



Office of the Governor

**MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Nora Meyers Sackett  
Press Secretary, Office of the Governor  
[nora.sackett@state.nm.us](mailto:nora.sackett@state.nm.us)  
(505) 690-7313

April 8, 2021

**Gov. Lujan Grisham signs End-of-Life Options Act**  
*Provides rights, protections for terminally ill New Mexicans*

SANTA FE – After years of advocacy, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on Thursday signed into law a humane measure that will provide terminally ill patients the ability to seek medical aid in dying.

Sponsored by Rep. Debbie Armstrong and Sen. Liz Stefanics, with support from co-sponsors Rep. Day Hochman-Vigil, Rep. Patricia Roybal Caballero and Sen. Bill O’Neill, House Bill 47 enables patients who are terminally ill with the capacity to make informed decisions at the end of their lives to obtain medication for self-administration to help them avoid significant pain and suffering at the end of their lives.

The legislation includes various significant safeguards for patients and medical practitioners alike. A provider must, among other checks and balances, determine that the terminally ill patient has the mental capacity to make an informed and voluntary decision as well as the capacity to self-administer the medication.

The legislation was originally named for the late Hon. Elizabeth Whitefield, a distinguished and trailblazing member of the New Mexico legal community, who in her later years, after a terminal cancer diagnosis, became a fierce public advocate for dignity in dying. She died in 2018.

“This is a long overdue moment that I am humbled to have a small part in,” said Gov. Lujan Grisham. “New Mexicans deserve every single dignity we as a state and as a community can provide them. Dignity in dying – making the clear-eyed choice to prevent suffering at the end of a terminal illness – is a self-evidently humane policy. And I am proud to lead a state where so many advocates, including the late Elizabeth Whitefield, fought so hard for so many who will now have access to the peace of mind and humanity this legislation provides.”

“Every New Mexican deserves to live life as they choose, and to maintain that free will and autonomy when facing their final days with a terminal illness,” said lead sponsor Rep. Debbie Armstrong. “I am incredibly proud that New Mexico will now join many other states in providing compassionate options to those at the end of long-fought battles, allowing them to end their suffering and pass away in peace.”

“This measure is about compassion for the suffering,” said Sen. Liz Stefanics. “Adults with terminal illnesses should have the freedom to choose the end-of-life options that are right for them. I would like to thank Representative Armstrong and the other co-sponsors for their many, many years of dedication to getting this bill through the legislative process, and to Governor Lujan Grisham for signing it into law today.”

“This legislation would not be possible without the sacrifices and bravery from New Mexico residents, their family members, and the bill sponsors,” said State Ombudsman Zack Quintero. “Because of their efforts, the power of autonomy, dignity, and respect over medical decisions is now where it belongs – with the individual. New Mexicans experiencing terminal illness, who can make fully informed decisions, can now have complete and full control over their own medical options in life. That ability is now a right in New Mexico.”

###