



the oregon report

a publication of the oregon death with dignity center
520 sw 6th avenue, suite 1030, portland OR 97204

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show your support: start a conversation over coffee

Along with our new "respect the will of the people" logo come fashionable opportunities for you to visibly show your support for Oregon Death with Dignity. Because our emphasis is on people, the new logo highlights people's faces and each iteration carries the simple message "respect the will of the people," and is featured in very chic blues and greens. You can obtain these items by calling 503-499-0045. What better way to support the cause you care about than by using these items to engage your colleagues, family, friends and neighbors in conversations about why you support Oregon Death with Dignity. Each order comes with a free "respect the will of the people" bumper sticker. Please display it proudly on your car.

short-sleeve shirt \$17.50 white 100% cotton; S, M, L and X-L. Choice of two logo colors: green (shown) or blue. Please add \$3 for shipping and handling.

long-sleeve shirt \$25.00 white 100% cotton; S, M, L and X-L. Choice of two logo colors: green (shown) or blue. Please add \$3 for shipping and handling.

ceramic mug \$10.00 white, ceramic: Choice of two logo colors: green (shown) or blue. Please add \$3 for shipping and handling.



RESPECT
the will of the
PEOPLE
www.dwd.org



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new look, new structure: respect the will of the people

It seems simple to grasp, "respect the will of the people," but several years into the Oregon Death with Dignity law, some policymakers still haven't gotten the message. For that reason, with this redesigned issue of The Oregon Report, we are pleased to introduce to you a new look, a simple message and a re-organization that is in part a response to our donor community.

To us, "respect the will of the people," simply means that we as a society should respect the will of individuals who might, after a long terminal illness, choose a peaceful, hastened death with the assistance of their physician. This level of respect for the individual has been won through two hard fought elections, countless court challenges, and refuting blatant lies by opponents about the three years of flawless implementation of the law.

And let us all be clear. There are terminally ill people who would not want to choose a hastened death for any number of reasons, and quite simply, WE RESPECT THEIR CHOICE. All we ask is that they respect ours in return.

new structure: oregon death with dignity

The fact is that protecting the will of the people isn't easy. The forces that would take away the hard won rights that have improved end-of-life care and set a standard for the nation are extraordinarily well funded and constantly looking for a way to overturn our law.

To better prepare to fight the opposition, and in response to some donors who asked why we weren't the same organization, along with our new look, comes a new organizational structure. Oregon Death with Dignity Legal Defense and Education Center, the nonprofit organization that has successfully defended the law, and Oregon Right to Die Political Action Committee, the political organization that has helped lobby and support the law, will now both be known simply as Oregon Death with Dignity.

For all sorts of technical reasons we won't bore you with, the IRS requires us to account for nonprofit activities and political activities in different ways. So you will still be asked for donations to support legal and education work, which you can deduct from your taxes, and in certain seasons, we will ask for your political contribution to help lobby and support the policymakers who support and respect your rights.

Our pledge to you is that we will always be clear about the work we are doing to defend and promote your rights, and we will always clearly explain why we're asking for the contributions we seek, whether they be for legal and educational work, or for political work.

So there you have it. Oregon Death with Dignity: Respect the Will of the People. Simple, huh?



OREGON death with DIGNITY

www.dwd.org

oregon death with dignity
520 sw 6th ave., suite 1030
portland OR 97204

legal defense and education center
v 503/228-6079 f 503/499-0046

political action fund
v 503/228-4415 f 503/228-7454

Questions or comments? Please contact
us at info@dwd.org

dear supporters,

As you can see from the redesign of The Oregon Report we've been busy putting together a new public face. But we've been busy behind the scenes too. What once was two organizations, Oregon Right To Die Political Action Committee, and Oregon Death with Dignity Legal Defense and Education Center, will now operate under the umbrella name of Oregon Death with Dignity.

We've created a new legal structure that allows the organization to broaden its scope of political work at both the state and federal level. And by working in closer collaboration with the nonprofit's legal defense and public education work, we can ensure that we are using your dollars in the most effective ways possible to defend and promote the Oregon law.

Oregon Death with Dignity will still ask you for different kinds of contributions at different times of the year. Some will be to support our legal and education work, and those contributions are tax deductible. At other times we will ask you to support our political work, and those contributions are not tax deductible.

This new structure allows us to achieve savings, be more effective strategically, and communicate a simple message to the public and policymakers.

We at Oregon Death with Dignity are very excited about all of the changes we've made, and there are more on the way. This Fall we'll be launching a completely revamped website and there will much more detail on that in the next newsletter.

As always, thank you for your support. We couldn't have been as successful without you, and as we prepare for future fights with opponents of the law, we are confident the changes we've made will help us ensure we're doing the best job we can to fight for what you believe in.

Sincerely,

Hannah Davidson

Jeana Frazzini

excerpts from letters you've sent...

From time to time we feature letters from supporters to remind us all why we are in this fight. If you have similar stories, please send them to us via email at info@dwd.org, or by regular mail to 520 SW 6th Avenue, Suite 1030, Portland, OR 97204.

Dear ODWD:

Each time I read your letters, or respond to your requests for funding assistance, I am so very grateful to every one of you for your wisdom-guided efforts to safeguard Oregon citizens' right to choose when and how the very personal moment of death should come to us.

I was diagnosed with MS eleven years ago at the age of 38. The initial attack affected my legs, optic nerve, and worst of all, overall body strength. Alternative healing practices (stress reduction, meditation, acupuncture, removal of root canals and mercury amalgam fillings) stopped the MS attacks. Over the years I gradually regained my health and strength, to the point the last few years where I was taking 8-10 mile hikes, weight training regularly at the gym, and maintaining all home and yard work. I had my life back. I really thought I had this disease beat.

However, in December of 1999, the MS struck again after a serious cold/flu, this time in the form of vertigo, severe migraines, major short-term memory and mental acuity loss, and incapacitating body fatigue and weakness. The MRI taken in April 2000 shows it is attacking the myelin in my brain this time. This has been a very sobering year, as I reconciled with once again facing this healing

challenge. Under the guidance of my current doctor, during the past five months I have already made tremendous progress to regain my health. I am very fortunate to have not only a brilliant and caring physician, but the total love and support of family and friends.

Although I have great hope for once again beating this latest attack of the disease, I know there are no guarantees for the future. I guess you could say the blessing of this illness has been the constant reminder to cherish each and every moment I have been given on this beautiful earth. When the MS first hit, I took full responsibility for my healing process. I intend to do the same regarding my eventual death.

Since this second attack, I now understand more clearly the possible (many say inevitable) downward direction this illness may take. I understand the incapacitation may take many forms, both mental and physical. You can therefore understand the personal relevance of YOUR work. Even though I don't know if I will utilize the law, I want to be ready, with MY choice, when the time comes. I know the level of participation in life – mentally, spiritually, physically, emotionally—that I believe I need to continue as a valuable and contributing member of earth's family. I feel very strongly about preserving the right to make my final, very private choice of leaving this beautiful planet in peace, with dignity. Once more, thank you all for your continuing work.

Sincerely,
Katherine L., Lake Oswego, Oregon

"I want to be ready, with MY choice, when the time comes. I know the level of participation in life – mentally, spiritually, physically, emotionally—that I believe I need to continue as a valuable and contributing member of earth's family. I feel very strongly about preserving the right to make my final, very private choice of leaving this beautiful planet in peace, with dignity."



maine death with dignity center advances legislation

As most of you are aware, Maine voters very narrowly defeated an Oregon-style Death with Dignity law in the last election. While everyone would prefer that Maine had won, it was confirmation that to even get close, the narrow parameters as defined in the Oregon law are the only ways in which voters support for death with dignity has a chance of passage against 4 to 1 funding advantages by opponents.

The great news out of Maine was that a core group of dedicated professionals from the healing professions came together to form the Maine Death with Dignity Center. With a grant from Oregon Death with Dignity, they established a new nonprofit, the Maine Death with Dignity Center, and began to work – of all things – with the people who opposed them in the election.

Finding common ground, they proposed legislation that ultimately passed to:

- Extend hospice benefits to all Medicaid patients in Maine
- Require insurers doing business in Maine to offer hospice benefits
- Establish the Maine End-of-Life Center within the Maine Health Dept. to study and report on these issues
- Gather baseline data to form future policy on end-of-life care
- Provide funding to Maine's volunteer hospices

Oregon Death with Dignity was pleased to lend support to Maine throughout the election, and in their legislative efforts since the election. Having helped them get started with a small grant, we hope to encourage and sustain these important allies.

Your political contributions made the difference. We participated in forty-six races, raised and spent over \$80,000, and thirty-eight of our candidates were elected. The result was that for the first legislative session since our law passed, not one serious threat to the Oregon Death with Dignity law was entertained.

washington watch

There is much to watch in Washington, DC these days as we continue to monitor possible legislative activity from Senator Don Nickles (R-OK), or possible regulatory intervention from Attorney General John Ashcroft, each of which seem quiet for the time being. The big recent news in DC was the introduction of the Conquering Pain Act by Oregon Senator Ron Wyden (D) who has defended the Oregon law against all opponents, and Senator Gordon Smith (R) who continues to oppose Oregon Death with Dignity.

Oregon Death with Dignity supports the Conquering Pain Act as a way of improving pain management and palliative care throughout the country. It is fitting that the bill is introduced by Senators from Oregon because, since passage of the Oregon Death with Dignity law, Oregon leads the nation in improvements to end-of-life care.

This bill represents the first time that forces supporting improvements to palliative care have been on the offensive with a major bill, not merely playing defense against Sen. Don Nickles and Rep. Henry Hyde's attempts to overturn the Oregon law. Oregon Death with Dignity has worked in DC to help build and hold together a coalition of groups that helped stop the draconian efforts to overturn Oregon's law. We are thrilled that this group is now able to work productively toward achieving success and improving palliative care throughout the country, and not just defending against those policymakers who oppose us.

The Conquering Pain Act would:

- Distribute information on best practices for pain management to care givers
- Establish family support networks in pain and symptom management
- Ensure all Medicare and Medicaid patients understand they should expect their pain to be managed
- Establish demonstration projects to improve end-of-life care

the 2001 oregon legislative session

Despite overwhelming popular support, Oregon Death with Dignity's toughest opponents continued to serve in the legislature. In an effort to elect a legislature that is more in step with the voters, Oregon Death with Dignity Political Action Fund (formerly Oregon Right to Die) worked to elect candidates to the Oregon Legislature that support death with dignity for the second election cycle in a row.

Your political contributions made the difference. **We participated in forty-six races, raised and spent over \$80,000, and thirty-eight of our candidates were elected. The result was that for the first legislative session since our law passed, not one serious threat to the Oregon Death with Dignity law was entertained.** Our work sent a strong message to Salem that support for this choice is sound, and any elected official who ignores the will of the people will have a difficult time getting elected.

Only three bills directly affected us this session. The first was a bill that would have restricted the Oregon Health Plan from covering medical services related to the death with dignity law. This bill, Senate Bill 218, was introduced by long-time opponent, Sen. Roger Beyer and never received a hearing. The second bill was introduced by Sen. Joan Dukes, near the close of the session. Senate Bill 885 was strongly supported by Oregon Right to Life. In its original form, it would have

created a pain management commission with the power to determine medical standards of practice. It is inappropriate for such standards to be determined by a bureaucratic entity—these decisions should be left to the medical community. The bill was opposed by every medical group in the state—from the Oregon Medical Association, to the Oregon Nurses Association, to Oregon Hospice Association. Our concern was that the commission would be so politicized that our law would have been vulnerable to the maneuverings of our opponents. In the end, we were able to amend the bill so that the task force could only make recommendations, not establish standards. Additionally, the bill creates opportunities for interdisciplinary dialogue about critical end-of-life issues.

Finally, Sen. Kate Brown introduced Senate Bill 908 at the request of the Oregon Hospice Association to provide universal access to hospice programs. Unfortunately, in a session filled with budget shortfalls, anything that involved new funding was a real long shot. Senate Bill 908 did not advance out of the Senate Health & Human Services committee. We will continue to pursue avenues to expand access to hospice care.

oregon: join us in your community

As part of our new look and structure, we are going to be more aggressive in our organizing. Part of this is a series of Community Forums that we've set up around the state so that you, our supporters, can come and learn first-hand about what is happening in Salem and in Washington, DC. We'll be able to answer your questions about legal issues, and for people not familiar with the law, we'll also answer questions about how to help a terminally ill family member or friend, regardless of their choice on this issue. Watch your mail for time and location in your community.

We'll be holding Community Forums in the following areas. Watch your mail for dates and times:

- Corvallis
- Lake Oswego
- Salem
- Portland
- Eugene