

Submitter: Natalie Hval
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure: SB891

It is morally imperative that we, as ethical, compassionate members of society, support Death with Dignity laws generally and Senate Bill 891 specifically during this legislative session.

Death with Dignity mandates have worked well for over 20 years here in the state of Oregon. With data and experience, we now have an opportunity to make informed revisions to the law. SB 891 builds in flexibility for complex healthcare circumstances while leaving intact policies designed to protect the public.

Medical aid in dying (MAID) in Oregon has afforded terminally ill individuals the freedom to die a planned death while conscious and coherent enough to treasure the presence of loved ones. It has given them a degree of control in an otherwise uncontrollable situation and allowed a modicum of dignity during the dying process.

There are situations, however, which make accessing MAID unnecessarily difficult for those actively dying. Patients may be unable to find medical caregivers in their area who *believe* in their right to utilize MAID procedures. Inflexible timelines may end up disqualifying those who choose MAID but then suffer cognitive decline during the waiting period and are no longer deemed "capable" to utilize that end of life care. Some patients are so fragile when requesting MAID that they may die of their underlying disease while awaiting the procedural option. (Perhaps unpredictably unconscious, with relative strangers, or in an institutional setting they had hoped to avoid.)

These are terminally ill individuals who have requested the option to plan their end of life experience. We can put up barriers to access or we can find ways to best support their right to choose.

For me, the choice is clear: SB 891 speaks to issues of autonomy and quality of life. These are end of life options I would want for myself and my loved ones. Please vote in support SB 891.