Respectfully submitted to the House Health Finance and Policy Committee for the meeting to discuss HF1930: End-of-life option established for terminally ill adults.

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to you to ask for your support of the Minnesota End of Life Option Act. This law would provide relief or peace of mind to those who meet the qualifications established by the law, and who choose to take advantage of it, if suffering becomes unendurable in their end days. I don't know that I would take advantage of the benefits this law would provide, if I qualified for its implementation, but just knowing it is available would give me a level of reassurance that I might limit the length of suffering I need endure at the end of my life.

I never thought much about the subject before my sister, Rochelle, died several years ago. She died after two weeks in hospice care. This followed more than two debilitatingly painful years suffering the ravages of metastatic melanoma. Her disease slowly drained the life from her, but what must have been the most agonizing part of the process was waiting for death once she gave in to the realization that the end was near and she entered hospice.

Rochelle started walking and talking before she was one year old, and once she started, she never stopped getting out and talking to anyone and everyone who would listen. She loved and lived for conversation. Up to the time she entered hospice, she was able to maintain some ability to connect and talk to friends and family, but once active medical intervention in hospice entered the picture, physical comfort and pain management became the objective, and conversation—what made my sister who she was and gave my sister life—became all but impossible. She couldn’t express herself, and the frustration of not being able to do what she had loved for a lifetime**,** inflicted an anguish her medical team could not ease.

Whether we like it or not, whether we admit it or not, when terminally ill people enter hospice care, they are beginning the process of medically assisted dying. The only thing I am asking for with this legislation is more control over how long the process of dying is allowed to go on; just a little more control over how much anguish one must endure—IF one decides to exercise the option provided by this legislation.

I don’t know if Rochelle would have chosen to accelerate her process of medically assisted dying, but I do know the look in her eyes as she struggled to do what she loved so much and could no longer do. Having witnessed the end of my sister’s life; it would give me comfort to know this legislation was in place if I was given a similar prognosis.

Please support this legislation. I would hope not to have to take advantage of it, but I would appreciate knowing the option is available if I truly believed it was necessary.

If you choose not to support this legislation, I await your response with an explanation as towhy you have made this decision.

Respectfully,

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