

Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance of Washington, D.C.

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www.glaa.org

GLAA writes Jack Evans on Death with Dignity Act

From: Richard Rosendall

Date: Thursday, October 13, 2016 at 15:23

To: Councilmember Jack Evans

Subject: Death with Dignity Act

Dear Jack,

Thank you for your pledge to the Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance to vote for Bill 21-0038, the Death with Dignity Act of 2015, which has been sent to the full Council by the Committee on Health and Human Services.

We cannot improve upon your eloquent answer to our question on this bill in our 2016 [candidate questionnaire](#), in which you noted the pain of your wife Noel's suffering from terminal cancer years ago and added this: "I believe that individuals and families should have the right to make medical decisions for themselves, and if that includes the choice to end their life, the District should not interfere."

The Death with Dignity Act is modeled on an Oregon law. As described by *The Washington Post*, it "would allow patients with illnesses likely to result in death within six months to seek medication to end their lives. Two physicians would have to consent to dispensing the life- ending drugs after certifying the patient's terminal prognosis and mental competency."

The gay community's painful experience with AIDS gives us sensitivity to end-of-life issues. Contrary to opponents such as Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl, this carefully crafted measure is not based on a "eugenic philosophy" but on compassion and respect.

As Ward 8 Councilmember LaRuby May said during the markup, many of her constituents cannot afford to move to Oregon if they should face the awful circumstances that cause some terminally ill people to choose medically assisted dying. This bill's limitations, such as its requirement that the medication must be self-administered, mean that it will not be available to all who are suffering; but it will afford many people greater dignity and choice at the end of life. The Council can make further changes in this sensitive area of law in the future as warranted.

Here is a link to GLAA's testimony from July 2015:

<http://www.glaa.org/archive/2015/glaaondeathwithdignityact0710.pdf>

Thank you for your consideration.

Rick Rosendall

President

Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance