

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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I have never seen our church so packed as the day that Riley -- Riley's funeral was; not on Christmas, not on Easter. It was standing room only, and people -- it was to the point people couldn't even get into the church. His friends filled the body of the church. His love of his faith extended to his friends, and they came to say goodbye, only to be able to say "adieu." And, in French, the meaning of "adieu" is "to God," and that was said -- Riley had French heritage, and that was the way that we said goodbye to Riley. It wasn't goodbye. It was to see him later, and we will; and I couldn't let today go by without mentioning this special young man that has made such an impact on my heart. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Subsequently, this Expression of Legislative Sentiment was **ADOPTED** in concurrence.

In Memory of:

Eva Thompson, of Camden. A champion for end-of-life care and prominent local figure, Mrs. Thompson was a force in the Camden/Rockport area, working as a hospice volunteer, bereavement counselor and interfaith community minister. Mrs. Thompson will be long remembered and sadly missed by her family and friends and all those whose lives she touched;

(HLS 916)

Presented by Representative CASÁS of Rockport.

Cosponsored by Senator MIRAMANT of Knox, Senator KATZ of Kennebec.

On **OBJECTION** of Representative CASÁS of Rockport, was **REMOVED** from the Special Sentiment Calendar.

READ.

The **SPEAKER PRO TEM**: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Rockport, Representative Casás.

Representative **CASÁS**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, Women and Men of the House, on December 29th, two short months ago, my constituent, Eva Thompson, took her last breath on this plane of existence. She was surrounded by loved ones, yes, but loved ones who since 2013 had been dreading that very day.

In 2013, Eva was diagnosed with terminal metastatic colon cancer. When Eva reached out to me in 2016, she was quite matter-of-fact in telling me that she was living on borrowed time, and her medical team agreed. In those final years, after raising her family and finally closing in on retirement age, Eva chose to grapple with one final issue: being able to end her suffering at a time and in a way of her choosing. Now, one might think that someone advocating for a medical prescription that would surely end their life should be considered suicidal. However, this was not the case for Eva, and I'm guessing it's not the case for many terminally ill patients. In fact, I had to testify on Eva's behalf in favor of LD 347, "An Act To Support Death with Dignity." Why? Because Eva was in the cancer ward that day, continuing her treatment and fighting hard for every additional day that she could spend with her family. As Eva told me, she did not want to die, she was dying. And as Eva's daughter, Kayla, recently stated to me, there is an essential and fundamental difference between those two.

Now, I cannot imagine what a family goes through when dealing with something as personal as this, but one could speculate that after a life well-lived and with a diagnosis of terminal, one's brain might focus on those very last moments and how they would like them to go. But, in spite of this knowledge of the impending end, Eva's final days were not how she envisioned. Eva's daughter, Kayla, shared with me her thoughts on those final days, and Kayla said "There were no deathbed revelations or profound conversations as you see

in the movies. She was not conscious. Those last three days were not living. Instead, she was jaundiced, she was unable to eat, she was unable to move on her own. My mother, the most private and independent person I knew, had to be bodily lifted and bathed, and have water dripped into her mouth, and her pain kept at bay by morphine that she was unable to ask for. In my selfish love for her, I wanted to steal every second that I could with her, but still, if I could have spared her those last few days of lying helpless and in pain, I would have."

Now, Eva was an interfaith minister and hospice and palliative care provider who had also been diagnosed with terminal cancer, so she had set at a junction few of us can ever have claimed to have seen. End-of-life decisions are delicate, and rightfully so. Those departing might have a different perspective than those remaining, which makes these conversations that much harder. So, I do not ask, Madam Speaker, anything of anyone in this body, other than this: do your best to see other's perspectives, especially those hard and uncomfortable perspectives. Do not compromise on your values, but continue to strive to see those other perspectives.

I will leave you all with these words, and they are not my words, they are not the words of a renowned medical professional or the words of a family member who struggled for years in preparation for their loved one's end. They are Eva Thompson's words, spoken a few brief months before her final breath. Eva said, "For me, it comes down to rights and freedom. You might have views of this from a religious standpoint, from a political standpoint, but until you're the person dying, I don't think you can fully appreciate how important it is to have control over how the end goes." Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The **SPEAKER PRO TEM**: The Chair recognizes the Representative from York, Representative Hymanson.

Representative **HYMANSON**: Thank you, Madam Speaker, Men and Women of the House. I learned of and spoke with and had interactions with Eva Thompson through the Death with Dignity bill, in Health and Human Services, and she became a signator, along with me, to endorse moving forward the planned Death with Dignity Citizen's Referendum that she, as a hospice and palliative care professional and a minister, cared so deeply about. Thank you.

Subsequently, this Expression of Legislative Sentiment was **ADOPTED** and sent for concurrence.

The Speaker resumed the Chair.

The House was called to order by the Speaker.

At this point, the Senate came and a Joint Convention was formed.

In Convention

The President Pro Tem of the Senate, the Honorable Roger J. Katz in the Chair.

The Convention was called to order by the Chair.

On motion by the Senator of Waldo, President THIBODEAU, under unanimous consent, it was

ORDERED, that a Committee be appointed to wait upon the Honorable Leigh Ingalls Sautley, Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court, the Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court and members of the Judiciary and inform them that the