

Anabella Mayorga

From: Brian Bennett <brian.g.bennett@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 29, 2026 5:49 PM
To: Brian Bennett
Subject: H7760

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Dear
Representative,

I
am a mental health counselor from North Kingstown writing to voice my opposition to H7760.

In
my capacity as a mental health counselor, I work every day with young people whose suffering is such that they are considering ending their lives. My role is to help them cope with their suffering and, ultimately, find healing. For many, the alleviation of
suffering is hard won and requires that they return to treatment again and again. But what is always consistent, and what always informs my work and the work of everyone in my field, is that suicide is not one of their options.

Now,
I recognize that I am writing about suicide in the context of mental health, which is not something under consideration in this bill. At least not explicitly. But allow me to make three quick points in this regard:

1)
First, what we know from assisted suicide legislation passed in other states and countries is that, however narrowly defined the original legislation, it is always subsequently expanded.

2)
Second, and related, any attempt to draw a hard-and-fast distinction between physical and mental illness belies what we know about the nature of illness and suffering. If you pass this bill, you will soon have advocates asking you why the permission extended
to those suffering from terminal *physical*
illness ought not apply to those equally suffering from seemingly permanent *mental*
illness.

3)
Third, and more to the heart of my plea, I hope you will consider the impact of this bill on those who are currently suffering from severe mental illness. One thing we know from mental health research is that one of the protective factors against committing

suicide is the belief - be it moral, ethical, religious, or civil - that suicide is wrong. By legalizing assisted suicide (under whatever name we choose to call it in this bill), we put that belief in doubt and remove one more barrier to suicide for some of the most vulnerable among us. Anyone who has suffered from severe depression can tell you that one of its cruelest symptoms is the removal of hope - the loss of the ability to imagine how you could be happy again. From that perspective, the future for someone with severe depression is just as hopeless as it would be for a person with terminal physical illness. "Why," that person may justifiably ask, "if my state has sanctioned another person taking their own life, is it not OK for me to do the same?"

I do not envy your position as you weigh a bill whose consequences are, quite literally, life and death. But I hope you will consider the very real impact that this bill's passage would have on our community, especially the most vulnerable among us.

Sincerely,
Brian
Bennett, LMHC
North
Kingstown