December 9, 2015

The Honorable Senator Blumenthal
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Blumenthal:

On behalf of the American Bar Association and its over 400,000 members, I write to commend you for your work on pending legislation known as the “Compassionate Care Act of 2015.” The ABA strongly supports your efforts to enhance advanced care planning.

For over two decades, the ABA has supported congressional action to enact legislation that would foster advance care planning. Health care providers can not know and honor patients’ values and wishes unless care planning conversations take place on a recurring basis and providers have the skills needed to engage patients in a meaningful way. We are gratified to see that this legislation will strengthen the health care planning of thousands of Americans by enhancing public and professional education in advance care planning, providing financial support for programs of Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment, and implementing studies on the feasibility of a national uniform policy on advance directives, including a national registry.

The ABA thanks you and your staff for working with the various stakeholders to develop legislation that addresses the needs of so many people in need of advance care planning. We stand ready to assist you in moving this legislation forward.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Susman