

Patty Hymanson
Maine Medical and Osteopathic Associations
LD 613

TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AND
THE MAINE OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

In Support Of

LD 613- An Act to Amend the Maine Death with Dignity Act to Ensure Access by
Qualified Patients

Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services Room 209, Cross Building,
Augusta, Maine

Friday, April 11th, 2025

Good Morning, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Patty Locuratolo Hymanson. I live in York, am a physician, a past-Maine State Representative from 2015-2022, and past House Chair of this esteemed committee. I am testifying in support of LD 613, An Act to Amend the Maine Death with Dignity Act to Ensure Access by Qualified Patients, on behalf of the Maine Medical Association and the Maine Osteopathic Association.

The Maine Medical Association (MMA) is a professional organization representing over 4,000 physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine. MMA's mission is to support Maine physicians, advance the quality of medicine in Maine, and promote the health of all Maine people. The Maine Osteopathic Association (MOA) is a professional organization representing more than 1,200 osteopathic physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine whose mission is to serve the Osteopathic profession of the State of Maine through a coordinated effort of professional education, advocacy, and member services to ensure the availability of quality osteopathic health care to the people of this State.

The MMA and MOA's legislative committees have joined to advocate with one voice. We have all determined that we should testify in support of LD 613

I am speaking as a neurologist who practiced in- and out-patient neurology for 28 years on the Seacoast, Chaired the Medical Ethics Committee in our hospital for 10 years, walked down the path with countless patients from diagnosis, through treatment, to death in my 28 years in practice here. This bill allows people at the very end of their lives, who already qualify for a physician to prescribe medicine for their one death, to use the medicine because they are so near their death, their suffering so great, they can not live until the waiting period is up.

Our Associations believe this bill conforms to our core patient-centered care principles, which leave important medical decisions to patients and their doctors. For terminally ill patients facing unbearable pain, rigid waiting periods can impose unnecessary suffering. This bill enables physicians to act in accordance with the interests of qualified patients by waiving waiting periods when time is of the essence. By doing so, we honor the will of individuals to make personal decisions about their end-of-life care without delay.

This bill also honors physicians' training and respects our expert medical judgments by allowing us to determine whether a waiver of the waiting period is appropriate based on a patient's condition. This flexibility ensures that Maine's Death with Dignity law adapts to real-world scenarios rather than imposing a one-size-fits-all formula. And at times, patients and their families will still need the processing time imposed by the waiting period.

It is important to note that this bill does not remove the necessary safeguards of the Death with Dignity law. It simply allows physicians to adapt the process when actively dying people will suffer needlessly.

Thank you for considering the thoughts of Maine's physicians, and we hope you support LD 613.

Thank you,
Patty Hymanson, MD