

Testimony in Support of House Bill 7760: The Compassionate Care Act

To: Chairperson Carol Hagan McEntee and Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee

From: Zachary Gauthier

Date: April 28, 2026

Chairwoman McEntee and members of the committee, my name is Zachary Gauthier and I am a resident of Johnston. I am submitting this testimony to express my strong support for House Bill 7760, the Compassionate Care Act. I speak today on behalf of my uncle, Mike Gates, and our entire family.

My Uncle Mike is currently facing the immense challenge of living with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. ALS is a relentless disease that does more than just attack the physical body; it places an unimaginable emotional weight on everyone who loves the person diagnosed. I see the daily toll this takes on his wife, Brenda, who remains steadfastly by his side through every difficult moment. I see it in his two children, who are forced to witness their father navigate an impossible journey.

Most heart-breaking is the impact on his grandchildren. They are experiencing a level of pain that no child should have to endure—watching their grandfather, a man of immense strength, gradually lose his independence.

For a man like Uncle Mike, who dedicated his life to public service for thirty plus years as a sergeant detective for the Cranston Police Department, dignity is not just a preference; it has been the cornerstone of his life. Providing him the option for compassionate care ensures that Brenda, his children, and his grandchildren can remember him for the life he lived and the service he gave, rather than being haunted by the final, most agonizing stages of this terminal illness.

This legislation is about granting a family the right to a peaceful goodbye. It is about autonomy and mercy. I respectfully urge this committee to pass House Bill 7760 and provide Uncle Mike and families like ours the grace of a choice.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Zachary Gauthier

Johnston, Rhode Island