

A RESOLUTION OF THE ARIZONA DEMOCRATIC PARTY RECOGNIZING THE PRACTICE OF AID IN DYING AS A DESIRABLE MEDICAL CHOICE FOR MANY TERMINALLY ILL, MENTALLY COMPETENT ADULTS.

WHEREAS, Arizona's Medical Treatment Decision Act affirms the specific patient right to self-determined care at the end of life; and

WHEREAS, advances in science and technology have created medical interventions that often prolong the dying process and increase suffering; and

WHEREAS, "medical aid in dying" describes a medical practice defined by established standards of care, which enables a mentally competent, terminally ill adult to obtain a prescription for medication, which the patient may choose to self-administer, in the face of unbearable suffering, to advance the time of an approaching death; and

WHEREAS, many find comfort and peace of mind in having access to options at the end of life, including aid in dying, even if they do not exercise those options; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2018 Gallup Poll, "A broad majority of Americans, 72%, continue to believe that doctors should be legally allowed, at a patient's and a family's request, to end a terminally ill patient's life using painless means"; and

WHEREAS, nine states, plus Washington D.C., affirmatively authorize the medical practice of aid in dying, enabling terminally ill mentally competent adult residents to receive a prescription for life-ending medication from their doctor; and

WHEREAS, the two decades of data following implementation of Oregon's law shows "no evidence of heightened risk for the elderly, women, the uninsured, people with low educational status, the poor, the physically disabled or chronically ill, minors, people with psychiatric illnesses including depression, or racial or ethnic minorities"; and

American Public Health Association policy that "supports allowing a mentally competent, terminally ill adult to obtain a prescription for medication that the person could self-administer to control the time, place, and manner of his or her impending death, where safeguards equivalent to those in the Oregon DDA are in place."

WHEREAS, the Arizona statute (A.R.S. § 13-1103) that prohibits aiding another to commit suicide should not encompass the rational judgment of a psychologically healthy, terminally ill individual facing end-of-life suffering, who asks his or her physician for the means to die in a humane and dignified manner.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE ARIZONA DEMOCRATIC PARTY

1. respects the diversity of perspectives on end of life decisions; and
2. supports equal protection within the diversity of perspectives on end of life decisions; and
3. urges the State Legislature to consider the enactment of legislation, using as a model Oregon's "Death with Dignity Act" under which terminally-ill adult Arizonans would be allowed to make a written request for the prescription of medication for the purpose of ending life in a humane and dignified manner.

Submitted on August 23rd by Pat Burns of LD3