

Madam Chair, Members of the Committee:

My name is James Hamilton.

I testify today because I will not be here one year from now.

I am dying of small cell lung cancer, the same disease that cruelly killed my brother and devastated my family 15 years ago. I spent his final weeks at his bedside, doing what little I could to alleviate the suffering of suffocating as the disease ate away what remained of his lungs and wreaked havoc on his other organs. I do not wish the prolonged death he experienced. Nor do I wish my wife, son, siblings, extended family, and friends to weather the same storm. My brother's death scarred me, just as my own death may scar those I love.

Death need not be this ugly. Were the law to allow it, I would choose to end my life before this disease riddles my body and destroys my brain, as it did my brother's. As things stand, my options are to travel to another state for an extended period and die far from my friends and family or, as my mother did, to voluntarily stop eating and drinking. That is only slightly less arduous than death by lung cancer, in my experience.

I ask that you spare me, and others like me, from this fate by enacting HF 1930 as soon as possible. The time and manner of my death should be mine to decide.

Thank you.

James M. Hamilton

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