

Subject: Albany Dispatch: 3 Weeks Left  
From: Corinne Carey, Compassion & Choices

Good morning!

As the legislative session begins to wind down for 2022, will lawmakers in Albany take any steps to move New York's Medical Aid in Dying Act (A4321a/S6471) out of committee and onto the floor by the time they leave on June 2?

***That's the question everyone is asking.***

This Dispatch will give you:

- Where We Stand; and
- What You Can Do every day for the next three weeks in the form of a handy "Session Countdown Toolkit."

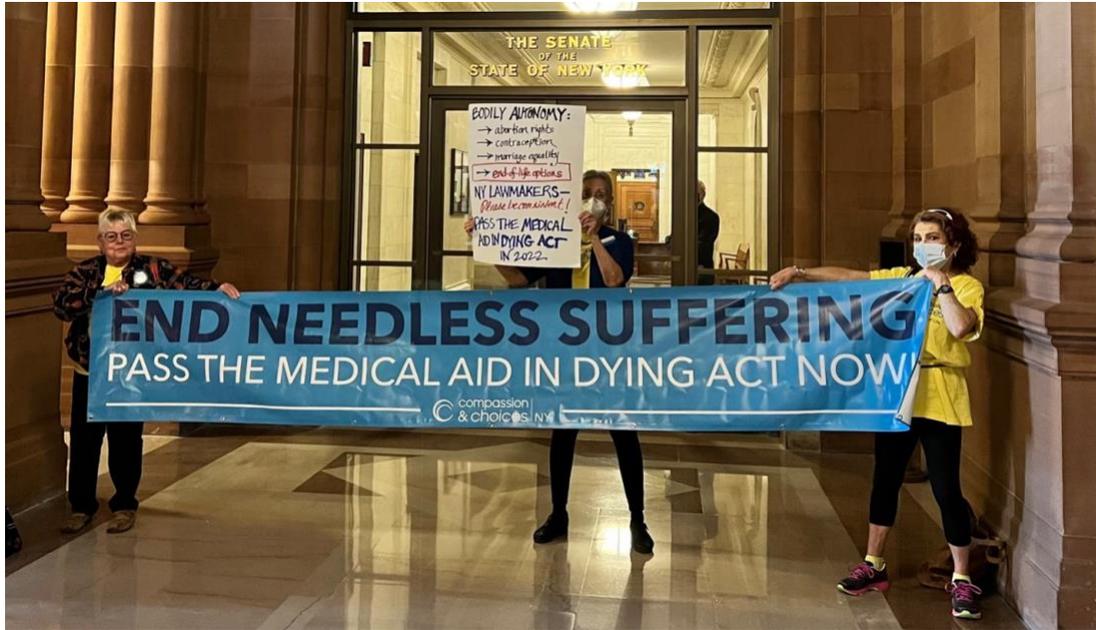
Before we dive in though, to this very long email message, please mark your calendars for two important upcoming dates:

- **Tuesday, May 24** - Join us for a Demonstration/Vigil in Albany
- **Tuesday, June 7** - Join us for a Statewide Campaign Briefing

More about both of those events below.

## **WHERE WE STAND**

There is definitely momentum for this bill like we've never seen before. Walking the halls of the capitol, talking to reporters and other advocates, and looking at the meetings we're getting with high-level staff, it's clear that we've made a mark this session, and there's no longer any way that lawmakers can ignore us.



Volunteers outside the Senate chamber on Wednesday, May 11.



Susan Harris, Barb Thomas, Assemblymember Jessica Gonzáles-Rojas, Amanda Cavanaugh, and Nancy Willie-Schiff at the New York State Capitol on May 11.

## **In the Media**

Senator Brad Hoylman penned this opinion piece in the Empire Report: [Talking About Death Is Hard; Easing Suffering Is Not](#).

Yesterday, the *NY Daily News* published a very compelling opinion piece, [Let Terminally Ill New Yorkers Choose to Die](#) by Daren & Amy Eilert, the parents of Ayla Rain Eilert, who died on April 2. You may have heard Daren and Amy speak at our rally on April 27.

→ Please consider retweeting the story by clicking [here](#), or if you want to share a more political and pointed tweet, you can see and retweet what I said by clicking [here](#). We'll post something easily shareable on Facebook tomorrow or Monday, so please check back on our Facebook page!

Momentum comes because so many of you responded to our call to write Letters to the Editor to your local paper. We've seen at least ten of these published over the past few weeks including from [Dr. David Pratt](#) (Albany Times Union), [Barb Thomas](#) (Glens Falls Post-Star), [Nancy Willie-Schiff](#) (Albany Times Union), [Silas Kramer](#) (NNY360), [Rev. Dick Gilbert](#) (Rochester Democrat & Chronicle), Former Assemblymember [Janet Duprey](#) (Plattsburgh Press Republican), [Rachel Berk](#) (Albany Times Union), [Dr. Yale Rosen](#) (Newsday). You can find many of these letters posted on our [Facebook page](#). If you want to write a letter to the editor, please let me know if you need any help. You can also consult our [Volunteer Resource Center](#), which has a good section on communicating with lawmakers and the media (i.e., writing letters to the editor).

## **New bill sponsor alert!**

Assemblymember Deborah Glick, a senior member of the legislature and a leader on reproductive and LGBTQI+ rights, signed on as a bill sponsor this week. This is a big deal. Please take a moment to thank her by sending her a note (here's [her contact information](#)), or visiting [her Twitter page](#).

## **Meetings with lawmakers**

Thank you to all of you who volunteered to attend Zoom meetings with lawmakers this week! Lawmakers can feel that we're running out of patience, and we need to keep up that level of disappointment at their inaction. Please keep an eye out for requests from Amanda for you to join a meeting in the coming weeks.

## **Coming up**

This weekend, I'll be in Brooklyn for a [panel discussion](#) (free) and [screening of the film Into the Night](#) (\$10) at Greenwood Cemetery. The film doesn't deal with medical aid in dying, but I've been asked to say a few words about our campaign, and I think there will be some really interesting people there. If you're around and want to say hello, that's where you'll find me!

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Okay, buckle your seat-belts, because this is long. This **Session Countdown Toolkit** will give you a day-by-day schedule of what you can do.

We're working to pass the Medical Aid in Dying Act during this legislative session, however as the end of session approaches it is imperative to make a final plea to legislators that by not passing the bill they are essentially leaving terminally ill New Yorkers to suffer at the end of their lives without the options that those in 10 states + Washington, D.C. have.

**Every day** we will be posting on social media and would encourage that as you are taking your daily action in support of the Medical Aid in Dying Act, you would take a moment to interact with a post on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

→ By liking, commenting, sharing and/or tagging the posts -- even if you have NO followers! -- you help to raise awareness about the issue and lawmakers take note of how many "likes" and "shares" we get. If you haven't yet gotten on Twitter, please consider doing so. Here's a [tutorial about how to get a Twitter account](#), and here's a link to the webinar we did on [How to Become a Powerful Digital Advocate](#).

### **3 WEEKS OUT: Get your hands and stamps ready, this week is all about hitting mailboxes**

Amy Eilert, Ayla Rain Eilert's mother, who you may have heard speak at our rally, suggested to us that maybe sending sympathy cards to lawmakers instead of just letters might have an impact. She said: "We receive so many sympathy cards; we don't want sympathy, we want action. We want change." Go to your local Hallmark, drug store, or dollar store and buy some sympathy cards.

#### **8 Days Left: Monday, May 16:**

Write and mail a handwritten letter (or card) to members of the health committee including: Assemblymember [John McDonald](#), [Assemblymember Solages](#), [Assemblymember Bichotte-Hermelyn](#), [Assemblymember Cymbrowitz](#) asking them to support the bill. Click on each of their names to find their mailing addresses. If the member has more than one address, mail to their address in the NYS capitol, not the district office.

#### **7 Days Left: Tuesday, May 17:**

Write and mail a handwritten letter/card to Senate Health Committee members: [Senator Kaminsky](#), [Senator May](#), [Senator Cleare](#)

**6 Days Left: Wednesday, May 18:**

Write and mail a handwritten letter/card to leadership:

[Senate Majority-Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins](#), [Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie](#)

**TWO WEEKS OUT: This week is all about phone calls, it's time to use that dialing finger!**

*This week we are asking you to call those lawmakers who are not yet cosponsors and/or join us in Albany.*

**5 Days Left: Monday, May 23**

Assembly health committee members

Assemblymember [John McDonald](#), [Assemblymember Solages](#), [Assemblymember Bichotte-Hermelyn](#), [Assemblymember Cymbrowitz](#) asking them to support the bill. Click on each of their names to find their phone numbers

**4 Days Left: Tuesday, May 24**

***Join us in Albany for a candlelight sit in!***

As the session winds down and the legislature has failed (yet again) to act on the Medical Aid in Dying Act, advocates, supporters and even staff of the campaign - are feeling not disappointed this year, we're feeling angry and frustrated. We have always maintained a demeanor of decorum and compassion, so instead of shouting, we've organized a candlelight sit-in at the capitol.

We are looking for 25-50 supporters to join us in Albany on Tuesday, May 24 from 10 am - 3 pm (or 11-2, whatever you can do, and depending on how far you need to travel!) to help us show lawmakers that by not acting on the legislation this year, they are causing New Yorkers to suffer. We plan to walk the hallways of the Capitol and then sit in one area with battery operated candles and large signs to remember our loved ones and ensure that lawmakers know that their inaction has caused pain.

If you aren't able to join us in person, take a moment to light a candle at home and remember you aren't alone! You are part of a large campaign that's like family. Send us a picture of you & your candle (and maybe a picture of your loved one). Then, call your own legislators and tell them you want them to help move the bill.

***Our presence in the capitol on April 27 garnered us the most press coverage we've ever gotten! If we can get two dozen supporters to participate on May 24, I know we'll get press, which is the most impactful thing we can do at this time.***

**3 Days Left: Wednesday, May 25**

Today is about making phone calls.

First, call leadership and ask them to support the bill. Click on each of their names to find their phone numbers

[Senate Majority-Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins](#), [Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie](#)

Then call a few new members of the legislature whose support we would love to have:

[Assemblymember Cunningham](#), [Assemblymember Lucas](#), [Assemblymember De los Santos](#), [Assemblymember Gibbs](#)

## **The final week:**

### **2 Days Left: Tuesday, May 31**

Lawmakers may still be in session, or they may decide to adjourn early. We also might have a better sense of what is possible on this day, so stay tuned. But today's about planning for the future. We will be hosting a call on June 7 to debrief the legislative session and talk about what we know, what worked, what didn't and what to expect over the next few months. You'll also get a chance to say a huge thank you to Assemblymember Dick Gottfried, chair of the Assembly Health Committee who is retiring after 52 years of service in the legislature; Senator Diane Savino is also not running for re-election, and we'll be saying thank you to her as well. You'll also get a chance to meet and talk to the senator who will be carrying the bill, if it needs to be reintroduced in 2023! Today, take a moment to [RSVP for the call](#) and mark your calendar to join us!

### **1 Day Left: Wednesday, June 1**

Share your disappointment and frustration. Trust that we are all feeling the sameway. Talk to a friend, maybe even someone you met during this campaign. THEN turn your feelings into action. Post on social media, let your lawmakers know through phone calls, emails, handwritten letters - that they did not act in the best interest of the vast majority of New Yorkers who support the Medical Aid in Dying Act and you are disappointed in them.

### **Last Day of Legislative Session: Thursday, June 2**

You don't think the work is done, do you? NO WAY! Now we really need to spring into action over these next few months to keep this issue at the top of mind of legislators and we don't start from scratch in January. There are two things you can do:

1. **Ask the Candidate!** Research who is on the ballot! In November, every legislator including the Governor is up for election. Take a moment to see who is running for the Assembly and Senate seats to represent you as well as looking up the candidates for Governor and Lt. Governor. Once you know who is running, try to find ways to connect with them over the next few months on

the campaign trail. Also, stay tuned because we'll be sharing more tools and resources about how to do this in the near future.

→ **Remember, when they ask for your vote - ask them where they stand on end of life choice.** It's important to remember that we get bill sponsors from the work you do on your own in your own communities! Senator Zellnor Myrie signed on to the bill this year, which was a huge win, because one of our supporters, Monona Yin, talked to him at her local farmer's market.

1. **Help Grow our Movement!** We need to double the number of people who are taking action on any given day. Can you help us find a place in your community to do a public event? A library, Kiwanis or Lion's Club, local veteran's group, a unitarian church, a civic organization, and neighborhood association.... We need to find new advocates and generate news coverage in towns across the state. Look around & let us know how we can help you create a film screening, discussion, or presentation in your community.

Thank you for all that you do!

Corinne

PS: You can always drop a donation [here](#) if you like what you see, or you want us to be doing more.

PPS: Some of you asked for links to the briefings that I've been sending lawmakers. Each Monday morning when lawmakers are in session, I've been sending them an email series called the Weekly Why which is a deep-dive into one aspect of medical aid in dying. You can see each one of those emails here:

- [January 21 – Because Too Many New Yorkers Have Suffered](#)
- [January 24 – Because New York Voters Support the Bill](#)
- [January 31 – Because the Medical Aid in Dying Act makes sense for New York](#)
- [February 7 – Data Doesn't Lie](#)
- [February 14 – Peace & Love is what it's all about](#)
- [February 28 – It's Not Suicide](#)
- [March 7 – Who's Next? One of Your Constituents?](#)
- [March 14 – Who Gets to Decide?](#)
- [March 21 – What About Faith?](#)

- [March 28 – A Change of Heart](#)
- [April 4 – This Isn't About Money](#)
- [April 25 – Meet Ayla Rain](#)
- [May 2 – What Side Are You On?](#)
- [May 9 – What is Autonomy?](#)

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"Compassion & Choices fights for the rights of people at the end of their life and pushes back against those who seek to strip those rights away. Click [here](#) to read about some of our recent efforts in courthouses across the country."

