

Testimony in support of House Bill H7760, the Lila Manfield Sapinsley Compassionate Care Act (H7760)

FROM: Kristin Scharf, Warren, RI

ATTN: Chair of House Judiciary Committee

I am a strong supporter of medical aid in dying, and therefore support passing H7760. I gave verbal testimony when this bill came up two years ago but am unable to attend on April 30.

My father died a slow, agonizing death of Parkinson's and Lewy body dementia 12 yrs ago, and I have been a strong supporter of **Compassion & Choices** since then. It is hard to believe that Oregon passed a medical aid in dying bill 27 years ago, and it has taken this long for 14 other states to pass similar legislation. On a positive note, this issue is getting more and more attention and 6 of those states passed legislation in the last two years. All of these states have strong measures to prevent abuse or incorrect use of medical aid in dying, and I have not seen any evidence that abuse has happened. There is a long record of success with the use of medical aid in dying in the United States, and an even longer record in other countries.

We as a society have **compassion** for our pets, helping them to die peacefully, and yet don't give human beings the same **compassion**. In the US we spend billions on sending terminal patients to the ER, where they are put through painful lifesaving measures that make them suffer further. We have the technology to give consenting adults the option to choose to die peacefully, rather than in agony, when they have a terminal diagnosis with 6 months or less to live. And we would reduce health care costs in the US by doing this. But we make it illegal, which I find very hard to understand. I never want to watch anyone else in my family die the way my father did, and I certainly don't want to die that way myself. Currently VT and ME have medical aid in dying laws, so I can still live in a New England state and have access to this compassionate option. MA is also getting very close to passing legislation, but I would prefer to stay in RI. I moved here 5 years ago and love everything about living in RI, but I would definitely move if necessary.

I am hopeful that RI will finally pass legislation this year, rather than sending it back to committee again. There have been 27 years of review in many states in the US, and there is ample evidence that this would be good legislation. Please pass it NOW and help the people who need it this year.