



Legislative Testimony
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**Written Testimony Supporting
House Bill 5148, An Act Concerning Pregnant
Patients Exercising Living Wills**

Senator Gerratana, Senator Somers, Representative Steinberg, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee:

My name is Kaley Lentini, and I am legislative counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am submitting this testimony in support of House Bill 5148, An Act Concerning Pregnant Patients Exercising Living Wills.

The ACLU-CT strongly supports bodily autonomy for all people, including people who are pregnant. As such, we support this bill, which would repeal Connecticut's pregnancy exception for advance directives and allow people to specify in their advance directives what they would like to do if they are pregnant.

Connecticut law currently completely disregards the expressed advanced directive wishes of pregnant people. Under current Connecticut law, a pregnant person's health care wishes are automatically nullified if they are pregnant, meaning they will be forced to receive medical life-sustaining treatment when they are permanently unconscious, incapacitated, or terminally ill, despite contrary instructions in their advance directive or their past statements regarding their wishes. The government should not direct physicians to disregard the health care wishes of pregnant people simply because they are pregnant.

People have a constitutional right to refuse medical care. The U.S. Supreme Court recognized this right in 1990, stating that there is "a constitutionally protected right to

refuse lifesaving hydration and nutrition.”¹ A person does not lose this right when they become pregnant.

Currently, four states allow people to determine how their advance directives will apply when they are pregnant. Nearby, New Jersey and Vermont protect the bodily autonomy of pregnant people by respecting their advance directives. Connecticut should do the same.

We strongly urge this committee to support House Bill 5148.

¹ *Cruzan by Cruzan v. Dir., Missouri Dep't of Health*, 497 U.S. 261, 279 (1990).