

Sarah Walcott  
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LD 613

Good morning. I am writing today in strong support of LD 613. I work as a licensed clinical social worker at the Alford Cancer Center in Augusta, and I have seen firsthand the comfort, relief, and opportunity for a "good death" provided to our patients and their families by our existing Death with Dignity Act. To give people some control and dignity during a time where so much has been taken from them is an invaluable gift. Unfortunately, I have also seen people die waiting to access this service, people who have wanted this option since they got their diagnosis. That is a particular kind of heartbreak. To know that someone made every effort to minimize suffering for themselves and their families, only to die in the hospital during their waiting period, is devastating. We all deserve better. Please allow physicians to exercise their clinical judgment and expertise to waive the waiting period if needed. Please allow patients the opportunity to have a good death on their own terms, with the recognition that cancer and other terminal illnesses do not respect waiting periods. Thank you for your consideration.