

Good afternoon Chairman Kagan.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Sandy Mandel and I am here to speak in support of HB1054.

I want the right to end my life in a peaceful manner with my family surrounding me if I am dying of a terminal illness and am of sound mind. No one else should have the right to deny me this. My brother, who had ALS, who had 6 months or less to live and who was of sound mind, wanted that ability before each piece of his body became paralyzed. Because he did not have that right and because he did not want me to go to prison for assisting him to die, he starved himself to death. Colonel Dutcher, my 83-year-old father-in-law who spent his career protecting the United States, who had six months or less to live after a diagnosis of throat cancer and who was of sound mind, wanted this right. Because he did not have this right, he wrapped himself in a blanket, then plastic wrap, and then he shot himself in the mouth at 4:30 in the morning when he was by himself because he did not want to go through an agonizing death.

Perhaps you would not seek aid in dying and that is your right. I would seek aid in dying and that is my right.

I urge you, members of this committee, to vote for the Colorado-End-of-Life Options Act so that when my time comes, I and other terminally ill people who qualify will have the option to leave this world gently, at home, and at peace surrounded by loved ones.