

Dear members of the Health and Human Services Committee.

My name is Robert McCown and I live in Cumberland Center, ME.

This august body boldly passed a Death with Dignity bill in 2019 and I urge you to have that same sense of leadership with LD 613, an act to amend the Maine Death with Dignity Act to Ensure Access by Qualified Patients.

As you know, under the Death with Dignity law, there is currently a waiting period of 15 days between a patient's 2 verbal and one written request for medical aid in dying. In addition to that, there is also a 48 hour waiting period before the patient can receive their medications. In total, that is over a half month of waiting.

Although this timetable may seem insignificant to a healthy person, to a person on the verge of death, even a few hours can seem like an eternity.

Why would you force a patient to wait over half a month longer before being relieved of their intolerable terminal illness? Just take a moment and think about this: if the patient were your family member or close friend, would you want them to suffer an additional half month? I should hope not.

LD613 will allow a doctor, in their professional opinion, to waive part or all of the waiting period while still protecting a patient by requiring them to fulfill the ME Death with Dignity law: two verbal and one written request for medication. As you can see, the current Death with Dignity law still remains intact, protecting patients.

I urge you, Health and Human Services Committee members, to pass LD 613. It is the compassionate and merciful thing you can do for the people of Maine.

Thank you for your kind attention,

Robert McCown