

60 REASONS TO SUPPORT NEW YORK'S MEDICAL AID IN DYING ACT

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Reason #15

Because giving me the option of medical aid in dying would free me to spend all my remaining energy just living, knowing that I would not end up in a dark hole of suffering.

The following was drafted by Fay in 2019. She died on July 20, 2020.

I was diagnosed with incurable T-cell lymphoma in 2014.

In 2015, I almost died when another illness struck. Thankfully my healthcare providers caught it and treated me, but the lymphoma returned in 2019. I'm living in Brooklyn with my daughter Monona so she can help care for me between medical treatments.

I'm very close to my family, my kids and granddaughter, and whatever time I can buy with them I'll try for: if it's a year, or two years, I'm perfectly willing to go through treatment to buy that time.

Right now, I'm going through six cycles of chemotherapy, with four weeks in between each. I'm also taking a lot of prescription drugs: anti-cancer, anti-nausea, prevention of pneumonia. You name it, I've got it. My days are divided between going to the hospital, taking drugs, and monitoring my red blood cells.

I very much want to live. I love my family, I really have a very good time living in my daughter's home. But if I get to the point where I'm in pain — where I'm worried about every little nodule that appears — I may have a different set of mind, depending on how long I can put up with it.

If I wanted to do something about getting a medical aid-in-dying prescription, I would have to go to New Jersey, establish my residence there, get a hospital to take me, and an oncologist to look after me. My God, I already have a pretty hard time just breathing.

To me, even if I had a medical aid-in-dying prescription, I would consider it as just a form of insurance, so I can ensure I die peacefully. I may or may not take it, depending upon if my suffering becomes unbearable at the end of my life.

Quality of life, to me, means to live the best you can, while you can, and then when you cannot do this anymore, I should have the legal right to say that's it. I support medical aid and dying because I think it will give so many terminal patients some sense of control when pain becomes unbearable.

I am putting up with all the pain of chemotherapy because I want to live. I am very much concentrating on what I want at this time of life. It's like, all the unnecessary things are stripped away. I'm concentrating on time with my family, savoring everything, and being connected with the people who are most important to me.

To join our mission, email **Amanda Cavanaugh** at acavanaugh@compassionandchoices.org.

