

Chairman Kagan and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today.

I am Lynn Weitzel. I live SW of Littleton in JeffCo, and I am in favor of HB 1054.

The verb “die” is an active verb. I die. I am dying. It cannot be passive. I cannot *be* died. No one can die me. Therefore, dying is an active process. It is something I will do, and each of *you* will do when the time comes.

I don’t know what disease process I will die with. I do know that when I am actually dying – am *terminally* ill – I want to have the option of choosing how and when I die. If my pain or suffering is so intense that I can no longer bear it, I want to have the option of legally taking a drug that will peacefully and quickly end my life.

I am a retired hospice nurse. I have seen hundreds of people do their dying. Many died gently and peacefully with all their symptoms well controlled. Others had such intense pain that no amount of medication controlled it. Some had such severe anxiety that nothing gave them peace. Some had such terrible angst over their decline that they cried out, “Let me die. Why can’t I go now?”

They could legally refuse their medications, food and drink, oxygen – and many of them did – but those ways of dying may be very painful and can take days or weeks. For some, there was no solution to their suffering other than sedating them – a process of medicating them into a coma over the days or weeks until they died. However, for some of *them*, even *sedation* did not work. *And*, it removed them from living their lives and being present with their families in their final days.

HB 1054 offers another choice – an optional one, for those who want to do our dying consciously, with our families, in our homes, in our Colorado – the opportunity to fill a prescription (or not), to take the medication (or not), and, thus, to die making our own choices.

I own my body. No one can tell me what to do with it. Doctors, family, friends and clergy can make suggestions – but the final decisions about any treatments and my dying are up to me.

I *will* die, and I will choose how to do that. I want every option open to me --- so I encourage you to pass this bill on to the full House for discussion there.

Thank you for listening, and thank you all for your service to the State of Colorado.

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