



Representative Harriet Drummond
Sponsor Statement

House Bill 54 "Voluntary Termination of Life"

House Bill 54 allows terminally ill patients to ease their suffering and hasten an inevitable and certain death. This bill preserves dignity and a person's right to live, and die, on their own terms according to their own desires and beliefs.

Oregon enacted the first "death with dignity" law in 1994 through a citizens approved ballot initiative. The Supreme Court upheld the law in 2006. Washington followed with another ballot vote in 2008. Vermont passed the first death with dignity law passed by a state legislature in 2013 and Colorado, California, and Washington DC all legalized similar legislation 2016. Similar bills have now sprung up in twenty-five other states.

Death is a natural part of life. Providing dignity, control and peace of mind during a patient's final days with family and loved ones places a much greater focus on a person's life than on the often painful and agonizing process of dying.

This bill specifically requires the request process to stop immediately if there is any evidence of coercion. The laws further require the two physicians who work regularly and closely with terminally ill patients to be involved throughout the request process. These two qualified and independent diagnoses ensure against coercion.

This bill allows patients to have important end-of-life discussions with the doctors they already know and trust. Without this discussion, well-meaning doctors are faced with prescribing painful procedures even when the patient does not want them and there is little or no hope for success. People in these conditions have already lost their health and often much, much more. This bill at least lets them control the last and most important decision they have left.