

Sharon McDonnell
Yarmouth Town
LD 613

To the Health and Human Services Committee,

I understand that LD 613, An Act to Amend the Maine Death with Dignity Act to Ensure Access by Qualified Patients, is scheduled for public hearing on Friday, April 11, 2025, at 10:00 am before the Health and Human Services Committee.

I am sorry that I cannot be there in person, but I am traveling out of state.

I am a physician that has worked with end-of-life care, and I am a supporter of Maine Death with Dignity.

This legislation changes only one part of the current law which will allow for a waiver of the waiting periods by the physician if it is in the best interest of the qualified patient.

Most people work very hard to stay alive and hope for a cure. But at the end of their life, it may become clear that this is not possible. This bill seeks to address those people that realize they are terminal and then do not have a lot of time or the energy to apply, to wait, and then be approved.

The ability to have the choice of how one ends their life is a huge relief and a comfort to those afraid of losing control and being in pain. We have made the barriers to the medications a bit too difficult. You can rectify this by passing this legislation. The program is working well and can be made a bit better by offering this change.

I have had the good fortune of working with two families this year and their death was dignified, deeply connected to family, and pain free. I want this for everyone that wants the choice.

I am hopeful too that in my own end of life decision-making that my physician will have the opportunity to exercise clinical discretion and waive the waiting period if needed to prescribe the medications more quickly.

Thank you for your consideration

Sharon McDonnell MD MPH
Consulting Faculty
Maine Health Preventive Medicine Fellowship
Portland ME
Maine Health Preventive Medicine Fellowship