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LD 613

I am writing to support LD613 - An Act to Amend the Maine Death with Dignity Act to Ensure Access by Qualified Patients.

I traveled this journey with my mother in the state of Vermont two and a half years ago, from attending her initial request to a physician for permission to end her life, to mixing the compound the day she decided to end her life. I am strongly in support of assuring that an individual with a terminal prognosis who seeks to end their life should be able to do so with the blessing of an attending physician. That physician should be able to modify the needed waiting period and necessity of a second physician's ok, if circumstances warrant.

Watching my mother make her case to end your own life was the saddest and bravest moment I have ever witnessed, aside from her actual death. My mother was a very strong, intellectual and passionate person who loved living. She had stage 4 lung cancer that spread to her brain and all over her body, and after one excruciating chemo course, at the age of 79, she decided that that was not how she wanted to end her life, for the sake of her family and herself. In Vermont, an individual needs to plea in person to one physician as well as in writing to the state. That was plenty emotionally painful for her. Luckily, she was granted permission and early in her final summer, she was visited by a doctor who provided the medical compound to bring about her death. My parents kept it in the closet for the summer. My mother was on a cocktail of steroids and pain medication that allowed her to enjoy her grandkids, her husband, and her children for most of the summer, sometimes from bed, other times sitting on the porch outside, and a few times, we even took long drives together and talked. She was able to write letters to all of us, and say all the things she needed to say, as were we, to her.

If a person has the courage to end their life in a way that allows them to feel in control and spare themselves the worst of the pain and spare their loved ones lasting visions of them in excruciating pain, we should be making that as accessible as possible, provided the individual has a terminal disease. I support the amendments suggested in LD613.