

Compassion in Dying of Oregon

Issue Number 6 - Fall/Winter 2000

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Congress Threatens To Repeal DWD Act **Senator Wyden Promises To Filibuster**

With the U.S. presidency still undecided and Congress waiting for the outcome, the fate of Oregon's Death with Dignity Act waits in the wings.

The sponsors of the misnamed "Pain Relief Promotion Act" are continuing their efforts to pass the bill before the new congress is sworn in on January 3, 2001.

Senator Nickles, R-OKLA, vows to attach his bill to an appropriations bill that he thinks President Clinton must sign. The only person standing in his way at this time is Oregon's own Senator Ron Wyden.

Sen. Ron Wyden has promised to filibuster Nickles bill to prevent it from passing. Other senators, such as Senators Kennedy and Feinstein, have offered to help Ron in his fight.

This bill is not intended to relieve pain - it is solely intended to overturn Oregon's law.

Wyden told reporters: "This is about throwing the law of a small state, located many, many miles from the capital, into the trashcan because it does not comport with the personal and religious beliefs of some in Washington, D.C."

In their attempts at imposing their extremist religious beliefs on Oregonians they willingly doom the terminally ill across this nation to unnecessary pain and suffering during their final months.

Dr. Nancy Crumpacker Receives Compassion Honor

Nancy S. Crumpacker is a medical oncologist, an ACP-ASIM member of Portland and a graduate of University of Kansas School of Medicine, Dr. Crumpacker did her internal

medicine training at Truman Medical Center in Missouri, and her Oncology Fellowship at OHSU. Dr. Crumpacker was in private practice in Tualatin until the summer of 1999.

Dr. Crumpacker is the first recipient of the Compassion In Dying of Oregon award for "Outstanding Contributions of Support and Guidance for the Terminally Ill." She has generously shared her medical wisdom with patients, families, and other physicians facing terminal illness. We are fortunate to have her as one of our medical advisors and as an advocate for better care and choices at the end of life.

Nancy's award was a framed print of the Red Tail Hawk with a letter from Governor Roberts' telling of her husband's connection to the hawk.

Former Governor Barbara Roberts Speaks To Canby Kiwanis About Compassion In Dying Of Oregon

Former Oregon governor Barbara Roberts was the featured speaker at the Canby, Oregon Kiwanis meeting on December 4 on the subject of Oregon's Death with Dignity Act and Compassion In Dying of Oregon.

Governor Roberts, a strong advocate for human rights, serves on the advisory board of Compassion. Barbara Roberts watched her husband, Senator Frank Roberts, die a prolonged and difficult death. She vowed to fight for the right of all Oregonians to have access to the best end-of-life care available. She believes if they choose to hasten their death they should have the legal option to do so. She supports Oregon's Death With Dignity Act and is concerned that it is threatened in Congress.

Governor Roberts presented data covering the past three years under Oregon's law. She noted that only 43 persons used the Act in the first two years. All died peacefully at home with family, loved ones or friends at their bedsides and without complications.

She pointed out that through Compassion In Dying of Oregon's stewardship, our law has been implemented carefully and responsibly. In addition, she noted, end-of-life care has seen dramatic and measurable improvement throughout the state since the passage of the act.

A recent study conducted by Dr. Linda Ganzini at Oregon Health Sciences University reported that 88% of Oregon physicians who were eligible to prescribe medication under Oregon's law said they had attempted to improve their knowledge of end-of-life care and pain management since the passage of the Death with Dignity Act. These same physicians said that as a result, they could have more open and honest discussions with their patients about end-of-life options.

Oregonians can be proud we lead the nation in the use of morphine for pain management, have almost twice the national average of persons in hospice care, and have the highest number of persons dying at home instead of in hospitals and nursing homes.

Governor Roberts also noted that when Compassion empowers patients with real choices they see an immediate and dramatic improvement in pain care. Legal, assisted dying has brought stunning, well documented improvements in care for the terminally ill. Oregon is the model from which other states can learn and achieve success.

Compassion in the News

Dr. Nancy Crumpacker, one of Compassion's volunteer physician advisors, appeared in the September Bill Moyers PBS special on dying, *On Our Own Terms*. She was the physician for Kitty Rayle, a terminally ill Oregonian who sought assistance in using the Death with Dignity Act. Even though Compassion's name was not mentioned during the program our name and number, with a brief explanation about our services, aired in Oregon and Washinton before and after each of the programs through the generous donation of Compassion In Dying Federation.

Dr. Crumpacker received thanks from across the nation. A Kentucky man wrote, "Oregon is light years ahead of the rest of the nation in giving citizens the right to have a say in how they will face death." He concluded by saying, "May the Lord richly bless you and your service to humanity." Another caller said, "I wish we all had the choice that Oregonian's have - -"

In addition, Compassion volunteers appeared on the second show of the Moyers series to answer phones during OPB's fund-raising period.

A special thanks to Nancy and to all of our volunteers.

Director Speaks Out

Compassion's executive director, George Eighmey, gave presentations across the state of Oregon to educate the public and care givers about Compassion's mission. In May he appeared before the Unitarian Church Fellowship in Florence, the Medical Assistants Organization in Springfield, and Lane County Community College class on health care. In June he spoke to a hospice group also in Florence. During July through December George gave presentations in Portland, Eugene, Medford, Newport, Canby and provided numerous television, radio and newspaper interviews.

His work has increased the awareness of Compassion throughout Oregon.

With Love He Flew

In 1993 as Oregon State Senator Frank Roberts, husband of then Governor Barbara Roberts, lay dying, he told Barbara if indeed there were a life after this one he would send her a sign. At the time it was more a statement of love which neither thought could actually come true.

Frank Roberts pursued two passions in life. As a legislator he championed the rights of individuals to have end-of-life options, including the physician assisted dying law. In his private life he was an avid bird watcher. The hawk was his favorite bird.

Frank died before seeing Oregon's law enacted, but he may have come back to visit his beloved and us.

Our Hawk

The hawk in flight, soaring above the field and hill, dipping and turning, beauty and freedom silhouetted against the sky - for me, the Red-Tailed Hawk brings memories of love and joy - and loss - and will always have a home in my heart.

Frank loved the Red-Tailed Hawk. He never failed to notice the hawk in flight. And a hawk perched like royalty atop a country split-rail fence post never escaped his watchful gaze. The hawk was pure pleasure for him.

For our 15th wedding anniversary, I commissioned an artist to carve a life-like Red-Tailed Hawk for Frank. The small hawk sat on a fence post, rusted barbed wire curled around the post. Frank's special hawk nested on his office desk for five years, until his death.

In 1993, as Frank lay dying of cancer, surrounded by his family, I needed to help him let go. For months we had cared for him at home with the help of Hospice and so many loving friends. During the last weeks, he had been clear with me that he was ready to die. Now it was my turn to be brave and give him the permission he seemed to need.

Kneeling on his bed that night, I summoned all my courage and love.

"It is time to let go, Frank. You can fly like the hawk, float on the air. The whole sky is yours. Be a hawk, Frank. You are free to fly now, my love."

And he did. He let go and soared.

As I drive around Oregon, the hawk is often my traveling companion. Flying near my car. Landing on a tree where I've stopped. Sitting like a guardian on a rustic old fence post. Frank told me he would send me a sign. And he has. The hawk is his sign. The hawk is my comfort.

Barbara Roberts

Oregon Governor, 1991-95

Through the generosity of Compassion In Dying of Oregon supporter William Comer, we are able to offer our supporters a limited edition, numbered copy of the Harvey Gaunt Red-Tailed Hawk print. this stunning color rendition of the hawk measures 20x31 inches.

With a donation of \$300, donors will receive an unframed print. With a donation of \$750, donors will receive a matted and framed-with-glass print, the Governor's narrative, personally signed by her, and a brief description of the artist and his work. Please contact us at 503-525-1956 to order your print today.

Changes at Compassion

Sean Cox Says Goodbye

Sean Cox, Assistant Director of Compassion from 1999 to 2000, left us in September to become executive director of a non-profit group he formed in 1998. His new passion is with For Us Northwest, a group dedicated to providing a caring and understanding environment to children who are infected with and affected by AIDS. We wish him the best.

Compassion Welcomes Kate Noson

With Sean's leaving, Compassion's Board and executive director chose to hire a half-time assistant to be shared with Compassion In Dying Federation. Kate Noson has joined the Compassion team and is working diligently for both organizations. She has extensive experience in non-profit work and has become an invaluable asset during her brief time with us. Please join us in welcoming Kate.

New Case Managers Join Compassion

Derianna Kilgore and Corrine Williams, both from Newport, Ceci Bennett, from Florence, Bob Abshear, from Portland, and Alice Rutter, from Ashland, have joined the Compassion case management team. All five have extensive experience in working with patients facing end-of-life decisions. We are fortunate to have them aboard.

Changes in the World

The Netherlands Passes Death with Dignity Act

A bill authorizing physician aid in dying passed overwhelmingly by the Dutch parliament. The Netherlands becomes the first country to legalize hastened death. Although the Dutch had turned a blind eye toward hastened deaths in the past, physicians remained subject to prosecution for murder. With the passage of this bill both terminally and chronically ill patients may request assistance in dying. They must meet certain guidelines similar to those established in Oregon's law to be eligible.

During an interview on KPAM radio, George Eighmey, executive director of Compassion, said the passage of the Dutch bill means that Oregon is not the only

jurisdiction which allows individuals to hasten their death. He said the medical procedure permits individuals to die with dignity and on their own terms.