

Dear House Judiciary Chair Claman and Members of the Alaska Judiciary Committee,

I am writing in support of HB 54 "End of Life Options", a bill which helps ensure Alaskans with 6 months or less to live have a voice about their end-of-life wishes.

As a physical therapist with twenty years of experience, I am an advocate for patient autonomy in health care. When people are provided with information and choices and time to consider their options, they can make the choice which best suits them. With the End of Life Options bill, this would help ensure that Alaskan voices are indeed heard and all options are available to prevent unnecessary suffering.

How we are born and how we die is paramount; these experiences shape who we are, those around us, how we look at the world and tread on the earth. These hours being present, holding the hands of our loved ones as they prepare for death molds our impression of dying, of the death process. There is no greater time to honor ones dignity and wishes than in the final days of life. HB 54 would ensure Alaskans voices are heard and honored.

As a born and raised Alaskan and health care provider, I thank you for introducing this important legislation and look forward to it moving forward so medical aid in dying is an option for terminally ill Alaskans.

Best wishes,

Zoya Herrnsteen

---

Letter in support of House Bill 54, End Of life Options.

I am 74 years old. I have painfully observed the lingering deaths of my parents, several aunts and uncles, and even more of my friends. In many of those cases the conditions from which they died were beyond the capabilities of the medical profession to do anything more than to prolong life, at any cost, often with no regard to the wishes of the patient or their loved ones and friends. Some of the patients were in a coma and hopefully not in pain, but my Mother and several friends were fully aware of their conditions, were wracked with constant pain, and, although they wished to die as quickly as possible, and voiced that to family, friends, and their doctors, the medical profession was hobbled by their inability to legally assist in that last, most charitable wish.

The Hippocratic Oath states, among other things, "do no harm". I would argue that prolonging ones life beyond their own wish to do so, ensuring they will die a lingering death of days, weeks, or months of excruciating pain, is a form of harm akin to torture! I have been a veterinarian for almost fifty years. I learned a very important lesson very early on that has never been far from my mind. The first few times I was asked to euthanize a terminally ill animal I was conflicted; here I'd been trained to cure animals, to

keep them alive, and now I was being asked to end ones life? Fortunately, euthanasia is not only an established practice in veterinary medicine, it is accepted as (and here is the thing that has stuck with me all these years) the last, best thing we can do for our animal charges.

I have euthanized many hundreds of animals at the end of their lives, ending misery for the critters, and the emotional agony of the owners of those animals who had been watching their beloved pet deteriorate in front of their eyes. Other than a small needle prick for the injection, the process is painless, simply an anesthetic procedure with a lethal overdose of the drug. In most cases I encouraged the owners to be in the room with us, so they, too, could see what I had seen alone at the beginning of my career; these animals simply went to sleep, a serenity replaced what had been a grimace on their faces, and they were at peace. The owners, too, had a sense of relief and knew they had done the right thing for their pet. Sure, there were almost always tears, but every client thanked me for what we were able to do.

It has always been my opinion we veterinarians have a huge advantage over MDs; we can provide that last, best, service, when they cannot. I am confident that most medical doctors, being the caring people they are, would appreciate having this procedure in their armamentarium. Not that they would have to use it, but knowing they could when the patient desired it.

Back to my opening sentence, I would hope that by the time I may need such a procedure to end my own suffering, I will be able to ask my medical provider for a legal, ethical, and profoundly moral method of ending my life when I want it to end.

Thank you for your consideration.

Karl Monetti, VMD

Box 56302

North Pole, Alaska, 99705

907-322-0242

---

My name is Herb Berkowitz (no relation to Ethan). I am 75 years old and have lived in Anchorage for almost 50 years. When my death comes I want it to be on my terms and in my home in Anchorage. I don't want to spend my final days in the Lower 48 because a vocal minority up here have religious qualms about how I choose to end my life — something that has NOTHING to do with them.

In 2018 religion, and only religion, lies at the heart of all objections to aid in dying. A whole series of "slippery slope" arguments have been debunked by years of experience in other states. It is NOT a plan for getting rid of the elderly, the handicapped, the poor or anyone else. It will be exactly what it is in States where it is legal — a private matter between physician and patient under the protection of safeguards that assure it won't be anything else.

I give HB 54 my unqualified support. No one has anything to fear from this law. It does not require anyone to do anything that violates his or her religious or moral values. It is no more artificial or unnatural than open heart surgery or chemotherapy. I want to be proud of my Legislature for rejecting disingenuous arguments and doing the right thing for Alaska's citizens.

---

Dear Harriet,

I'm writing to let you know that I stand in support of HB 54 - End of Life Options. I have lost many family members to terminal but lingering diseases. I don't know how they would have chosen, but, having been at their sides while they suffered, I do know that when my time comes I will want a choice.

Thank you,

Chris Bond

Sent from my iPhone

---

Hello:

I support passing SB 54 this year.

Thank you,

Jill Reese

2980 Lois Drive

Anchorage, AK 99517

---

My name is Lane Moffitt and I was born and raised in the valley. The last 21 years I have lived in the Wrangell St. Elias Park. My significant other Betty passed from cancer last June. It started 6 years ago with breast cancer and she went thru double mastectomy, chemo, radiation. . She was still receiving radiation and her mother came down with ovarian cancer and was too old for chemo. We stepped in and took care of her till she passed. Last September Betty was told the cancer had come back and it was in her right foot, lower spine, ribs, sternum and in her neck. She was told they couldn't do anything this time but maybe slow it down. She chose to come home to her nest and our 18 year old son and I took care of her for 8 months till she passed. I will tell you that it was so painful for her that you could not give her enough oxycodone and fentanyl to stop the pain cause she would start having trouble breathing. She

came to the point of having seizures and when they stopped she would have to spit out chunks of broken teeth. I can go on and on about all the other horrible things that happen along the way but I wont. I read hb-99 about 6 months ago and it is very well written. I know that you folks are probably overwhelmed with the budget crisis. No matter what you do with it a lot of people are going to suffer along with the state. This is one aspect of Alaskans life you can eliminate the suffering. There is not a week go by without a friend,neighbor or fellow Alaskan comes down with cancer that I hear about. Please let me know the status on this bill. A heartfelt thanks to all of you.

---

**Lizzie Kubitz**

---

**From:** Terrie Gottstein <terrie.gottstein@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 10, 2018 2:49 PM  
**To:** House Judiciary  
**Subject:** HB 54 - Death with Dignity bill

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE:

I am writing to strongly **support** passage of HB 54 (the Death with Dignity bill), which I understand is currently in your committee, receiving testimony on the bill. Unfortunately, I don't believe the timing of the hearing on the bill will coincide with my schedule, so I sincerely hope you give equal weight to this email, to be SURE you know how strongly I support this bill.

Hopefully, none of us or our loved ones will ever need to use it, but for anyone who does, HB 54 offers a compassionate, common sense solution for ending unnecessary pain and suffering. Please let Alaska join Hawaii and support the long overdue passage of this mechanism for what should be a basic human right. You've got a chance to make a big difference.

Thank you!

Terrie Gottstein  
Anchorage, AK  
907- 223-4240

## Lizzie Kubitz

---

**From:** Rep. Matt Claman  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 12, 2018 10:23 AM  
**To:** House Judiciary  
**Subject:** FW: Letter of Support for HB 54 - End of Life Options

**From:** Karen Possible [mailto:karenpossible@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 11, 2018 8:53 PM  
**To:** Rep. Matt Claman <Rep.Matt.Claman@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Letter of Support for HB 54 - End of Life Options

Dear Committee Members,

Please support this bill. This is very Alaskan legislation and speaks directly to our highest held belief in freedom.

If you have not seen an ugly death, then you cannot comprehend the horror which lives on in the minds of those left behind. We watched our loved ones as they pleaded for death. We don't want to die the same way.

My brother, Mark Greenwell, died of esophageal cancer. He suffered, horribly. He was young and in the care of Hospice. The cancer spread and corrupted the basic functions of his body. Mark's body swelled, filled with everything you can imagine when your guts have turned to mush. While they gave him medication for the pain, nothing could free him from the agony of seeing his own body decay. He was unable to go to the bathroom, unable to eat, unable to drink, parched, given a sponge on a stick to suck. His lips covered in Vaseline because they were so chapped and bloody. This proud, independent father was robbed of his life by cancer and robbed of his freedom, dignity and peace by the state.

Over the last four years I have spoken with many terminally ill people throughout the country, including those in states where they can have a peaceful exit through legal means. They find that just having the knowledge, the power and control to exit when they wish gives them the strength to carry on. This is very much about independence and freedom, something we Alaskans hold dear.

I know someone in Alaska who is terminally ill and is planning on putting a bullet in his brain. He is planning on strangers finding his body. He knows his 'blowing his head off' will be ugly and he doesn't want his family to see. People confide in you when they are desperate. If he is reading this, please know that I have not forgotten and I am fighting for you, too. I remember.

I remember all of you.

You, my fellow Alaskans, have the opportunity to make history. You have the opportunity to give the terminally ill the option of being at home, surrounded by the support and love of their friends and family, listening to music at sunrise and slipping peacefully away, if that is THEIR choice. My brother died in a nursing home, at 2 a.m., in December 2014, just shy of his birthday and Christmas, having slipped into a coma a few hours before after weeks of appalling suffering, pleading for escape, pleading for death.

It is time that we are civilized and that our Alaskan laws catch up with our humanity.

Thank you for your time, attention and your support. I will not forget your support.  
Karen Dechman Bond  
4620 Golden Spring Circle  
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

**Lizzie Kubitz**

---

**From:** Rep. Matt Claman  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 12, 2018 10:26 AM  
**To:** House Judiciary  
**Subject:** FW: Public Testimony from Sitka for House Judiciary Committee on HB54

**From:** Ken Fate  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 11, 2018 4:49 PM  
**To:** Rep. Matt Claman <Rep.Matt.Claman@akleg.gov>  
**Cc:** House Judiciary <House.Judiciary@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Public Testimony from Sitka for House Judiciary Committee on HB54

Please accept this Public Testimony from Sitka for House Judiciary Committee on HB54 as submitted to the Sitka LIO. Thank you. Ken Fate

**HB 54 Terminally Ill Ending Life Option:** Dear Committee members, I'm writing to strongly support House Bill 54 which allows terminally ill patients to ease their suffering and hasten an inevitable and certain death. Death is a natural part of life. This bill preserves dignity and a person's right to live, and die, on their own terms according to their own desires and beliefs and with a much greater focus on a person's life than on the often painful and agonizing process of dying. Oregon, Washington, Colorado, California and Washington DC all have similar legislation. The Supreme Court upheld this in 2006. The bill has safeguards to protect patients from coercion and allows patients and doctors to have honest and open discussion so that patients are able to make their own decisions.

Thank you for taking my comments.

Sincerely,

Libby Stortz,

Sitka, Alaska

## Lizzie Kubitz

---

**From:** William Kenyon <wtkenyon@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 13, 2018 8:40 AM  
**To:** House Judiciary  
**Cc:** Rep. Louise Stutes; Sen. Gary Stevens  
**Subject:** HB 54

To: House Judiciary April 13, 2018

Dear Chairman Claman and members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is William Kenyon, I am 76 years old and a resident of the city of Cordova, Alaska.

A year and a half ago, I was diagnosed with Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis, which is a terminal diagnosis. There is no cure for this condition. I will slowly lose my ability to breathe and near the end, be restricted to bed care.

I had a friend in Oregon who died of terminal cancer and using the Oregon law in that state, went through the process of being approved for medical aid in dying. My friend never used that help. Her explanation to me was that every day and every moment, she was not helpless, but had a valid choice on her future. That fact gave her a great degree of peace and as time went on, through the pain and discomfort, she would put off the decision for the next day and continue to live for another day.

Although I have not yet reached the last weeks or months of my life, I agree with my friend, I would like a choice also. With no hope when I reach that stage, I would like the right to choose, with a clear mind, when it is time for me to leave this world.

Thank you for allowing me to testify, I appreciate it.

Contact info: PO Box 1390, Cordova, AK 99574  
[wtkenyon@hotmail.com](mailto:wtkenyon@hotmail.com)



## Lizzie Kubitz

---

**From:** Rep. Matt Claman  
**Sent:** Friday, April 13, 2018 1:46 PM  
**To:** House Judiciary  
**Subject:** FW: Please support the End-of-Life Option Act

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Compassion & Choices <info@compassionandchoices.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 13, 2018 11:44 AM  
**To:** Rep. Matt Claman <Rep.Matt.Claman@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Please support the End-of-Life Option Act

Apr 13, 2018

State Representative Matt Claman  
State Capitol, Room 118  
120 Fourth Street  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear State Representative Claman,

I want you to know that I am among the 70% of Alaskans who support medical aid in dying. As your constituent, I strongly urge you to support House Bill 54, the End-of-Life Option Act.

For me, this issue is personal. I know friends and family members who had a difficult final chapter in their lives and could have benefited from medical aid in dying.

This bill would give terminally ill, mentally capable adults with less than six months to live access to the full range of choices at the end of life, including medical aid in dying. It offers hope and peace of mind to thousands every year who are confronting the possibility of a prolonged, painful death.

There are now eight jurisdictions where the right to choose your own, peaceful ending is affirmed either by legislation, the courts, or popular ballot. This legislation is modeled after legislation in Oregon and other states where it has a proven track record of success.

How we die, like how we live, should be a personal choice. Momentum for medical aid-in-dying legislation is growing across the country. As your constituent, I ask you to help make Alaska the next state to authorize this option.

Sincerely,

Ms. Jessie Koerner  
432 S Ogden St  
Anchorage, AK 99529

(303) 482-7681

[jkoerner@compassionandchoices.org](mailto:jkoerner@compassionandchoices.org)

Laurinda Marcello  
1952 Dodge Cir.  
Sitka, AK 99835  
[laurinda.marcello@gmail.com](mailto:laurinda.marcello@gmail.com)

Alaska House Judiciary Committee

April 13, 2018

Dear House Judiciary Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing me to submit these written comments regarding HB 54 "An Act providing an end-of-life option for terminally ill individuals; and providing for an effective date." I urge you to advance & eventually pass HB 54.

When I was just 18 years old, in the short summer between high school graduation and leaving for my freshman year of college, my family completely changed. My father – then a middle-aged college chemistry professor – was unexpectedly diagnosed with terminal cancer. Scans revealed a stage IV cancer had metastasized all over critical areas in his body. My dad thus opted for palliative or comfort care only. He would die just three weeks after initial diagnosis. Yet during this short time, so much happened to diminish his quality of life. There was a serious infection resulting in a medivac to Seattle and his loss of independence. Although we were able to get him back to Sitka, the cancer was faster than our ability to arrange for in-home hospice care, which my dad very much wished for. During his final several days, he faced the kind of pain that not even the maximum allowable dosage of morphine could erase. He passed away at Sitka Community Hospital.

The speed of his downward progression, would have likely precluded my dad from accessing Death with Dignity. The proposed law contains a very reasonable waiting period to safeguard against misuse. However, I take comfort in knowing that other terminally ill Alaskans could be helped by HB 54. Many terminally ill people have months to contemplate & plan for their deaths. Unfortunately, as I've seen with other loved ones and acquaintances, that extra time to think often comes with a prolonged period of agony. On a personal note, it is also not lost on me that risk for aggressive cancers or other serious diseases can have a genetic component. It remains my greatest hope that Alaska will offer its terminally ill residents the option to die with the assistance of medication. Please support the passage of HB 54.

Sincerely,

Laurinda Marcello  
Sitka, AK

*Please enter into the record my*  
**WRITTEN TESTIMONY**

Name: John Shows  
Representing: self  
Bill No./Subject: HB54  
Committee: HJUD  
Date of Hearing: 4/13/18 1pm

I am in support of HB54  
A close friend of mine recently  
was diagnosed with terminal  
cancer and took his own life  
violently. He should have had a  
better more humane option that  
preserved his dignity.

*John Shows*  
Homer, AK

## Testimony of Joel Hanson

Before House Judiciary Committee

HB54 Death with Dignity

Mr. Chairman, Members of the House Judiciary Committee, for the record my name is Joel Hanson, I'm 67 years old, I live in Sitka and I respectfully urge you to support the Death with Dignity legislation before you.

Like a lot of people in their late 60s, I have some personal knowledge and experience with end-of-life issues.

My father died almost 30 years ago from cancer. My mother, my sisters and I all spent time helping him through a prolonged and difficult period of deteriorating health at home, where he eventually died hooked up to a morphine pump which he needed in order to keep his pain in check during his last few months.

Then, 15 years ago, my mother died, also of cancer, also in pain, and also at home with her children at her bedside.

When I heard about this legislation recently, I went online and listened to a recording of the hearing it received before the House Health and Social Services Committee on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January.

To those who supported the bill at that hearing, and to those who support it here today, I say thank you for your efforts. End of life issues are not easy to deal with. But deal with them we must...both personally and as a society.

To those who opposed this legislation in January, and to those who have determined to oppose it today, I say this: It is the epitome of cruelty for a person to force months of physical agony on another person simply because of a religious

or ethical belief in the “sanctity of life.” If this is your position, as it was for the only two objectors at the January hearing, understand that what you advocate is, in effect, condemning someone else to suffer perhaps many months of pain in order to avoid being subject yourself to nothing more than a measure of doctrinal or ethical distress. Call it whatever you want, but don’t call your position a commitment of your devotion to a compassionate god or higher moral sense? No! Call it what it is: a commitment to prolonging human anguish.

I have my own confession: If this legislation fails, it won’t matter much to me personally because in a few years if I find myself near my own life’s end in the same kind of shape my parents were before their deaths (and there’s a reasonable chance I will), I have a backup plan. It won’t be the most dignified solution, but absent a legally sanctioned pharmaceutical alternative, it will be better than suffering...and possibly causing those around me to suffer. I know what that’s like.

I hope that those of you who are still undecided on Death with Dignity will give some thought to the fact that more than a few elderly and seriously unwell Alaskans choose to take their own lives every year with a bullet to the head. You could help reduce the frequency of such incidents by supporting HB54.

Thank you.

**House Judiciary Committee Testimony – Friday, April 13, 2018 –  
Gruenberg 120**

Hello, my name is Amy Lujan and I am a resident of Juneau. Thank you for hearing this bill. I'm here today to testify in favor of HB54, *representing only myself today*

I've been a part of the death process for four grandparents and my father. I don't believe that in any of those five cases, a medically assisted end-of-life option would have been chosen, if available. However, these situations made me think deeply about the choice or lack of choice we have, or should have, at the end of life.

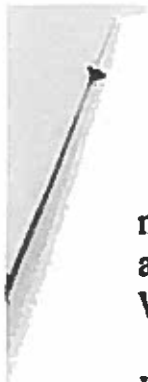
Having lived in rural Alaska for fifteen years prior to moving to Juneau, I've seen suicide and the aftermath close at hand. Clearly we must do everything possible to prevent the suicide of a mentally unstable person and to promote healing and future happiness for these individuals. This is VERY different from the end-of-life situation contemplated in this bill.

As I mentioned, I don't believe my grandparents or my father would have chosen a medically assisted end-of-life option. However, through the dying process I could see how our medical system pushes patients and families to always take the next treatment, even when quality of life plummets and hope is extremely remote.

One of the strongest Alaskan values is independence. Therefore, I believe Alaskans should be allowed to make their own choices in their final days, in consultation with their loved ones and their medical providers. It is a choice that I would very much like have available to me.

I respect the opinion of medical providers such as Dr. Jeanne Anderson, who has written movingly on this subject, including in today's Anchorage Daily News. Generally speaking, doctors are trained to push for a solution that could possibly lead to a recovery of health. We rely on their expertise. I myself would not be sitting here today were it not for life-saving surgery when I was 25 years old. Other medical procedures since then have greatly improved my quality of life.

I am glad that this bill allows Dr. Anderson and others to "opt out" of participating in the end of life option. However, we as individual humans



must have the ability to override the opinions of others, in cases where we alone can make the judgment **for ourselves** of what we're willing to endure. We must be allowed to choose death with dignity.

In two cases, I have observed friends deal with the horrific ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease that afflicted their family members. Dr. Stephen Hawking benefitted from a miracle and lived a productive life with this disease. These individuals were not so lucky. It was heart wrenching to watch their families go through this terrible dying process. I believe they might have chosen a medically assisted end-of-life option, if available. Or, at least the choice might have been a comfort to these patients and their families.

It is horrific to think about the unnecessary pain that family members may have had, if in fact they did bring about the death of their loved one by some other means. This could of course be labeled illegal and lead to serious consequences on many levels.

Please support this bill to spare both patients and families unnecessary pain. The medically assisted end-of-life process has worked in many other states and other countries, and we can learn from their experience to allow Alaskans the independence to make choices they deserve to have.

Thank you.



To: House Judiciary Committee

From: Susan Schrader

Date: April 13, 2018

RE: Support for: HB 54 "An Act providing an end-of-life option for terminally ill individuals; and providing for an effective date"

Good afternoon, Committee Members. My name is Susan Schrader; I have lived in Juneau for nearly 30 years. I am here to offer my full support for this legislation and to encourage you to do so also.

I'm not sure what to say that would help change the minds of those of you who oppose giving Alaskans additional end-of-life options. I can only suspect that you have not yet been in the very difficult position of watching a beloved family member or friend suffer from a terminal illness. But I have. Three of my husband's and my parents died from cancer, and I can tell you from personal experience that hospice and palliative care did NOT gain them the peace and freedom from suffering they wanted in their long final days.

Alaskans treasure our independence, our freedom, and our privacy. I feel incredibly fortunate to have been born in a country where I could make my own choices about how I live my life....and I think it is our right to be able to make choices about how to end our lives.

In my opinion, Rep. Drummond's Sponsor Statement provides an excellent rationale for, and analysis of, this bill. I certainly hope you have read her statement and the bill carefully and thoughtfully, and will recommend a "Do Pass" from this committee.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

Dear Rep. Drummond,

I hope it is not too late for me to state my support for HB 84. I believe it was 2016 when I and a friend spoke telephonically from the Fairbanks LIO office in favor of passing legislation that would give dying individuals a choice to shorten hours, days even weeks of extended suffering. Many states in the United States as well as our close neighbor Canada have such laws. The bill under discussion at that time, as other existing laws, was very careful to make sure that the choices/options offered would not be abused.

As we know, medical science has progressed in many ways including the ability to maintain an individual life far beyond what could have been expected. While this can be a godsend to the patient and family in some cases it simply prolongs the suffering.

I am a hospice volunteer and as such was able to attend a presentation on Washington's law by a Physician from a children's hospital in Seattle. He explained how the process works in Washington state. First, you were required to be a citizen of the state before you were eligible to make a decision under their law, which seems a reasonable requirement. He discussed the statistics about who opted to end their life when death was inevitable. It was a surprisingly low number including many who originally were in favor of that option but later changed their mind.

We humans always like to believe we have control over our lives plus we have choices about the important decisions in our lives. Therefore, how much more important the choice of the end of your life is.

I am confident that our Alaska Legislature can pass a law that will give Alaskan citizens choice and dignity at the end of our lives.

Monte L. Jordan (Ms)  
P.O. Box 73941  
Fairbanks, AK 99707

[mjresourceak@gmail.com](mailto:mjresourceak@gmail.com)

Good afternoon, members of the committee, my name is Barbara McDaniel and I am here to testify on my own behalf in support of House Bill 54.

In my fortunately healthy life, I've always accepted that my death is inevitable. When I was young I would say, "I hope I die in my sleep." But later I discovered I don't need to simply hope I die comfortably. I realized I can at least make legal, mitigating plans that increase the odds that I won't die a drawn-out, sick, painful, and very expensive death, one that would traumatize my children.

In consultation with my children, all adults, I modeled taking responsibility for one's life (and that includes death) and created my Advanced Directives when I was 52. When I was 57, on my request, my doctor helped me obtain my Certificate of Comfort One Status, the do-not-resuscitate order for emergency or medical personnel. My local hospital has copies of the documents on file. I wear a bracelet. Basic information is in my wallet and glove box. And the best part is my children know what is coming, they know the plan, and they know what to do. We are prepared.

Now I am covered legally in instances of sudden, life-threatening accidents, violence, or physical failures. But I still do not possess the last piece of control I need to ensure my access to careful, professional assistance in ending my life in the event of terminal illness. HB 54 is the missing piece I need to complete my personal plan to increase my likelihood of experiencing a comfortable, orderly, dignified, death. Please pass HB54.

I whole-heartedly thank Rep. Drummond for bringing forward this compassionate bill for personal rights and responsibility. And I thank you all very much for hearing my testimony today.

Barbara McDaniel  
1040 N Craig Stadler Loop  
Wasilla, AK 99623  
907-355-3204

---

My name is Barbara E. Hunt who is in support of HB 54 and was responsible in getting the Girdwood Board of Supervisors to pass a resolution in favor of the bill. I moved to Girdwood in February 2017 after losing my husband of 37 years to Renal Cancer. He fought a courageous losing battle with various treatments until death was imminent. I was his sole caregiver until he was placed under Hospice care in November 2016. At that time, our son joined me at his father's bedside. On the first night of the Hospice nurses' 24 hour care, he asked for medication to peacefully end his life. However, it was made known to him that the support was not possible. He didn't want us to live with the imagery of his final deterioration and unbearable discomfort. He chose starvation as a means to hasten the process. He always sought quality of life, but that was not to be at his end. My hope is to prevent another person from having to spend their last days with their loved ones worrying unnecessarily about what kind of death they will have and how to mentally, emotionally and physically support them. I encourage the Judiciary Committee to continue to allow HB 54 to move through the Legislative process. Girdwood has shown their support to the State on this bill by passing a local resolution and hopefully this will pave the way to make Alaska the 8th state in the country to have options at the end of life.

Barbara E. Hunt  
Compassion and Choice Team Leader Girdwood

---

Dear Rep Drummond

I very much support HB 54. I have facilitated a class dealing w end of life issues and those taking this class were sympathetic for legislation such as HB 54. A similar law became legal in Canada 2 yrs ago and several US states have laws in place for those near the end of life. Folks have not abused these options already in place.

I would hate to force my loved ones to suffer needlessly. Aid in dying is not a choice of death over life. It is an option that allows those who are dying the option of a controlled and peaceful ending. Thanks for introducing this bill.

--

Ron Johnson  
Professor Emeritus  
Mechanical and Environmental Engineering  
Univ of Alaska Fairbanks

2113 Jack St  
Fairbanks, AK 99709

---

Hi, As a man about to turn 73 years old, this issue is becoming more personal.

I strongly believe that citizens should have as much control and choice as possible over their own lives. I have prepared instructions to the local medical staff that I do not want heroic measures to prolong my "life" when recovery is no longer possible. I refuse food, hydration, IV medications, permitting only pain-killers.

I do not want any state laws to override my intentions for my own care.

Best wishes,

Sam Bunge  
Petersburg, Alaska

---

Dear Representative Drummond,

For a person as old as I am, (71), having cancer is a bummer but not a disaster. Though I was not born in Haines, it is here where I want to die - here where I have lived for more than 40 years. This is where I am happy and healthy in many ways. If you have a condition that is a conscious prelude to death, while

conscious many people want to plan that experience. HB54 allows patients to work with doctors to make a plan so that death is not a surprise nor is it full of physical pain. HB54 also helps patients stay in Alaska instead of moving, as many have, in order to have access to decision making strategies in Washington and Oregon. Please help us by voting in favor of HB 54.

Sincerely,

Stephanie K. Scott  
Box 431  
Haines, Alaska 99827  
907-766-2718

---

I am deeply in favor of Alaska becoming one more state that allows people to die the way they want to die. When we talk about dying with dignity we're not talking about our valuable, young, vibrant teenagers in villages or other places in Alaska, we're not talking about depression or mental illness. We're talking about people who are actively dying and have no hope of recovery. We're talking about giving people more options than just starving to death in a hospital or a hospice, or hoarding medication to kill themselves.

The world is not black and white, you can still love life and fight for life while understanding that people have a right to choose to not be in horrible agonizing pain, or to not be sitting slowly wasting away for while they wait for death. Why do we hate those who do not fear death at the end? do we not praise soldiers for this same trait? I grew up hearing people talk of those who had died "at peace" in reverent tones. We're not affording peace or dignity in prolonging the lives of those who wish to die. No one is forcing people to make this choice either. There are no death panels killing off our grandparents, no one is strapping down patients and killing them because of these dignity laws.

Please support HB 54.

Angie Fraker  
1650 Eastridge Drive 104  
Anchorage, AK 99501

---

Dear Representative Drummond,

I am in support of HB 54 because it gives patients and families time to plan and prepare for end of life. And it provides physicians and nurses and other care givers an opportunity to support the patient and their loved ones as they transition to end of life as a care team.

When my mother was diagnosed with ALS in 1999, there were no options that were at the time socially or legally acceptable. She was 70 years young, had lived independently and worked until her body no longer allowed her the freedom to work. My husband and children made the best of a most terrible circumstance. We cared for her until her death 15 months after she was diagnosed. There is no cure for ALS. Along with her care team, our family did our best to give our mother and grandmother all we could to make her last chapter comfortable and peaceful. Mom and I talked about assisted suicide at great length. For my mom, the end was inevitable. She was frustrated a death with dignity option was not available. The fight to stay alive with medications and tube feedings would have extended her life by weeks or months. This was not in her game plan. She wanted to die at home, not in a hospital. She had

worked in the medical field and knew about heroic measures to save a life that was destined to be short. She had a Comfort One bracelet. She was ready. If HB 54 had been enacted, she would most definitely have opted in. I wish she had the opportunity to plan her death with the dignity she had in life.

Like you, I will never know what it is like to die until it is my turn. The best I can hope for is that I will be kept comfortable and pain free in peaceful surroundings. Giving people an option with HB 54 will not impact the majority of the people in Alaska. Giving one person the option will make a difference not only to him or her, but also to the loved ones struggling with the transition. Once the decision to plan for a good death has been made, a subtle shift from struggling to live longer to acceptance of living well begins. Sharing of stories, and having memorable conversations can begin.

My hope for people with a terminal illness is for each of them to have the option of a good death. At the right time. One that is peaceful, one that allows a transition that is at best difficult, but fully accepted by the patient. And hopefully accepted by the family and loved ones that take the longer journey after a death, the journey that brings grief, conversations, stories and ultimately acceptance of a life well lived and an appreciation of a death with dignity. A good death is the ultimate gift to a life well lived. Please approve HB 54.

Elizabeth Bacom

PO Box 683

Petersburg, AK 99833

---

# ANCHORAGE LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

Email: Anchorage.LIO@akleg.gov 907-269-0111/ phone, 907-269-0229/fax

## WRITTEN TESTIMONY

NAME: Joni Bruner

REPRESENTING: Self

BILL#/ SUBJECT: HB 54  
COMMITTEE &

HEARING DATE: 4/13/18

I Agree with Voluntary Termination of Life.  
Concern: DEATH CERTIFICATE - REASON -  
will there be problem with Life insurance  
using refusing payment as a result? NOT  
written in the Bill clearly as to what  
the certificate will say.

Joni Bruner

Please Keep / PASS THIS BILL!  
AND THANK YOU!

