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To: Rep. Knute Buehler, Oregon State Legislature  
From: Terry Kalley, Freedom of Access to Medicines  
Re: Oregon HB 2300 – “Right-to-Try”  
Date: March 1, 2015

Dear Rep. Knute Buehler,

I had the pleasure of working with both the Michigan Senate and House to pass Right-To-Try in our State last year. From Day 1 I stressed that this legislation was a non-partisan issue because terminal illnesses strike all Americans regardless of race, gender, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, income level or age. While I understand that Republicans and Democrats debate issues very passionately based on deeply held beliefs, terminal illnesses do not distinguish between Democrats and Republicans. When a terminal illness strikes, it totally transcends political affiliations.

The issue is a simple one for me. My wife, Arlene, has fought Stage IV breast cancer for over ten years. This incurable disease that takes over 40,000 of our dearest each year. Her survival depends on access to the latest drugs as soon as possible. Due to her longevity, she is running out of drugs. Cancer drugs take on average about 13 years to progress through the FDA clinical trial process, including designing the trials. Right-to-Try grants terminally ill patients access to medications after Phase I of a trial and thereby can cut the waiting time for new drugs by five years or more. Terminally ill patients simply do not have five years to wait, so this earlier access can make the difference between life and death.

My wife also feels strongly that she ought to have the right to choose with her doctor what treatment will work best for her. She does not believe that some government official that does not know her medical history or her current pathology can make that decision for her. This is especially true in the case of evaluating the risks of her medical treatment. The greatest risk to most patients is to be denied access to the medical treatments that they need. In many circumstances, failure to obtain the medications needed condemns a patient to essentially a 100% certainty of death.

The medical sciences are in the midst of a technological revolution and it is imperative that our patients have access to the newest treatments that can promote the wellbeing of the majority of society. I humbly implore you to enact this legislation without delay.

Sincerely yours,

*Terrence D. Kalley*

Terry Kalley,  
Founder, Freedom of Access to Medicines