



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and Esteemed Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Mathew McIntyre and I humbly serve as the Representative for Maine's House District 18, serving to bring forward the voices of the good People of 16 towns and four Unorganized Territories spanning portions of Penobscot, Hancock and Washington counties. I offer my testimony in opposition to LD613, "An Act to Amend the Maine Death with Dignity Act to Ensure Access by Qualified Patients".

Per the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a societally accepted definition of "Oath" is presented as; *a solemn attestation of the truth or inviolability of one's words*

While it is acknowledged the Hippocratic Oath has been revised over the course of history, the most current version sworn by medical professionals is provided below, for your consideration. I draw your attention to the bolded text.

"I swear to fulfill, to the best of my ability and judgment, this covenant:

I will respect the hard-won scientific gains of those physicians in whose steps I walk, and gladly share such knowledge as is mine with those who are to follow.

I will apply, for the benefit of the sick, all measures [that] are required, avoiding those twin traps of overtreatment and therapeutic nihilism.

I will remember that there is art to medicine as well as science, and that warmth, sympathy, and understanding may outweigh the surgeon's knife or the chemist's drug.

I will not be ashamed to say "I know not," nor will I fail to call in my colleagues when the skills of another are needed for a patient's recovery.

I will respect the privacy of my patients, for their problems are not disclosed to me that the world may know.

Most especially must I tread with care in matters of life and death. If it is given me to save a life, all thanks. But it may also be within my power to take a life; this awesome responsibility must be faced with great humbleness and awareness of my own frailty.

Above all, I must not play at God.

I will remember that I do not treat a fever chart, a cancerous growth, but a sick human being, whose illness may affect the person's family and economic stability. My responsibility includes these related problems, if I am to care adequately for the sick.

I will prevent disease whenever I can, for prevention is preferable to cure.

I will remember that I remain a member of society, with special obligations to all my fellow human beings, those sound of mind and body as well as the infirm.

If I do not violate this oath, may I enjoy life and art, respected while I live and remembered with affection thereafter.

May I always act so as to preserve the finest traditions of my calling and may I long experience the joy of healing those who seek my help."

All life is precious, and, every effort must be made to protect and preserve the dignity of the dying. As the last son of Marguerite McIntyre, I was asked by my mother to serve as her health care proxy during her final months and days. There were very few "good days" towards the end, as her once strong body weakened and her once brilliant mind rapidly began to deteriorate. I prayed constantly for guidance and wisdom, to help me figure out a way to ease her pain. I spoke with family members. I reached out to total strangers. I admittedly struggled, and only in the deafening darkness when no one was around to see, I wept quietly while holding my mother's hand to try to offer comfort. During the final hours, in her last barely lucid moment she looked at me and said simply "Mathew, thank you". Shortly thereafter, she passed away peacefully.

Her physicians were charged to manage the medical aspects of her condition, and they did their job well. It was the duty of her son to maintain her dignity, and someday I hope I will accept that I did my best. My decisions were guided by my heart, and my faith. They had nothing to do with the statutes of man.

Thank you for your time, and I pray you the wisdom required to render your decision on this Bill.