

Cynthia Kimbley  
Anchorage  
907/240-9961

I am here in support of House Bill 99 on behalf of myself and my father who is ~~unable attend~~.

My father, age 90, has been an Alaska resident since 1948. He was until December 2014, very independent – living in his own home, driving, shopping, visiting friends, and taking care of all his own needs. Last fall he was diagnosed with a terminal illness and now confined to a wheel chair and is now receiving hospice care.

~~He is now on anxiety medication and morphine for what he calls "discomfort" as his body starts to shut down.~~

*He is fully competent & able to make decisions for himself*  
This is not the **quality** of life that he had experience all his life.

Both my parents have had health care directives for many years. That choice is allowed by law.

My father has several times expressed to family members that he wished that Alaska had a Death with Dignity law.

I took the time to go online to Oregon's website. I wanted to understand and make certain that the ability to choose was **only** the patients. Which it is. In Oregon the patient must be able to administer the ~~pill~~ *medication* themselves.

As a family, I don't think that we are ever ready to experience a loved one's passing. But who are we to decide that they have to remain alive for our emotional wellbeing.

I now watch a man, whom I love, unable to continue to live life as he had experienced in the past. I see a man that knows how he must spend the rest of his life because he currently has no ability to choose.

My father recently told me that he would like to go to sleep & “be gone”. He said he hoped that I wished the same thing for him.

I told him that it might be selfish, but we would never be ready.

He said “YES that was selfish”.

I would support my father’s choice for death with dignity.

Would it be difficult? Of course it would.

But harder still is to know that he aware that he is dying; watch the changes in his body as he wastes away; seeing how very tired and how sad he is because he is frustrated that the process of dying is taking so long.

What makes it bearable if he chose Death With Dignity?

It would be knowing that he made the choice that **he** wanted; *he is at peace with dying* knowing that this was both the quantity & most importantly the quality of life that he chose.

Death with Dignity is specific to only terminal patients and their ability to choose quality & quantity of life.

I am respectful of your right to choose for yourself.

But please don’t deny those who DO want the ability to choose for themselves.

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