

WHEREAS, absent the availability of medical aid in dying, some patients and loved ones in New Mexico have become so desperate to relieve the suffering caused by terminal illness, that they sometimes turn to violent means; and

WHEREAS, many find comfort and peace of mind in having access to options at the end of life, including medical aid in dying, even if they do not exercise those options; and

WHEREAS, a 2012 public opinion poll by Research and Polling found that 2 out of 3 New Mexico voters (65%) favor “allowing a mentally competent adult, who is dying of a terminal disease, with no hope of recovery, the choice to request and receive medication from their physician, which could bring about their own death, if there were appropriate safeguards in place to protect patients against abuse”; and

WHEREAS, five states have affirmatively authorized medical aid in dying for residents, enabling terminally ill, mentally competent adults to receive a prescription for life-ending medication from their health care provider; and

WHEREAS, aid in dying has been successfully implemented in Oregon, where the quality of end-of-life care, pain management and the use of hospice have all greatly improved; and

WHEREAS, eighteen years of transparent reporting and study of medical aid-in-dying practice in Oregon demonstrates the utility and safety of the practice, in upholding a patient’s right to self-determination; and

WHEREAS, the nearly two decades of implementation in Oregon data shows “no evidence of heightened risk for the elderly, women, the uninsured, people with low educational status, the poor, the physically disabled or chronically ill, minors, people with psychiatric illnesses including depression, or racial or ethnic minorities”; and

WHEREAS, many people find significant relief in the legal right and medical means of control, in bringing an end to the suffering that may be caused by their terminal illness, and only a very small minority (less than 1/2 of 1%) of terminal patients request a prescription for medical aid in dying medications; and

WHEREAS, many well-respected health and medical organizations, including the American Public Health Association, the American Medical Women’s Association, the American Medical Student Association, and the American Academy of Legal Medicine, recognize aid in dying as a legitimate, necessary end-of-life option for eligible adults facing an imminent death from a terminal illness; and

WHEREAS, Medical aid in dying is supported by the New Mexico Public Health Association,

the New Mexico Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, and the New Mexico Psychological Association; and

WHEREAS, the City of Albuquerque recognizes that the choices a person makes at the end of life are inalienably grounded in that individual person's life experience and values; and

WHEREAS, the City of Albuquerque perceives that New Mexico statute on "assisted suicide" does not encompass the rational judgment of a psychologically healthy, terminally ill individual facing end-of-life suffering, who asks their physician for the means to die in a humane and dignified manner.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL, THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE:

Section 1. That the City of Albuquerque respects the diversity of perspectives on end-of-life decisions; and

Section 2. The City of Albuquerque supports equal protection within the diversity of perspectives on end-of-life decisions; and

Section 3. The City of Albuquerque recognizes the practice of medical aid in dying as a legitimate medical option for those terminally ill, mentally competent adults who might choose to utilize it; and

Section 4. The City of Albuquerque urges the New Mexico State Legislature to enact the End of Life Options Act, allowing for open and accessible medical aid in dying for those terminally ill, mentally competent adults seeking control over their own deaths; and

Section 5. That this resolution be delivered and presented to representatives of the New Mexico State Legislature.

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