

I write in total support of the Minnesota End-of-Life Act, HF 1930.

I speak for myself, my family, for thousands of families like ours, and especially for my two terminally ill sisters who fervently ask you to help them obtain the right to die with dignity.

I present you three points:

Many chronic/terminally ill patients wish to end their suffering.

Perhaps you personally have had the terrific good luck not to have had a seriously chronically ill family member who is in almost constant pain? Or one sedated or full of painkillers most of the time? You are most fortunate indeed.

But if you have or had one, you may have had the wrenching misfortune of having that ill relative ask you if you could help end her suffering, end her life?

Thousands of family members have been or currently are in this situation, including mine, caring for two terminally ill sisters who wish to be able to choose to die.

Not just for their sakes.

Let's not fool ourselves. Many of us may or will be in this situation ourselves in the near or distant future, given medical advances that allow physicians to keep us alive longer, maybe not always for the better. If that is your desire, fine, it is your perfect right to go on living for as long as machines can keep you alive. For myself, as for many other Minnesotans, "life at all costs is not living. It can mean enduring chronic pain, losing hope and yes, expending incredibly financial costs, bankrupting self, family, Medicaid, and our state. It's all too much—our whole family is stretching to the limit emotionally, not to mention financially.

We family members feel helpless, because we are. We've explored all the semi-legal and some illegal ways to help our sisters die, because they have asked us and we love them. None of the methods worked out, some due to the particular medical situations of my sisters, too complicated to go into

here. The banned methods out there were too iffy, too scary, or too hard to execute. Many would make criminals of us all too.

You know the saying walk a mile in someone's moccasins? In this context, the sentiment for caring and empathizing would be: spend a year in a terminally ill patient's hospital bed. confined to bed, spoon-fed, dressed and washed by others, and yes, the ultimate indignity, diapered.

MN didn't have to reinvent the wheel here.

The authors of this bill have learned from enlightened states that have gone before. MN can join the ten US states (and DC) that have had the good sense, compassion and the will to help their desperate constituents who are too sick to plead directly before all the committees and legislators, leaving us—their relatives and friends--(feeling) helpless and almost hopeless to petition on their behalf.

Our state is not alone. The work on medical assistance in dying or “death with dignity” bills--the details, specs limits and safeguards have all been done by the compassionate and progressive states and countries that have passed laws already. They have documented that the laws work providing options for the terminally ill. The states with such laws find no scenarios playing out of abuse or misuse.. These bills have not “promoted suicide,” they do not require any sick individual to take any action whatsoever. Instead, they grant permission to those who rationally, but desperately, seek relief where any relief has to this point has been banned.

The emotional costs to terminally ill patients is incalculable.

Families are also emotionally exhausted, not to mention financially. In our family, currently we continue to patch together the labors of family, friends and part-time home health aides to the tune of \$40,000 a year. One family recently documented the cost of more skilled health care aides needed 24-7 for a more advanced case of what my one of our sisters suffers, also \$40,000 but a month, not a year. Note that these costs do not include any of the staggering medical bill costs, just home health care.

I beg you to learn from states with already enacted laws and be moved by petitions like mine here in MN.

We Americans are so proud of upholding the rights of the individual. Let us show some respect for the dignity of the dying by letting the terminally ill not the state determine their own fate.

Please contact me with any further information or assistance I could provide.
Your constituent,

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