

Testimony for HB 5898 An Act Concerning Aid In Dying For Terminally Ill Patients

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I strongly urge you to support **HB 5898 An Act Concerning Aid In Dying For Terminally Ill Patients**. End of life care decisions should be based on the mentally competent, terminally ill person's life stance and personal choices.

The Catholic Church should not dictate our value systems especially considering their worldwide and local pedophilia scandals. And those who use scare tactics are relying on misinformation and it should be treated the same way as anti-vaccination myths – with disdain and resentment for the misery their lies have caused our communities.

On a more personal note, as a person with a psychiatric illness and a neurological disorder, I truly understand the fear the opponents of this bill have: the poor, infirmed and disabled will be forced to take a lethal medical cocktail. Yet the bill, as it is written, cannot be used against me by my physicians, by my health insurance company, by my family or by my depressive self.

As an Atheist Humanist, I embrace reason and science while tempering it with compassion and empathy. Those of us who no longer believe in religion (40% and growing in our state) deserve laws that are based on these values and not the dictates of the Catholic Church nor on unfounded myths.

Last, please note that Oregon's Death with Dignity law has been successfully in effect for 21 years. Their 2018 Annual Report (<http://www.healthoregon.org/dwd>) showcases why laws like this work:

- Of the 168 DWDA deaths during 2018, most patients (79.2%) were aged 65 years or older with the median age 74 years
- Most had cancer (62.5%), followed by neurological disease (14.9%) and heart/circulatory disease (9.5%)
- Most (90.5%) were enrolled in hospice care
- Most (99.3%) had some form of health care insurance
- The three most frequently reported end-of-life concerns were loss of autonomy (91.7%), decreasing ability to participate in activities that made life enjoyable (90.5%), and loss of dignity (66.7%)
- Of the 249 prescriptions written, only 168 were used (67.5%)

Again, I strongly urge you to support **HB 5898 An Act Concerning Aid In Dying For Terminally Ill Patients**. This law will allow end of life care decisions to be in the hands of those with a terminal illness and will be one more option that allows them to meet death with self-determination and dignity.

Respectfully,

Rebecca Williams