



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

Why Passing the Medical Aid in Dying Act Is a Top Priority in 2024

SENATOR BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL AND ASSEMBLYMEMBER AMY PAULIN January 16, 2024

| ISSUE: **MEDICAL AID IN DYING, HEALTHCARE**



Empire Report

One of our top priorities for 2024 is finally passing the **Medical Aid in Dying Act** to enable our terminally ill constituents to gently end unbearable suffering. The time is now after **nine years of legislative debate on this compassionate legislation**.

Medical aid in dying allows terminally ill adults – capable of making their own health care decisions – with a prognosis of six months or less to live, to request a prescription that they can self-ingest to die peacefully in their sleep. It is currently **authorized in 10 states and**

Washington, D.C., including nearby states New Jersey, Vermont and Maine.

This compassionate end-of-life care option allows people who are dying – and will soon die regardless of the quality of their medical care – to eliminate needless pain and suffering in their final days. Nobody wants to suffer and nobody wants to watch a loved one suffer. Passing this bill is all about providing compassion and love, while reducing unnecessary suffering.

We could go into great detail about the dozens of terminally ill advocates for this bill who have died – often suffering in agony – while begging the state legislature to pass the bill. We've talked to so many of these brave people. Some hoped we would pass the law in time to help them. We didn't. But we have the opportunity to help so many other terminally ill New Yorkers.

Notably, we've also met the children and other family members of people who availed themselves of medical aid-in-dying laws in other states. They've shared their stories – sad, bittersweet but also inspiring – about how their loved ones were able to have a sense of autonomy over their dying process and how that brought them peace. And the loving goodbyes they generously shared with us never fail to bring a tear to our eyes.

We could also go into great detail about all the safeguards built into this legislation, that are modeled after the safeguards in the 11 jurisdictions where medical aid in dying is currently authorized. And in the last quarter-century since Oregon implemented the first medical aid-in-dying law in the country in 1997, there has never been one credible case of one of these laws being misused. Not one.

But our colleagues know all this because we've been educating them and they've been hearing from their constituents. And our colleagues also know that states where medical aid

in dying is authorized show significantly better use of hospice and palliative care than states where it is not yet authorized.

They also know that **medical aid in dying is strongly supported** by a majority of New Yorkers – upstaters and downstaters, men and women, Democrats, Republicans and independent voters – in poll after poll. In the most recent **Siena College poll** of New York State voters in November 2023, support was nearly twice as high as opposition, 58-30%.

This is not a political or partisan issue. This is a human issue that gives people who will imminently die some measure of autonomy over how much pain and suffering they must endure before they die.

We have an opportunity to pass a law with strong public support that will demonstrate our compassion and love for our fellow New Yorkers who are dying. It's time. Let's pass the Medical Aid in Dying Act. Now.

Assemblymember Amy Paulin (D-Westchester) chairs the Assembly Health Committee. She has served in the New York State Assembly since 2001.

State Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal (D-Manhattan) chairs the Senate Judiciary Committee. He has served in the New York State Senate since 2013.

RELATED LEGISLATION

2023-S2445A

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- Introduced

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 - In Committee Senate
- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
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- ◦ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Relates to the medical aid in dying act

January 20, 2023

In Senate Committee **Health**

Sponsored by **Brad Hoylman-Sigal**

Do you support this bill?