

March 31, 2025

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

100 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333

Chairs Ingerswren, Meyer and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Len Freeman; I live in Falmouth, Maine; and I write in support of LD 613, *An Act to Amend the Maine Death with Dignity Act to Ensure Access by Qualified Patients*.

Maine has had a Death with Dignity law since 2019. The State's experience subsequent to enactment shows no evidence of misuse or abuse. Consider a person with a terminal diagnosis coupled with the probability of a painful and possibly bankrupting death (with subsequent impoverishment of the survivors). Having the medications and the choice to end their own physical and mental suffering offers great comfort even if they never exercise that choice.

According to the *Maine Death with Dignity Act Annual Report* for calendar year 2023, 80 patients started the process (19 more than in 2022). Four individuals died before they could make their written requests; that is a preventable human tragedy.

LD 613 is a critical amendment to the *Maine Death with Dignity Act*. The Act will ensure that all qualified patients can access aid-in-dying medication without having to worry they will die during the waiting period. Physicians should have the clinical discretion to waive all or a portion of the waiting period using their professional judgement.

I respectfully request your support for aid-in-dying legislation currently under consideration as LD 613. The people of Maine want and deserve this amendment to our Death with Dignity Act. Thank you.

