conference appears before this committee in opposition to H.B. 6425 "An Act Concerning Aid in Dying for Terminally Ill Patients". The Conference understands that some people may view establishing a legal process whereby a person may take their own life is an expression of compassion for a terminally ill patient. However, the question must be asked if helping a person take their own life is true compassion and the best direction for our society.

Some will argue it is an individual choice, so a person should be able to make that decision. These same people want to ignore the dangers to patient lives, and that other seriously disabled people may face, if this approach to treating illness becomes legally acceptable in our society. Do we really want to let the state determine who may legally die in our society? Connecticut followed that approach with the death penalty. Only after realizing that even after the best legal safeguards were put into place relating to the death penalty, mistakes were made, and the law was repealed. This committee should have similar concerns with H.B. 6425. The state should not be involved in the taking of human life, since people may have their lives taken without their consent, despite what may be viewed as appropriate safeguards.

The lack of strong legal safeguards in this bill are numerous and will be clearly outlined in other testimony before this committee. The Conference would like to focus on one of major pitfalls of this legislation, and that approved in other states, which is not so obvious. H.B. 6425 indirectly authorizes the use of drug cocktails that **have not been approved** by the FDA or any other ethical research review board. Under assisted suicide laws the **patient is the test subject** for the drug cocktails. Although doctors that prescribe the drug cocktail may be aware of what other physicians have subscribed, they still can and have been modified. This is why some patients may take hours to die and have negative, sometimes frightening, side effects. This bill does nothing to address this issue and therefore will allow Connecticut citizens to be test subjects should H.B. 6425 become law.

The Conference believes that in respecting the value of human life and showing true compassion for suffering patients is to vigorously improve palliative and hospice care. We should not adopt laws that may lead to the unintentional taking of a human life or allow patients to be subjected to the testing of drug cocktails. In a nation that could develop a vaccine for a major pandemic in a year, we should be able to improve patient care to reduce human suffering and show compassion that values human life.

Deacon David Reynolds

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Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference