



Founded to **protect** and **uphold** the **dignity** and **worth** of human life from conception to natural death.

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Senator Ingwersen and Representative Meyer and distinguished members of the Maine Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Mike McClellan. I am the Executive Director of Maine Right To Life, an organization that was established to honor the dignity and inherent value of every human life. Our mission is to safeguard the sanctity of life from conception to natural death by working to make abortion, infanticide, physician-assisted suicide, and euthanasia socially, ethically, and legally unacceptable while actively promoting compassionate alternatives. We strive to inform, educate, and inspire individuals from all backgrounds to advocate for life at every stage. Our vision is a world where abortion becomes unthinkable.

Maine Right to Life stands in strong opposition to LD 613, *An Act to Amend the Maine Death with Dignity Act to Ensure Access by Qualified Patients*, sponsored by Representative Michele Meyer of Eliot.

Yesterday morning, I read our family's daily devotional to my wife. The story came from *Streams in the Desert* and told of a naturalist who noticed a large, beautiful butterfly in distress. It was struggling to free itself from its chrysalis. Moved by compassion, the man gently released the creature. But to his sorrow, the butterfly fluttered briefly—then fell to the ground and died. In his lab, he discovered the painful truth: the struggle to break free was necessary. Nature had designed the fight to strengthen its wings. In trying to save it, he had unknowingly robbed it of its strength—and its future.

This story stayed with me as I considered LD 613.

We challenge you to reflect on something that was once a defining value of both our state and our nation: **hope**. We are not here to judge any individual or personal situation, but to advocate for a principle we believe in deeply. Hope and perseverance often yield remarkable stories of grace and redemption. In contrast, a culture of death can only ever result in one thing—death.

A former member of this very legislature once told me that she had supported physician-assisted suicide—until her grandmother, facing terminal illness, held on just long

enough to meet her newborn great-grandchild. That moment of connection, of unexpected joy, changed her perspective. It reminded her that life—even near its end—still has the power to inspire, surprise, and bless.

So I ask again: why this bill? Maine has not seen a public outcry demanding expansion of physician-assisted suicide. If anything, the broader national mood seems to be shifting back toward a renewed emphasis on life, not despair. Yet, this legislation feels like an effort to cement an agenda before such change can take root.

As I reviewed the steps involved in Maine's physician-assisted suicide process, what struck me most was the paperwork. The end of a human life reduced to a stack of forms—how profoundly sad. Have we lost the reverence for life in all its stages?

It's important to note that many seeking physician-assisted suicide are not primarily suffering from unbearable physical pain, but from existential distress: the fear of losing autonomy, dignity, or control. These are deeply human concerns—and they call for deeply human responses. Compassionate care, palliative medicine, hospice support, and mental health services can offer comfort, dignity, and yes—hope.

I urge you to review the 2024 DHHS Annual Report on the Death with Dignity Act. Maine's suicide rate, already above the national average, appears to be on the rise again. More people began and completed the physician-assisted suicide process in 2023 than in previous years. What does this tell us? That despair is growing—not receding.

We must ask ourselves what message we are sending. Are we suggesting that some lives are no longer worth living? That autonomy should trump the inherent dignity of every person? These are dangerous ideas. Every life, even in its final days, carries worth, meaning, and potential.

Finally, I ask you to reflect not just on the immediate impact of this bill, but on the broader cultural consequences. What kind of society are we building? Maine appears to be leading the way in what many see as a "culture of death"—through assisted suicide, abortion, confusion over gender identity, and the enabling of addiction. I implore you not to take another step down this path.

I recognize the likely outcome of this committee's vote. But I cannot stand silently. My duty is to speak truth. History will not look kindly on those who chose to expand the reach of death in the name of compassion.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Sincerely,**  
Mike