

In Their Own Words: Disability Rights Advocates on Medical Aid in Dying

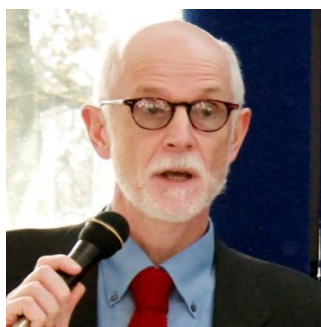
Across the country, disability rights advocates and organizations are sharing their support and experiences with expanding end-of-life options.



“

We cannot advocate for the rights of people living with disabilities to be able to make their own choices and healthcare decisions during life, only to deny those freedoms at the end of life. I believe much of the objection to medical aid in dying is driven by fear and misunderstanding. Dying is a part of living.”

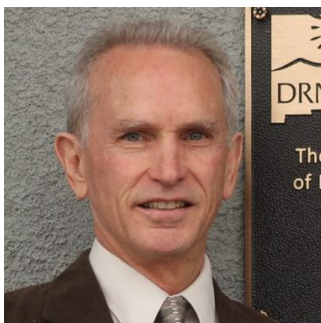
- **Gene Hughes (1959-2021)**, disability rights advocate, Utica, New York



“

In the years since passage of the Oregon Death with Dignity Act, DRO has received very few complaints from disabled Oregonians about the Act. All of the complaints we have received have focused on the concern that the Act might discriminate against persons with disabilities who would seek to make use of the Act but have disabilities that would prevent self-administration, thereby denying these persons the ability to use the Act. DRO has never to my knowledge received a complaint that a person with disabilities was coerced or being coerced to make use of the Act.

- **Bob Joondeph**, Executive Director, Disability Rights Oregon (DRO)



“

One of the, probably the most fundamental right that we support as an agency is the right to make your own decisions whenever you're competent to do so. And that leads us to stand here in support of this bill that I'm sure that many of you know that this is a highly controversial issue in our disability community, and our interest is particularly to make sure that people who might avail themselves of this really do have the capacity to do this.

- **James Jackson**, Executive Director, Disability Rights New Mexico, speaking before the New Mexico House Health & Human Services Committee, Jan. 2019