

THE



# Dignity Report

*A publication of the Death with Dignity National Center*

WINTER 2018



## IN THIS ISSUE:

Living History | A Lifetime of Activism  
Toward the Tipping Point | Mapping Out 2018  
Having a Choice | Answering the Call(s)

# Table of Contents

Toward the Tipping Point.....3  
 Living History.....4-5  
 Death with Dignity in 2018..... 6-7  
 Donor Spotlight..... 8-9  
 Having Choice, Having Control.....10  
 Answering the Call(s).....11

*Cover photo: Former Oregon Governor Barbara Roberts with our Board President George Eighmey celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of implementation of the Oregon Death with Dignity Act, on November 8, 2017 in Portland.*

## GIVE DIGNITY

You can support our work in many ways:

- a one-time or recurring gift;
- a gift in honor or in memory of a loved one;
- a gift of stock or mutual funds;
- a legacy gift.

Please visit

**DeathwithDignity.org/Support**

to learn more and contribute.

*Thank you!*

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# Toward the Tipping Point



Though some state legislatures are not in session in 2018, we are gearing up for a very busy year. I am excited about the breadth and depth of our work in states across the country, and truly inspired by our grassroots partners who are leading the way.

### STATE BY STATE

For the first time in our history, we will be working in states in all stages of campaigning.

In Nevada and New York, we are building grassroots infrastructure and forging new partnerships. In Hawaii, we have been collaborating with legislators and local partners for the better part of two decades, and will work on an active bill that can become law in 2018.

With our friends in Maine, we will be co-leading a signature gathering effort. And in Washington, D.C., we will continue to defend the new assisted dying law from congressional attempts to repeal it.

Through our new State Leadership Incubator, we are providing resources and support to advocates

in eight states, including some who are just beginning their work. The centerfold map provides a big-picture view of our plans for 2018.

### INCREASED LEGITIMACY

Last November, the Vermont Medical Society dropped its opposition to Death with Dignity; in December, its Massachusetts counterpart followed suit to become the 10<sup>th</sup> American Medical Association chapter to do so. Physicians are increasingly becoming Death with Dignity proponents, as they recognize that medical aid in dying can ease suffering, instead of prolonging it.

### YOU LEAD THE WAY

Across the country, generations, and party lines, we see a profound shift in how our culture views assisted death. Where citizens like you lead, legislators will follow. State by state, day by day, we are approaching the tipping point.

Onward,

*Peg Sandeen*



# Living History: Celebrating 20 Years of Death with Dignity

In November 2017, advocates and pioneers of the assisted dying movement gathered in Portland to celebrate two decades of implementation of the Oregon Death with Dignity Act.

We were honored to have former Oregon Governor Barbara Roberts speak at our luncheon. One of the most accomplished and respected politicians in state history, Roberts has spent decades advocating for Death with Dignity nationwide. Her commitment to the cause is deeply personal. In this excerpt from her remarks, edited for length, Roberts shares the story of how her husband catalyzed the movement for assisted dying in Oregon and laid the groundwork for the nation's first Death with Dignity statute.

\*

*"During the 1980s my late husband, Senator Frank Roberts, was the leading public proponent of Death with Dignity, introducing a law three*



Gov. Barbara Roberts speaking at the anniversary luncheon

*times in the Oregon legislature. In the first two sessions he couldn't even get a hearing on his bill.*

*I had just begun my first months as Oregon's new governor when Frank reintroduced his death with dignity bill for the third time. For the first time we would learn who stood where on the legislation. Supporters—both citizens and legislators—now understood they had allies. It was a watershed moment. A coalition emerged including advocates from legal, medical, and political communities who would take the issue directly to the citizens of Oregon.*

*In 1992 Frank faced a new challenge. After surviving his first battle with*



Select members of the 1997 No on 51 campaign team. From left: Kristin Reese, Geoff Sugerman, OR Sen. Diane Rosenbaum, Karen Cooper, Eli D. Stutsman, JD, Carol Pratt, JD

*cancer, he received a second diagnosis. This time, it was terminal. He said no to the treatment and opted to maintain the most control possible for the time he had remaining. He knew the Death with Dignity Act would not reach the ballot in time for him. But as he grew more ill he still remained an advocate for the law.*

*grateful to those who picked up the torch. I have been honored to be an advocate for the law in Oregon and elsewhere. But our work is still before us. So let's celebrate this anniversary today and let's begin to work for the next 20 years."*

Read Gov. Roberts's full speech at [DeathwithDignity.org/Roberts](http://DeathwithDignity.org/Roberts).

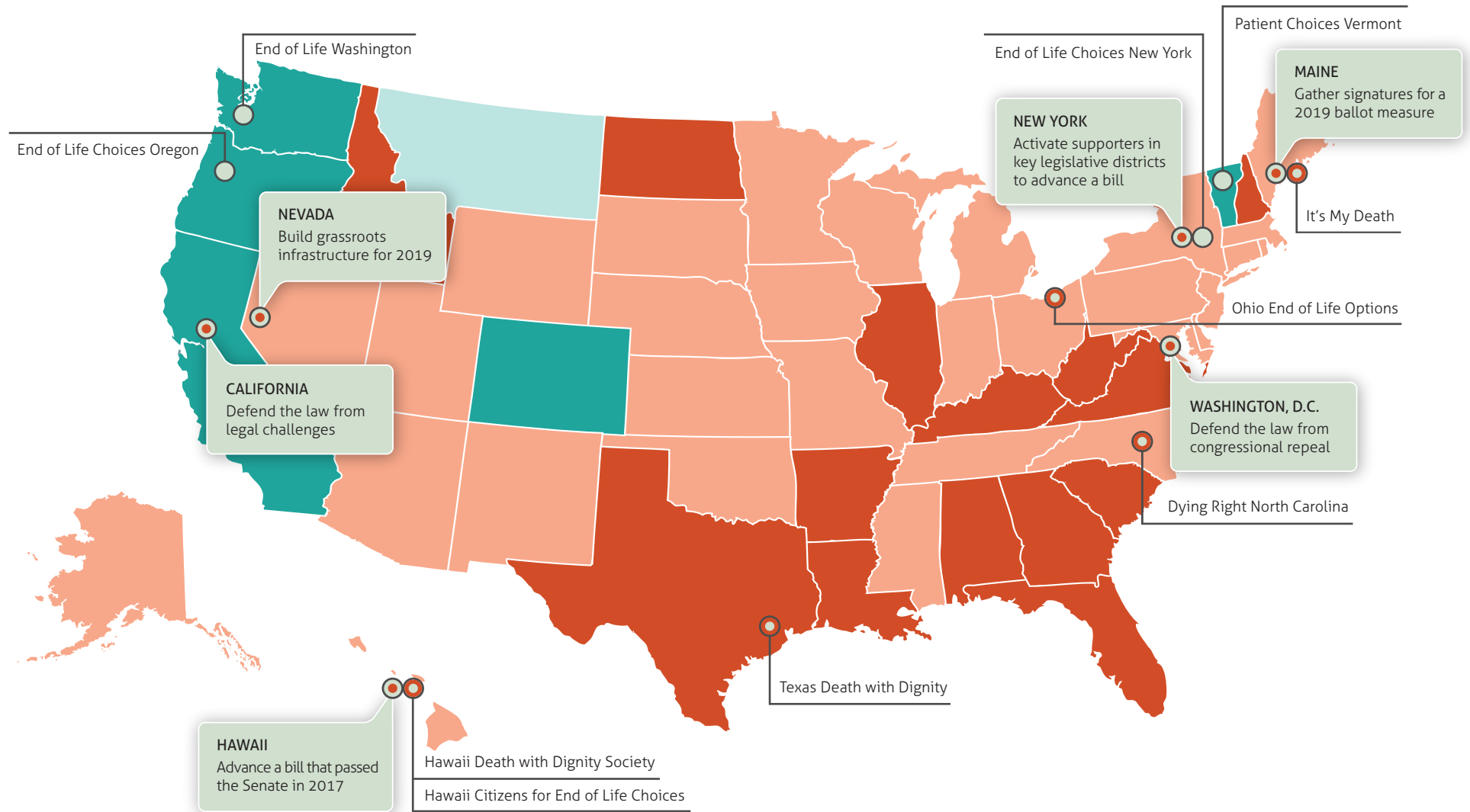


Death with Dignity National Center Executive Director Peg Sandeen (center) with Board members (from left) Carol Pratt, JD, George Eighmey, JD, Deborah Ziegler, and Eli D. Stutsman, JD

*Frank died on Halloween 1993, but not before he understood his hope for Oregon was moving forward. He always believed Oregon voters would support the law.*

*As we celebrate this 20<sup>th</sup> year of the Oregon Death with Dignity Act, I remain proud of Frank's leadership and*

# Death with Dignity in 2018: Policy Advocacy and Collaborations



## THE MOVEMENT IN 2017

- States with a Death with Dignity statute
- States where Death with Dignity is legal by court decision
- States that considered Death with Dignity in 2017
- States with no legislative activity in 2017

## POLICY ADVOCACY IN 2018

- Active campaign states

What we're doing in 2018

## COLLABORATIONS

- Participants in the Dignity50 State Leadership Incubator
- Patient service partners

\* To learn more about the Dignity50 State Leadership Incubator, please visit [DeathwithDignity.org/Dignity50-Incubator/](http://DeathwithDignity.org/Dignity50-Incubator/)





Joanne Busiel with her daughter Erika at the People's Climate March in Portland, Oregon, on April 29, 2017

## Donor Spotlight: Joanne Busiel's Lifetime of Activism

Two defining characteristics of Death with Dignity supporters are an inspiring level of engagement with the world and a steadfast commitment to social justice.

Joanne Busiel is no exception.

Joanne is an active volunteer, sharing her time among several organizations, including Moms

Demand Action for Gun Sense in America and environmental organizations like OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon. She has also volunteered as a court advocate, speaking up for children who have been neglected or abused. In her retirement, she is continuing a lifetime of activism. That includes advocating for Death with Dignity.

### ADVOCATING FOR END-OF-LIFE OPTIONS

"I have always tried to see what can be done to assist people in need," Joanne says.

Joanne has ample personal and professional experience with end-of-life issues. She worked for years at two long-term care facilities in Chicago, where she witnessed the struggles of seniors in their final stage of life.

Several of her friends and family suffered from prolonged and painful cancer and other fatal illnesses in states without the option of physician-assisted death. Joanne knew it was an option she personally wanted.

### RETIREMENT IN OREGON

When considering retirement locations, Joanne was clear that having the option of Death with Dignity was important, should she need it.

"I want to be able to control the end of my life if I am terminally ill," Joanne says.

In addition to her desire to live closer to her children, having access to Death with Dignity "was a key reason for moving, in 2015, to Portland from Oberlin, Ohio."



Joanne Busiel

### A VOLUNTEER, A SUSTAINER

Joanne's commitment to Death with Dignity led her to join our circle of sustainers, making quarterly gifts to support our work. Sustainers provide us with a consistent and reliable source of funding that enables us to invest in long-term campaigns and initiatives.

"I am so impressed with the accomplishments of the Death with Dignity National Center," Joanne says.

We are grateful to Joanne for contributing to our efforts to make Death with Dignity available to all Americans. 🙏

To learn more about becoming a sustaining donor, visit [DeathwithDignity.org/Sustainer](https://DeathwithDignity.org/Sustainer).

# Having a Choice, Having Control

By Bob Gellatly

When I received my cancer diagnosis several months ago, doctors told me I had two options: do nothing and live another one to six months, or undergo aggressive chemotherapy and radiation treatment, which may extend my life for three to six months.

## A CHOICE ABOUT TREATMENT

Having seen what my brother went through when he had pancreatic cancer, I decided to ride it out: no chemo, no radiation, just palliative care.

## SHARING MY STORY

I did some research and got involved with the Death with Dignity National Center and its partner organization, Ohio End of Life Options. I've also contacted Ohio state legislators with a simple message:

*Death with Dignity is about having the ability to determine when and where and how you're going to go. It's about having a choice, having control.*

## A MATTER OF ACCEPTANCE

I'm 69 years old and I've had a good, productive life. I worked at a good job for over 30 years; I have two children who grew up to be wonderful people and who respect my end-of-life decisions; and I have three wonderful grandchildren.

I wouldn't say I'm coping, that's not how I see it. I think it's really a matter of acceptance. I know what's going on. I know my options.

I accept the reality of my situation.

What I do not accept is not being able to determine how, when, and where I will die. ☞



Bob Gellatly, an advocate in Ohio

# Answering the Call(s): Elia Inglis joins Death with Dignity

Every day, we receive calls from patients, their loved ones, advocates, and healthcare professionals seeking information about Death with Dignity and other end-of-life options.

Elia Inglis, a social worker and the newest member of our team, provides callers with resources and referrals, and offers support for those confronting illness or loss.

With a Master's in Social Work from Columbia University, Elia brings a deep commitment to the cause and to working with people in need in all stages of life. She has worked with survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence and individuals

with cognitive impairments. She supervised an assisted living facility for adults with disabilities, and just started working with the Napa County District Attorney's Office as a Crime Victim Volunteer Coordinator.

Elia first became aware of the Death with Dignity movement as a teenager. At the time, her uncle was dying of AIDS, and several of his close friends experienced prolonged and painful suffering near the end of their lives.

"Many of them died very painful, slow deaths," Elia says. "I heard them talking about this law"—the Oregon Death with Dignity Act—"which, if they could access it, would give them some of the dignity back that they were not getting elsewhere."

Elia is excited to put her clinical skills to work in service of the assisted dying movement that has brought comfort and control to qualified citizens in five states and Washington, D.C.

"I believe the work done by the Death with Dignity National Center is amazing and I am honored to be a part of it," she says. ☞



Elia Inglis, MSW, our new Social Worker



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celebrate this anniversary today  
and let's begin to work for the  
next 20 years."*

—Former Oregon Governor Barbara Roberts



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