

Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services LD
1313 “An Act To Enact the Maine Death with Dignity Act”

April 10th, 2019

Senator Gratwick, Representative Hymanson, and members of the Joint
Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 1313 “An Act To Enact
the Maine Death with Dignity Act”

My name is Julia Fitz-Randolph and I live in Pemaquid. I am here today on behalf
of the Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network (MUUSAN) as a person of
faith guided by our shared belief that human life has inherent dignity, which may be
compromised when life is extended beyond the will or ability of a person to sustain that
dignity. We believe that it is every person's inviolable right to determine in advance the
course of action to be taken in the event that there is no reasonable expectation of
recovery from extreme physical or mental disability.

These above words are shared verbatim from The Right to Die With Dignity
General Resolution adopted by the Unitarian Universalist Association in 1988. Yes,
1988. Unitarian Universalists were the first religious body to pass a resolution
supporting safe-guarded laws that allow competent, terminally ill adults to make
decisions in accordance with their own self-determination, and to access such laws if
they choose. This resolution further resolved to inform and petition legislators to
support legislation that will create legal protection for the right to die with dignity, in
accordance with one's own choice.

The Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network links all Maine UU
churches together to advocate for a more just society. Formed six years ago, MUUSAN

is an all volunteer organization that reviews the annual Maine Legislative Agenda to identify bills and resolutions to support or oppose. We see LD 1313 as being in harmony with Christian/spiritual values of faith, human resilience, mercy, compassion, and above all, understanding of the individual nature of a human death. This bill is about loving kindness and respect for hearing what a dying person needs to close out their life in a way that holds the most personal meaning from their perspective.

I'm sure all of you know or have lost a loved one, family or friend to a tortuous end of life journey. As my father lingered incapacitated in the final months of his life, he begged me to help him end his misery. I could not because there was no Death with Dignity Act to support him, his medical team, and his family. His last words to me when I couldn't help him were: "Judy, I am so disappointed in you."

From our hearts and the reasons articulated above, the Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network urges this committee to vote "Ought to Pass" for LD 1313. Thank you for your consideration.