

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

P.O. Box 75265, Washington, DC 20013

www.glaa.org

Tuesday, December 20, 2016

The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton
United States House of Representatives
2136 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Norton:

This is to urge your strong defense of the Death with Dignity Act of 2015 when it reaches the Hill for congressional review. It has been passed by the D.C. Council and signed by Mayor Bowser. We have already heard noises against it from some of the usual paternalistic voices.

We cannot improve upon the eloquent answer by Councilmember Jack Evans to our question on this bill in our 2016 candidate questionnaire in which he noted the pain of his wife Noel's suffering from terminal cancer years ago and added, "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 legislation 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 at 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 law will afford many people greater dignity and choice at the end of life.

You have stood with us many times during your twenty-six years of distinguished congressional service. Thank you for standing with us once again.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Rosendall
President
Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance