

Dear House Health Care Committee,

I understand that today is the public hearing and potentially a vote on HB4135. I urge you to vote NO on this bill.

Citizens with Alzheimers and dementia are included among the vulnerable in this bill who could find themselves assigned a slow, painful death by starvation and dehydration. After recent experience with people in this group, I cannot fathom how we could treat our neighbors this way. Last fall my grandmother passed away at almost 99. At the end she was in a memory care unit of an assisted living facility. Mealtime in the dining room was a pillar of the daily routine for these residents, and I sat with them several times while visiting. I can't imagine forcing one of the residents to watch everyone else eat, while he or she is denied even a sip of water. The lack of understanding how they can be denied basic care would only add to their distress.

As my grandmother's body failed, she became unable to eat. She went from eating food to drinking Ensure during meal time. In the last few days she became bedridden and could not keep any food down. But her body determined this pace - not another person. My grandmother was treated with compassion and dignity and made as comfortable as possible. Denying her water when she wanted it would have been inhumane.

Something is very wrong when I am begging my legislators not to legalize killing their constituents. Don't you agree?

Sincerely,
Erin Salter