

ME LD 613 Testimony – 132nd ME Legislature – April 11, 2025

The following testimony is in **SUPPORT of the Act to Amend the Maine Death with Dignity Act to Ensure Access by Qualified Patients:**

On December 28, 2022, my sister Helen McKinnon of Deer Isle, smiled at me with a twinkle in her eye and uttered the most sincere “Thank You” I have ever experienced as I handed her the Death with Dignity cocktail prescription she had fought long and hard to obtain from her physician. She then snuggled down in her favorite comforter, hand in mine, with her daughter and granddaughter also at her side, and fell peacefully asleep. Within 15 minutes, she experienced a serene death. She was one of the lucky ones. She had not succumbed to her aggressive cancer throughout the waiting periods gauntlet of the current Maine Death with Dignity Act. Others, I’ve learned, have not been so fortunate.

My sister’s sole purpose after her untreatable cancer diagnosis was to die on her own terms. She often expressed her gratitude for Maine’s Death with Dignity Act. She was driven, as was her nature, and was specifically (pardon the personal nature of this) to die before her care-giving daughter had to change her diapers. Dignity ... with a capital D. The required waiting periods, in addition to the other necessary doctor’s appointments and paperwork, seemed almost cruel. She was ready to die. It was apparent to us all. Her stress-induced anxiety and agitation grew as she lay in her bed ... waiting.

If, as LD 613 proposes her physician could have waived the waiting period(s), I firmly believe that Helen’s Death with Dignity experience would have been much improved.

Please deeply consider my sister’s story as you contemplate this LD 613 Amendment to the Maine Death with Dignity Act. There are many of us who wish to utilize Death with Dignity ourselves should the circumstances present themselves. Your thoughtful consideration is appreciated. May you find it in your hearts to support this amendment.

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