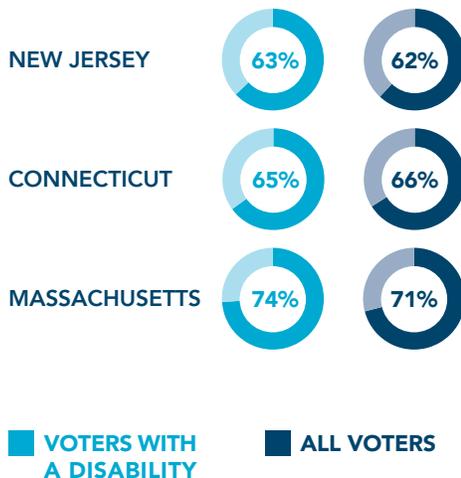


OPTIONS AT THE END OF LIFE & DISABILITY RIGHTS

Fundamental Shared Values



2/3 people living with a disability in NJ, CT, MA support medical aid in dying.¹



When people face life’s inevitable end, they deserve to have autonomy and a full range of medically appropriate options for care at the end of life. **One of those options is medical aid in dying.**

Support for medical aid in dying has grown rapidly, **72% of United States voters support this end-of-life care option.** This legislation has gained support from a broad base of voters, including those living with disabilities.

Years of Evidence, No abuse.

Nearly ten years after the first law authorizing medical aid in dying went into effect in Oregon:

“Rates of assisted dying ... showed no evidence of heightened risk for the elderly, women, the uninsured ... people with low educational status, the poor, the physically disabled or chronically ill ... people with psychiatric illnesses including depression, or racial or ethnic minorities, compared with background populations”²

Across the country, an increasing number of disability rights groups have taken a neutral or supportive position on medical aid in dying.



¹ Purple Insights, Voter & Disabled Community, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Massachusetts Survey (Feb. 2014), available from https://compassionandchoices.org/wp-content/uploads/Purple_Strategies_2014_NJ-CT-MA-Combined_02-2020.pdf

² Margaret P Battin, Agnes van der Heide, Linda Ganzini, Gerrit van der Wal, Bregje D Onwuteaka-Philipsen. Legal physician-assisted dying in Oregon and the Netherlands: evidence concerning the impact on patients in “vulnerable” groups. Journal of Medical Ethics, Volume 33, Issue 10, 2007, available at <http://jme.bmj.com/content/33/10/591>

AUTONOMY AND PEACE AT THE END OF LIFE

People with disabilities are speaking out in support for medical aid in dying.



“ I think those who have a terminal illness and are in great pain should have the right to choose to end their lives and those that help them should be free from prosecution.”

– **Stephen Hawking**, (1942 – 2018),
Renowned Cosmologist and theoretical physicist, who lived with Lou Gehrig’s disease



“ I’ve always felt that one should have a choice at the end of their lives. That has not changed because I have an ALS diagnosis. What’s more important for a dying person than to have control at the end of their life? ”

– **Sara Myers**, (1954 – 2016),
Terminally ill person with disabilities and an ALS patient,
New York City



“ Based on my 23 years of clinical practice, as a person with a disability, and as an individual whose family members have experienced very difficult end-of-life challenges, I am in strong support of authorizing medical aid in dying.”

– **Dr. Seth Morgan**,
Board-Certified fellow of the American Academy of Neurology,
leader for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, and chair of
Montgomery County’s Commission on People with Disabilities

The movement to expand end-of-life care options and the disability rights movement share important core values:

AUTONOMY

INDEPENDENCE

SELF-DETERMINATION

For more information, visit CompassionandChoices.org/disabilityrights