



## Christian Civic League of Maine

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*Associated with Focus on the Family*

Sen. Gratwick and Rep. Hymanson, honored committee members, I am Carroll Conley, Jr. of the Christian Civic League. I thank you for the opportunity to speak in opposition of LD 1313.

I was raised in a conservative evangelical home; therefore, I developed what I would describe as a "default opposition" to the concept of suicide and related matters. I really never thought about it much. I just recognized it was central to the life issue in our doctrine and tradition.

When I chose a career path in public policy, I certainly couldn't avoid the issue; therefore, I was forced to give it more thought. Through that process based upon many of the arguments and warnings we've heard here today, I solidified my position of opposition.

I was really hoping we could get through this session without having to invest time and energy to this. But when I heard there was a doctor prescribed death bill forthcoming, I dug out my written testimony from six years ago to begin preparation. It was then I noticed the date at the top of my testimony -- April 29, 2013.

I remember getting a call that day while I was sitting in this room. I went out into the hallway--it was my wife. She told me my dad had taken a turn for the worse, and I better get to Bangor as quickly as possible. I submitted my testimony to the clerk and made my way to the hospital.

There I found my dad, my hero, in the throes of unspeakable agony. Our family was told that a choice had to be made between therapeutic action and pain management -- due to his condition, those two actions were not compatible.

We waited to see in hopes other options might arise, but by the next evening there still were only two choices, and my dad's choice was predetermined and absolutely clear -- manage the pain.

Palliative care protocols commenced, and hospice was contacted. My dad called my two sons to say I love you and goodbye. His relief was immediate and obvious. The process of his departure was expected to be several days. I went home to get some rest that night and received a phone call the next morning at 8:36. It was my brother telling me dad had died. We might not have been ready for him to go, but he was.

So now, when I advocate for palliative care and against doctor prescribed death, it's no longer an assumed default position, neither is it a theoretical public policy -- it's experiential.

So rather than resorting to this risky proposition of physician-assisted suicide, let's invest in the tremendous medical advances in palliative care and the incredibly effective hospice programs in our state. I urge you to vote "Ought not to Pass" for LD 1313.