



**PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES
WHO WANT
CHOICES IN ALL
ASPECTS OF LIFE**

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Dear Sirs:

I am a person with quadriplegia due to a spinal cord injury in 1973, and the founding President/Chairman of AUTONOMY, Inc. AUTONOMY is a national disability rights organization representing the interests of people with disabilities who believe that we should have choices in all aspects of our lives, including the right to exercise control at the end of our lives. Based on the autonomy of dying people with terminal illnesses, we support their right to obtain the assistance of their physicians in hastening their deaths and thereby ending their suffering.

My colleagues and I decided to establish AUTONOMY because we are deeply offended by some disability organizations claiming that people with disabilities generally oppose the right to die, including the right to physician-assisted dying. We believe that the disability rights movement stands for the principle of self-determination for all people with disabilities, including people with terminal illnesses. We believe that the majority of people with disabilities share our views, and support the right to assisted dying for terminally ill individuals. We are particularly outraged by the actions of Attorney General Ashcroft in effectively nullifying the democratically-enacted Oregon Death with Dignity Act. This is an arrogant and illegal encroachment by the federal government that will adversely impact any individual who is or becomes terminally ill in the state.

AUTONOMY is grateful for your consideration of our concerns. We recognize the need for adequate safeguards to ensure that the decision of a dying person to hasten death is entirely informed and voluntary, and we believe firmly that the Oregon law provides such protections. A vocal, well-organized minority of people with disabilities who oppose the right to assisted dying should not be allowed to be used to undermine the will of the people of Oregon, including people with disabilities in that state. AUTONOMY supports the citizens of Oregon in their effort to ensure that their Death with Dignity Act will continue to be implemented.

Respectfully,

Andrew I Batavia, JD, MS
Founding President and Chairman
AUTONOMY, Inc.