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Addison
LD 613

In 2001 I spent weeks with my father who was dying with esophageal cancer. There was no hope for remission or prolongation of his life. And although our family was fortunate for him to be compassionately cared for by hospice in his home, as the weeks went on to months we watched as the quality of his life diminished. Choosing a physician assisted death is not a negation of life, but an affirmation of what is truly important in your life and when it is time to accept the inevitably, we all shall die.

As I understand LD 613, it is to allow the patient and her doctor to decide whether any purpose will be served by adhering to a 17-day waiting period. As a lawyer I am familiar with the concept of statutory waiting periods. Almost always, this is to assure that people will not act impulsively and make decisions that they have not fully thought through.

If you have ever cared for someone who is dying from a medical condition that will cause their death in six months, you know that the dying process is too often a long medical journey. There are enough safeguards in the law that this is not going to be a decision made impulsively. The timing of the decision should be between the patient and doctor and not with any arbitrary statutory waiting periods.