

# 2019 - 2020 Elections & Medical Aid in Dying

An Issue Worth Supporting



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Care and Choice at the End of Life

Compassion & Choices is the nation's oldest, largest and most active nonprofit working to improve care, expand options and empower everyone to chart their end-of-life journey.

# Introduction

This was an unprecedented election year, as COVID-19 took hold of our nation, shutting down normal legislative sessions coast to coast in early March so lawmakers could focus on the immediate health and economic needs of their constituents. The pandemic brought a deeper understanding of the fragility of our lives and the importance of ensuring all Americans have the full range of end-of-life care options, including medical aid in dying as an option for terminally ill adults to peacefully end unbearable suffering.

Since 1994, nine states and Washington, D.C., have authorized medical aid in dying. Extraordinary momentum during the last five years (six authorizations) continued into 2020 until the pandemic forced early legislative closures.

Over the course of the 2019 and 2020 legislative sessions, nearly 400 lawmakers from both sides of the aisle, in 24 legislatures in every region of the country, signed onto medical aid-in-dying bills as sponsors or co-sponsors.

What's been made clear from the data on two successive election cycles: There is little impact on primary and general reelection prospects for state legislative aid-in-dying bill sponsors. The reelection rate for 2018 was 92%; it increased to 95% in 2020.

Constituents across the nation are thanking their lawmakers for introducing and supporting legislation that promotes patient autonomy by authorizing the practice of medical aid in dying.

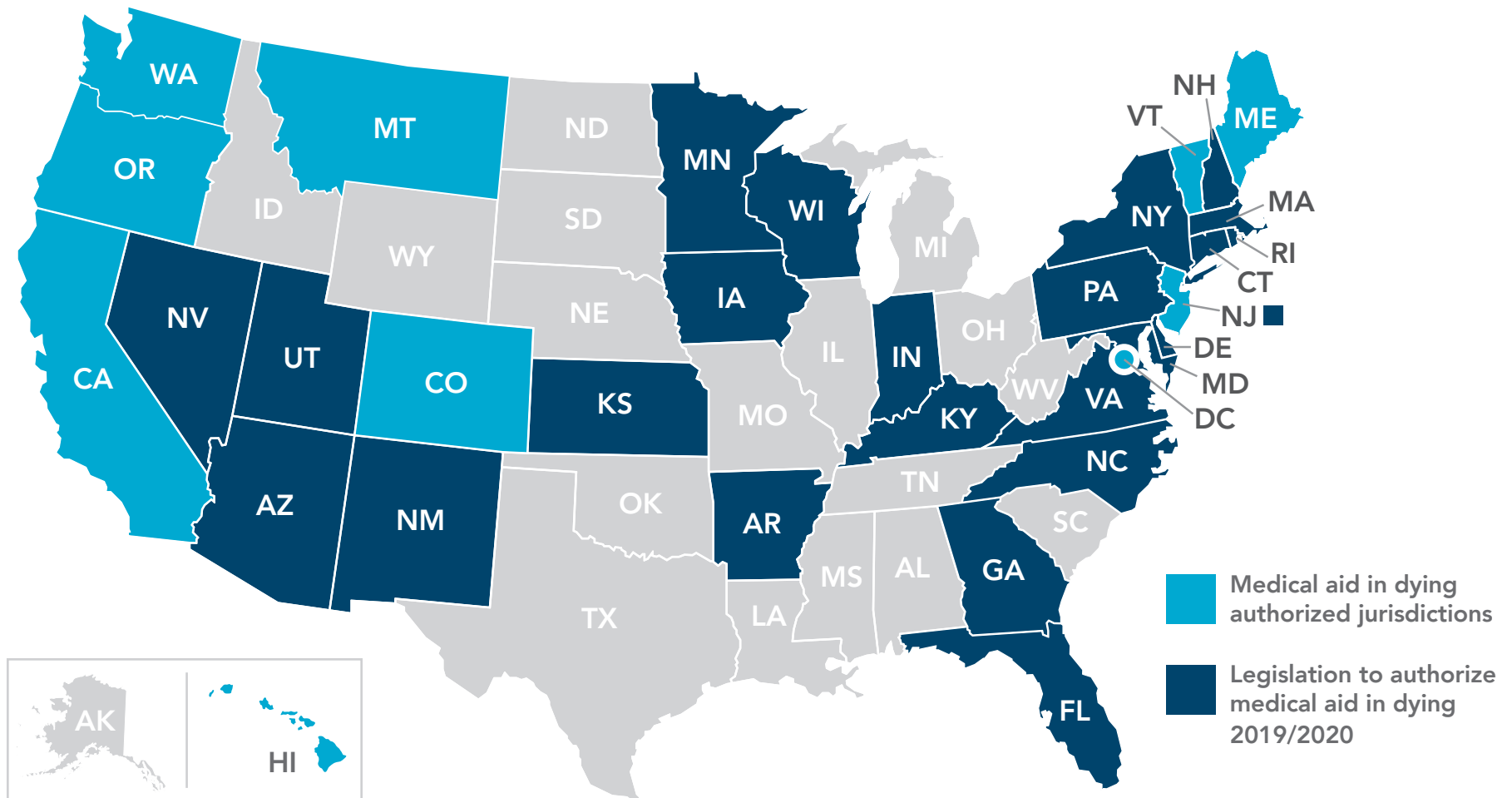
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- 2019 ● **NEW JERSEY / MAINE** by legislation
  - 2018 ● **HAWAI'I** by legislation
  - 2017 ● **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA** by legislation
  - 2016 ● **COLORADO** by ballot initiative
  - 2015 ● **CALIFORNIA** by legislation
  
  - 2013 ● **VERMONT** by legislation
  
  - 2009 ● **MONTANA** by court ruling
  - 2008 ● **WASHINGTON** by ballot initiative
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - 1994 ● **OREGON** by ballot initiative

# End-of-Life Options and the 2020 Elections

- » The end-of-life care options movement is growing strong. Nine states plus Washington, D.C., have authorized medical aid in dying via ballot initiative, legislation or state Supreme Court ruling. As a result, one in five Americans currently have access to this peaceful end-of-life care option.
- » Among the 41 states where medical aid in dying was not authorized by the end of 2020, 59% of them, 24 states, introduced legislation in either 2019 or 2020.



**1 in 5** Americans have access to this peaceful end-of-life care option.






# Bill Sponsors/Co-Sponsors Retained Their Seats

The 2020 election cycle represented the first opportunity for voters to express their approval or disapproval for legislators who carried medical aid-in-dying bills in 2019 and/or 2020:

- » 399 state lawmakers served as primary sponsors or co-sponsors of medical aid-in-dying bills introduced in 24 states.
- » Of the 261 sponsors and co-sponsors of medical aid-in-dying bills who sought reelection in 2020, 95% won, retaining their seats.



**399** state legislators served as primary sponsors and co-sponsors of medical aid-in-dying bills introduced in **24** states.

## Medical Aid-in-Dying Bill Sponsors/Co-Sponsors Earned High Reelection Rates

	OVERALL	SENATE	HOUSE
Reelection Year	290	81	209
Seeking Reelection	261	66	195
Retained Their Seats	248 (95%)	61	187
WON in Primary	252 (96%)	62	190
WON in General	248 (95%)	61	187

# Governors Embrace End-of-Life Care Options

State leaders coast to coast publicly support medical aid in dying.



## **Gov. Gavin Newsom** **CALIFORNIA**

"I support the End of Life Option Act, which offers sensible and humane public policy to an immensely personal decision, and I am reassured by the protections in this legislation for vulnerable patients and doctors alike."  
[News release, June 4, 2015]

## **Gov. Phil Murphy** **NEW JERSEY**

"Allowing terminally ill and dying residents the dignity to make end-of-life decisions according to their own consciences is the right thing to do. I look forward to signing this legislation into law." [Statement on Medical Aid in Dying for the Terminally Ill Act, March 25, 2019]

## **Gov. David Ige** **HAWAI'I**

"It is time for terminally ill, mentally competent Hawai'i residents who are suffering to make their own end-of-life choices with dignity, grace and peace. I am honored to sign HB 2739 into law, in hopes of giving these patients and their families choices and peace of mind." [Bill signing ceremony, *The Our Care, Our Choice Act*, April 5, 2018]

## **Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham** **NEW MEXICO**

"We should provide patients with humane end-of-life options, including medical aid in dying for terminally ill competent adults."  
[Albuquerque Journal candidate questionnaire]

## **Gov. J.B. Pritzker** **ILLINOIS**

"I am in favor of putting this very personal decision in the hands of patients to make in consultation with their doctors." [Disability Forum written questionnaire, January 18, 2018]

## **Gov. Peter Shumlin** **VERMONT**

"I feel incredibly fortunate, and I know my family does, that my dad was able to avoid awful suffering for about two or three weeks that otherwise would have taken away his dignity." [Farewell address, explaining his father's use of the state's aid-in-dying law, January 5, 2017]

## **Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo** **NEW YORK**

"I say pass the bill ... the older we get and the better medicine gets, the more we've seen people suffer for too, too long ... it's a situation we have to address, definitely." [WAMC/NPR radio interview, April 9, 2019]

## **Gov. Kate Brown** **OREGON**

"Oregonians spoke loud and clear when they passed the nation's first medical aid-in-dying law in 1994. It has contributed to Oregon's status as a leader in hospice and palliative care, and as governor, I work to uphold the will of our voters and would oppose efforts to repeal this law."  
[Email statement, December 4, 2018]



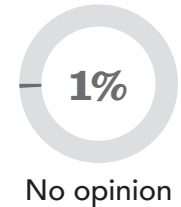
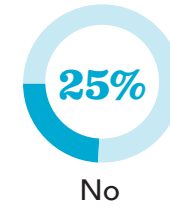
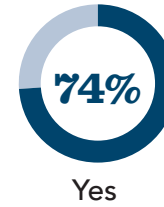
# Americans Overwhelmingly Support Medical Aid in Dying

The American public, across multiple demographics, consistently supports medical aid in dying by large majorities.

Just as importantly, state-by-state polling also indicates majority support that spans the demographic spectrum.

## Support Overall

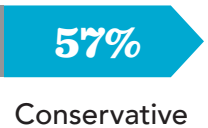
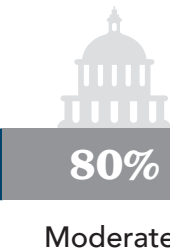
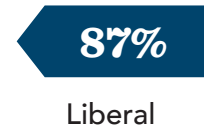
"When a person has a disease that cannot be cured ... doctors should be allowed by law to end the patient's life by some painless means if the patient and his or her family request it." (Gallup Poll, May 2020)



## Support Across Different Political Ideologies

"When a person has a disease that cannot be cured ... doctors should be allowed by law to end the patient's life by some painless means if the patient and his or her family request it." (Gallup Poll, May 2020)

AGREE



## Support Across Different Races and Ethnicities

"When a person has a disease that cannot be cured ... doctors should be allowed by law to end the patient's life by some painless means if the patient and his or her family request it." (Gallup Poll, May 2020)

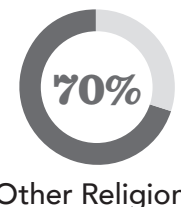
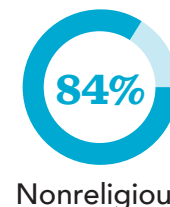
AGREE



## Support Across Multiple Religious Affiliations

"When a person is facing a terminal disease, it is morally acceptable to ask for a physician's aid in taking his or her own life." (Lifeway Research Survey, September–October 2016)

AGREE



# Election Results: Medical Aid-in-Dying Bill Sponsors

State	Year of Legislation	Bill Name	Senate			House / Assembly		
			Bill Number	Primary Sponsor	Election Result	Bill Number	Primary Sponsor	Election Result
Arizona	2019	Death with Dignity Act	N/A			HB 2512	Hernandez, Daniel	Won
	2020	Medical Aid in Dying Act	N/A			HB 2582	Blanc, Isela	Did not seek re-election
Connecticut	2019	An Act Concerning Aid in Dying for Terminally Ill Patients	N/A			HB 5420	Steinberg, Jonathan	Won
Delaware	2020	An Act to Amend Title 16 of the Delaware Code Relating to End of Life Options	HB140	Sokola, David	Won	HB140	Baumbach, Paul	Won
			N/A				Seigfried, Ray	Lost in Primary
Florida	2020	Death with Dignity Act	SB 1800	Rader, Kevin	Did not seek re-election	N/A		
Georgia	2020	Georgia Death with Dignity Act	SB291	Henson, Steve	Did not seek re-election	N/A		
Iowa	2020	An Act Creating the Iowa End-of-Life Options Act	SF2156	Taylor, Richard	Lost in General	H2302	Anderson, Marti	Won
							Bennett, Liz	Won
							Cohoon, Dennis	Won
							Gaines, Ruth	Won
							Mascher, Mary	Won
							Olson, Rick	Won
							Steckman, Sharon	Won
							Thede, Phyllis	Won
							Wolfe, Mary	Won
							Lensing, Vicki	Lost in Primary
			Kacena, Timothy	Did not seek re-election				
Indiana	2019	End of Life Options	SB 300	Randolph, Lonnie	Won	HB1020	Pierce, Matt	Won
Kentucky	2020	An Act Relating to Patient-Directed Care at the End of Life	N/A			HB 224	Marzian, Mary	Won
Maine	2019	An Act To Enact the Maine Death with Dignity Act	N/A			LD 1313	Hymanson, Patricia	Won
Massachusetts	2020	An Act relative to end of life options	HB4782	Brownsberger, William	Won	HB4782	Kafka, Louis	Did not seek re-election



Minnesota	2019	End-of-life option for terminally ill adults established	N/A	HF2152	Bierman, Robert	Won
				HF2152	Edelson, Heather	Won
				HF2152	Elkins, Steve	Won
				HF2152	Freiberg, Mike	Won
				HF2152	Gomez, Aisha	Won
				HF2152	Her, Kaohly	Won
				HF2152	Huot, John	Won
				HF2152	Lee, Fue	Won
				HF2152	Liebling, Tina	Won
				HF2152	Lippert, Todd	Won
				HF2152	Long, Jamie	Won
				HF2152	Morrison, Kelly	Won
				HF2152	Schultz, Jennifer	Won
				HF2152	Youakim, Cheryl	Won
				HF2152	Lesch, John	Lost in Primary
				HF2152	Loeffler, Diane	Deceased
				HF2152	Cantrell, Hunter	Did not seek re-election
				HF2152	Considine, Jack	Did not seek re-election
				HF2152	Mahoney, Tim	Did not seek re-election
	HF2152	Mann, Alice	Did not seek re-election			
Minnesota	2019	End-of-Life Options Act	SF2286	Dibble, Scott	Won	N/A
				Eaton, Chris A.	Won	
				Klein, Matt	Won	
				Marty, John	Won	
				Pappas, Sandy	Won	
			SF2487	Cwodzinski, Steve	Won	
				Laine, Carolyn	Did not seek re-election	
Nevada	2019	An Act Related to End of Life	SB 165	Brooks, Chris	Won	SB 165
				Spearman, Pat	Won	
				Parks, David R.	Did not seek re-election	
			N/A			
					Bilbray-Axelrod, Shannon	Won
					Carlton, Maggie	Won
					Yeager, Steve	Won
					Swank, Heidi	Did not seek re-election

New Hampshire	2020	New Hampshire Death with Dignity Act	N/A			HB 1659	Sandler, Catt	Won
New Mexico	2019	Enacting the Elizabeth Whitefield End-of-Life Options Act.	HB 90	Stefanics, Liz	Won	HB 90	Armstrong, Debbie	Won
New York	2019	Medical Aid in Dying Act	N/A			A 2694	Paulin, Amy	Won
	2019	Related to the Medical Aid in Dying Act	S 3947	Savino, Diane	Won	N/A		
North Carolina	2020	End of Life Option Act	N/A			HB 879	Fisher, Susan	Won
						HB 879	Hardistar, Jonathan	Won
						HB 879	Harrison, Pricey	Won
						HB 879	McGrady, Chuck	Did not seek re-election
Pennsylvania	2020	Compassionate Assisted Dignified Death	HB2033	Leach, Daylin	Lost in Primary	N/A		
Rhode Island	2019	The Lila Manfield Sapinsley Compassionate Care Act	SB 2265	Goldin, Gayle	Won	HB7369	Ajello, Edith	Won
Wisconsin	2020	Compassionate Choices Act	N/A			AB552	Hesselbein, Dianne	Won
							Milroy, Nick	Won
							Ohnstad, Tod	Won
							Pope, Sondra	Won
							Sargent, Melissa	Won
							Spreitzer, Mark	Won
							Subeck, Lisa	Won
							VruWonk, Don	Won
Taylor, Chris	Did not seek re-election							



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[CompassionAndChoices.org](https://CompassionAndChoices.org)

800 247 7421

[info@CompassionAndChoices.org](mailto:info@CompassionAndChoices.org)