

Jim Burke  
Topsham  
LD 613

Submission in support of LD 613

My name is Jim Burke, I am a resident of Topsham Maine, and I am going to be 76 years old next month. I am writing this note in support of the passage of LD 613.

At this stage of my life, I am more and more familiar with the process of aging, physical decline, illness, and death. It is inevitable and will happen to all of us. The Maine Death with Dignity Act provides the option for those of us who choose to use it to accept the inevitability of death when it is time and avoid the pain and suffering that often comes in the final stages of dying. The current law however requires a potentially significant waiting period between the realization that death is imminent and the ability to access the medication to assist us in our dying.

The amendment proposed in LD 613 will provide the treating physician with the ability to waive the waiting period for those patients whose conditions are rapidly deteriorating. Currently, if a qualified patient applies in an advanced state of decline, such as with a late diagnosis, or a serious change in their condition, they may suffer needlessly by having to wait up to 17 days before getting the medication. LD 613 will change that, making it possible for a physician to use their clinical judgement when it is called for in the best interests of their patient.

None of the other requirements of the statute are being affected by this amendment. It will simply allow those of us who seek to avoid unnecessary suffering at the end of our life to accept the inevitable. I urge passage of LD 613. Thank you.

Jim Burke