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To: House Judiciary Committee
Cc: Barth Bracy
Subject: Vote NO on Assisted Suicide

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My name is Ann L. Smith and I live in Westerly, RI.

I urge you to consider what has happened since Canada made assisted suicide legal. Like abortion, the populace is coerced into thinking that a certain procedure will be "safe" and "rare." The next thing you know, everyone is doing it!

Right now Canada reports that one in twenty deaths can be attributed to assisted suicide. Approximately 15,000 people a year take their own lives by assisted suicide in Canada.

At first Canada's law was to hasten the deaths of people where death was considered "reasonably imminent." Later the law was amended to allow the poisoning of people with permanent conditions. Next year, yet another expansion to Canada's MAID act will allow those with mental illness to kill themselves.

Hitler succeeded in shaping a social narrative and made people accept the idea that a country should eliminate their "useless eaters."

Once medical professionals and trusted family members start suggesting assisted suicide, the patient "caves" to the idea. I could almost imagine myself doing it if I were ill and everyone around me was talking about the supposed "benefits" of the procedure. Only the most obstinate among us would be able to resist this subtle coercion when it comes from multiple people who supposedly care for us.

Without constraints that uphold the dignity of natural death, the concept of taking one's own life, for whatever reason, will be legitimized. Keep in mind that about 5,000 people in Canada kill themselves by regular suicide each year in addition to those who end their lives in a clinical setting. We need to ask ourselves if assisted suicide will remove the stigma of suicide by other means. Canada's suicide rate has not shown any meaningful downward trends in recent year-over-year analyses.

Lastly, the slogan "Death with Dignity" I find particularly offensive when used in relation to assisted suicide. Natural death is the only dignified death. The slogan that says, "No one should tell you how to die" is also egregious, because the people pushing assisted suicide are the ones telling us how to die.

Please vote NO on assisted suicide in Rhode Island.

Ann Smith
Westerly RI