

# DEATH WITH DIGNITY IN [STATE]

Across the country, we have seen significant advances in pain control and hospice care to provide those at the end of life with comfort. Sometimes, even the best of care is not enough. In states where death with dignity is not legal, those terminally ill patients lack the choice to die on their terms in a peaceful and dignified way.

Death with dignity, also known as aid in dying, it is not only an end-of-life option that helps terminally ill people, it is the recognition that their pain and suffering must be treated appropriately. Residents of [STATE] dying from a terminal illness should have the ability to make decisions about their own life, without government bureaucrats, politicians, or religious leaders deciding for them.

Now is the time for us to pass a death with dignity law in [STATE] to ensure terminally ill patients have the full range of options that they determine is right for them, to avoid unimaginable pain and suffering at the end of life. It is time to honor those who are dying by allowing them the choice to end their life with dignity.

Since Oregon first passed the groundbreaking Death with Dignity Act in 1997, the state has seen flawless implementation of the law. In Washington, Vermont, California, Colorado, Washington, D.C., Hawaii, and Maine they have seen similar results.

Any death with dignity law must contain significant safeguards. All that have passed so far have stringent requirements for qualification:

1. The patient must be diagnosed within six months of death, the same standard used for hospice care.
2. The patient must be competent and voluntarily make repeated verbal and written requests, with waiting periods. If there is any indication that the patient is not of sound mind, they must be referred to a mental health professional for evaluation. The patient can rescind their request at any time.
3. The patient must take the medication themselves. Whether surrounded by family, friends or others, the patient must still self-administer the medication.
4. Two physicians must confirm the patient meets the requirements of the law. No doctor or health care professional can be forced to participate. All medical professionals have full opt out provisions and need to state no reason other than they are opposed.

In more than 45 years of combined experience in Oregon and the other states that have passed the law more recently, there is no evidence of any undue influence or coercion. Instead, opponents seek to impose their own stringent religious beliefs on all the rest of us with a fear-based campaign.

A growing number of Americans, including [STATE] residents support death with dignity. Today, seven in ten Americans support aid-in-dying legislation.