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Aid in dying gives peace to families



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My mother died of terminal breast cancer that spread throughout her body. Her prolonged dying was agonizing and excruciating for her and our family.

Although this happened over 50 years ago, the painful memory of her suffering still lingers. Our family is not alone in facing these physically and emotionally painful deaths.

This difficult, but shared, life experience explains why there is such strong support among Californians of every walk of life for expanded medical aid-in-dying options for terminally ill people.

All Californians should have the freedom to choose the end of life options that are right for them. We should be able to make this private and personal decision – in consultation with our doctors, our family and our faith – free from government interference. Safeguards in the bill before the Legislature are so strong that the California Medical Association no longer opposes it.

Sixty-nine percent of California voters, including 70 percent of Latinos and 60 percent of Catholics, support legislation that would let terminally ill, mentally competent adults request a doctor's prescription for life-ending medication if their suffering becomes intolerable.

After carefully considering the [End of Life Option Act](#), the state Senate approved it. The Assembly now has the opportunity to pass a [strengthened version of the bill](#), which includes the strongest patient protections of any law of its kind in the country.

“Medical aid-in-dying” has been authorized in four states, including Oregon, where it has been available and working as intended for 17 years. There has not

been a single reported incident of abuse. Why should terminally ill Californians be denied this option and the peace of mind it affords at the end of their lives?

For those caring legislators who could never imagine considering this option for themselves if they were terminally ill – because it may conflict with their values and beliefs – this vote must be especially tough.

My lifelong work as an advocate for social justice has taught me that these difficult moments require our utmost compassion, the wisdom to imagine walking in another person's shoes and the ability to respect the wishes of others. Those of us who have cared for a loved one and witnessed a lengthy and painful dying process are urging legislators to act now.

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