**Testimony of Charlie Quimby on HF 1930**

My position on HF 1930 End of Life Options bill is based on conscience and principles that have developed over a lifetime of experiences, relationships, study, and reflection. I have long familial history of secretive and tragic suicides as well as peaceful and merciful deaths. I have recently lost close friends to lingering cancers, Parkinson’s, and dementia. Each of these lives concluded with foreknowledge of the decedent, but not always with the involvement and acceptance of family and friends. Trust me, there is a very great difference between suicide and medical aid in dying, and not just before the law.

A longtime Dutch friend wrote to me not long ago of her decision to end her suffering with medical assistance and the blessing of her family:

“Now our time together is running out. I have submitted myself to the inevitable. René [her husband] does not want to cling on when he sees how much I am suffering and will continue to do so. We don’t want to get stuck up in a medical chase for yet another medical experiment leading to what? We have talked to our general practitioner about aid in dying when the time comes. He is very helpful, compassionate but also practical and has given us useful information. So good to be living in a country that really respects the will of the patient. And offers help. That doesn’t force people to suffer till death comes at last.”

Prohibiting or punishing individual behavior is not government’s only power. Our public policy should also foster a society in which adults may exercise their conscience and principles without violating the law or the rights of others. Especially in the most profound moments of their lives and deaths.

Because death is not optional, a society that values life must also allow honest conversations about how we desire it to end, respecting religious beliefs of the dying person where they exist and giving equal weight to the ethical beliefs of those whose moral constructs do follow a particular teaching. Such conversations will be availed under HF 1930, bringing together medical, spiritual, and family resources in ways to ease the transition of those like me who desire to have as much agency availing as possible in our final moments. End of life options are a comfort to many, whether they are used or not.

Please advance this bill.

Respectfully,

Charlie Quimby

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