



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Assemblywoman Amy Paulin, Faith Leaders, Elected Officials, and Advocates Rally in Scarsdale to Support the Medical Aid in Dying Act

Scarsdale, NY — Assemblywoman Amy Paulin (D-Westchester) joined faith leaders, state and local officials, and hundreds of advocates at Chase Park in Scarsdale last night in support of the Medical Aid in Dying Act ([A136/S138](#)). The legislation, which passed both houses of the New York State Legislature in June 2025, would give terminally ill, mentally capable adults with a prognosis of six months or less the option to request medication to peacefully end their suffering if it becomes unbearable.

The rally drew a large and diverse coalition of local supporters, including Westchester Reform Temple Senior Rabbi Jonathan Blake, Calvary Baptist Church Rev. Erwin Lee Trollinger, NYS Senator Shelley Mayer, New Rochelle Mayor Yadira Ramos-Herbert, White Plains Mayor Tom Roach, Assemblywomen Amanda Septimo, Dana Levenberg, and MaryJane Shimsky, Suzanne Berger, Chair, Westchester County Democratic Committee, Indivisible Scarsdale, the Scarsdale Democrats, End of Life Choices New York, Compassion & Choices New York, and many local residents and advocates.

As part of the event, 2,500 candles were placed throughout Chase Park to symbolize the number of New Yorkers who die of cancer each month. Cancer is the leading terminal illness suffered by people who choose medical aid in dying in states that authorize the option. The candles created a powerful and moving visual reminder of the thousands of New Yorkers affected by terminal illness and the urgency of compassionate end-of-life options.

Assemblywoman Paulin, the bill's longtime sponsor, called the rally “a testament to the compassion and determination of New Yorkers who believe in dignity, choice, and relief from needless suffering.” **She added**, “Tonight’s gathering was about love, compassion, and respect for personal choice. The Medical Aid in Dying Act is not about giving up—it’s about giving terminally ill patients peace of mind and control in their final days. I’m heartened to see our local community turn out as they have in support of this legislation.”

If enacted, the Medical Aid in Dying Act would make New York the 12th state in the nation, plus Washington, D.C., to authorize medical aid in dying. The bill includes strict safeguards, a multi-step request process, and comprehensive protections for both patients and healthcare providers.

Supporters say the measure is about autonomy, compassion, and dignity.

Rev. Dr. Erwin Lee Trollinger, White Plains Calvary Church, said, "It is a painful moment to watch loved ones lie on their beds of affliction, pain, and misery, or see that the essence of life in their eyes has dissipated and disappeared. This bill would give all of us the ability to leave this earth in a way that it is dignified and without pain and suffering."

"As we stand before the Author of life, we come to ask to help us and our loved ones to live and die with dignity, surrounded by love and compassion," said **Senior Rabbi Jonathan Blake, Westchester Reform Temple**. "As I have spent 25 years as a rabbi and teacher of Jewish tradition, a tradition that is multivocal and with little consensus, nevertheless I have found that it is consistent with the Jewish way, to say that if you could boil down Judaism to one premise it is this - that we were put onto this earth for the purpose of human flourishing, not to promote or prolong human suffering. And it is that sacred premise that informs my presence here this afternoon. Life is for living, and when we come to the end of our earthly journey, let us be surrounded by love and care and leave this earth on our own terms."

"I stand with the legislators who made a courageous and necessary decision on a bill that many people may not embrace until they have faced these difficult experiences themselves," said **Suzanne Berger, Chair, Westchester County Democratic Committee**. "New York is at its best when it leads, and this legislation is a powerful example of our state choosing humanity, dignity, and moral clarity."

Myra Saul, Co-Chair of the Scarsdale Democratic Town Committee, which was a proud co-sponsor of the event, said, "What I continue to hear in the community is that people simply want the option this bill offers. This is about allowing individuals to make the choice that feels right for them. I am proud to support this bill and grateful to Assemblywoman Paulin and our elected officials for their leadership on such an important matter."

State Senator Shelley B. Mayer said, "I join Assemblymember Amy Paulin, faith leaders, and other advocates in hoping that Governor Kathy Hochul will sign the Medical Aid in Dying Act into law. As a Senator with very conflicting sentiments on this subject, but who ultimately voted to support the bill, I know that this law will provide meaningful options for those facing imminent death who seek the relief it offers. It will allow New Yorkers facing terminal illness and unrelenting suffering the opportunity to end their life on their own terms peacefully and without pain, consistent with their own ethical beliefs. I want to especially thank Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins for her willingness to bring this bill to a vote, and hope that Governor Hochul will find a path towards signing it."

State Senator Nathalia Fernandez said, "The Medical Aid in Dying Act is a compassionate piece of legislation that gives terminally ill New Yorkers the ability to make a deeply personal

decision on their own terms. With strong safeguards and a clear process in place, this legislation acknowledges the reality that end-of-life care must respect both autonomy and dignity.”

“The majority of New Yorkers support signing Medical Aid in Dying Act into law,” said **State Senator Pete Harckham**. “In the years to come, many of our loved ones will benefit from this law, which will make end-of-life care an appropriate option for our residents.”

“I am in support of the Medical Aid in Dying Act as it reflects compassion and respect for personal choice, ensuring that individuals and families can make deeply personal decisions with dignity and peace of mind,” said **Assemblyman J. Gary Pretlow**.

Assemblyman Chris Burdick said, “I have been a proud cosponsor of the Medical Aid in Dying Act since joining the Assembly in 2021, and I hope that the Governor will sign this significant piece of legislation now that it has finally passed both houses. Dying with dignity on your own terms, when you are terminally ill, is an option that would alleviate much grief and suffering for individuals and their families.”

“As a state legislator who co-sponsored, advocated for, and ultimately voted for this bill, and as a person who has watched family members struggle with end-of-life choices, I will be so proud when Governor Hochul signs our Medical Aid in Dying legislation,” said **Assemblywoman Dana Levenberg**. “So many people, after seeing loved ones suffer needless indignities at the end of their lives, have worked so hard for so many years on this bill. Majorities of New Yorkers in every scientific poll taken on the issue support this bill. Governor Hochul, your signature on this critical legislation will give so many people peace of mind, as well as the ability - in a safe and protected way - to end their lives in a dignified manner of their choosing.”

Assemblyman Steve Otis said, “This legislation has been carefully crafted, thoroughly reviewed, and written to provide the right to make end of life decisions in the hands of the individual. Now is the time to approve this measure to place this important choice where it belongs.”

“I stand firmly with Assemblymember Amy Paulin and the advocates fighting for the Medical Aid in Dying Act. If enacted, this legislation will give terminally ill New Yorkers the power to make end-of-life decisions with compassion, peace, and self-determination. No one should have to endure unbearable suffering without the choice to meet their final moments with grace and control. This is about humanity, empathy, and honoring the dignity we all deserve,” said **Assemblywoman Amanda Septimo**.

“Nearly one in five Americans currently has the option to seek aid in dying in their home state, enabling them to manage their last days on their own terms,” said **Assemblywoman MaryJane Shimsky**. “Our legislation would extend this end-of-life choice to New Yorkers facing a prognosis of less than six months to live. It is a compassionate and thoughtfully crafted bill, with protections for patients and physicians, and with no obligation for either to participate. The Medical Aid in Dying bill has the support of a majority of New Yorkers.”

City of New Rochelle Mayor Yadira Ramos-Herbert said, “I want to thank my friend and colleague Assemblywoman Paulin for offering this very thoughtful approach to bodily autonomy and having the ability to decide what your life looks like, in every way that you can think about that. The guardrails are well thought out and will provide quality to so many who just want the agency to choose what their life looks like.”

Mayor Tom Roach, City of White Plains, said, “I’m here because I want to support my colleagues who had the courage to bring forward this legislation, which ensures that people have a say in how they leave the world. It is a choice for individuals, under specific circumstances under this law, and when people take a vote on an issue like this that is controversial, and there are strong feelings on both sides, it is important to show support for them, and support for our Governor as she considers this. The Governor has been so considerate of many important issues, and she has really led the way on mental health issues. So now the hope is that we will see this bill get signed into law.”

White Plains Council Member and Mayor-Elect Justin C. Brasch, who is of the Orthodox Jewish faith, said, “I’m proud to stand with the advocates and families who have spent years fighting for this moment. Everyone deserves the chance to live their final days with peace and dignity, which is why I am hopeful that Medical Aid in Dying will become an option for New Yorkers.”

White Plains City Councilwoman, Westchester County Legislator-Elect and Executive Director of the Westchester/Putnam Central Labor Body AFL-CIO Jennifer Puja said, “giving terminally ill individuals the freedom to decide how and when to say goodbye, sparing them needless suffering is compassionate. Thank you, Assemblymember Amy Paulin, for championing New York’s medical aid in dying bill to protect personal choice at life’s end. I urge Gov. Hochul to sign this bill into law and provide end of life choices for New York.”

Westchester County Legislator Ben Boykin said “I am pleased to support the Medical Aid in Dying Act (A136/S138) approved by the NY State Legislature in June 2025 and request that Governor Hochul sign this bill into law. It will allow those terminally ill, mentally capable individuals with a prognosis of six months or less to live with the option of medical aid in dying.”

David T. Imamura Westchester County Legislator and Majority Leader, and Executive Board member of the Westchester Asian American Democrats, said, “I strongly support the passage of the Medical Aid in Dying Act and ask Governor Hochul to sign into law this critical legislation. Those with terminal illness and who are in tremendous pain shouldn’t be forced to suffer without options. To me this law is about compassion and respecting personal choice, allowing individuals to end their suffering on their own terms and with dignity.”

The Medical Aid in Dying Act also has broad bipartisan support, as evidenced by **Westchester County Legislator and Minority Leader Margaret A. Cunzio** who said: “The Medical Aid in Dying bill is about compassion. I firmly believe that terminally ill Westchester residents want the ability to make choices that bring peace and dignity to their final days.”

“I applaud Assemblywoman Paulin and her colleagues in the New York State legislature for passing the Medical Aid in Dying Act,” said **Westchester County Legislator Catherine F. Parker**. “New Yorkers facing horrendous terminal illnesses deserve the freedom of choice to decide when the pain, burden, or lack of dignity is too much to bear.”

Westchester County Legislator Erika L. Pierce said, “Unfortunately, too many of us have had to stand by while our loved ones endure unimaginable pain while disease robs them of their life. I have had this for both my grandfather and my uncle, both of whom experienced extreme pain in their final weeks. While they had medication to “help”, it did not come close to erasing that pain. This legislation is about making lives better, even in those final days, and allowing us to do better for those we love.”

“Knowing I can access medical aid in dying has freed me from fear of the future and allowed me to live what remains of my life as fully as possible,” said **Dr. Jeremy Boal, a New York physician with ALS who supports the bill**.

Benny Pollak of the disabled community said, “As somebody living with a disability, I believe it is very important that we have the same access to all medical options as those in the general population, including access to medical aid in dying. We don't need extra protection. Those of us with living with disabilities want control at the very end of our lives, just as others do. I cannot express strongly enough that I believe that we are not an especially vulnerable population that needs extra protection, that we don't want to be patronized, and that we want to be empowered to make our own choices. And I cannot think of a more important choice than that of getting medical aid in dying.”

Joe Mayhew, a veteran from Dutchess County said, “The story of my support of Medical Aid in Dying is personal. It's of the pain and grief my family suffered when in 1998 when at 61 years old my father was diagnosed with lung cancer. My father was a tough man by any standard, but three months into chemo he had enough. A stout man who served in the United States Marine Corp, he became less than 100 pounds, couldn't eat or sleep, was sick all the time, and his pain was unmanageable. He had only one request of me - to help him end his suffering. It wasn't possible, and over the next month he suffered agonizing pain. For years, I felt I'd failed him for letting him suffer. Now NYS has finally passed this bill which allows the affected to determine how to leave life with dignity. No longer will a husband, wife, son or daughter feel shame for doing nothing because the state decided how much pain and suffering a terminally ill person can take.”

“For me, Medical Aid in Dying presents a simple issue - an issue of basic humanity,” said **Eileen Kaufman, Hartsdale resident, retired Touro Law School Professor and ovarian cancer survivor**. “I would sleep so much better at night if I knew that when the inevitable comes, I would be the one to decide enough is enough. Enough for me, and enough for my family, who suffers by watching me. I don't know what will happen, and I might not ever choose that option. But one thing I know for certain, is the peace of mind that I would have if I knew that option was available. I look forward to celebrating Medical Aid in Dying passing and becoming law in this State. I need it, and New Yorkers need it.”

“I’ve been an advocate for Medical Aid in Dying for more than 10 years - I attended the very first lobby day in the Spring of 2015,” said **Stacey Gibson, Garrison resident and grieving community Medical Aid in Dying advocate**. “My husband died the previous year, in a manner that was not in keeping with the glorious life that he led. I promised him that I would do all I could to find a better path for New Yorkers. I want to thank Assemblywoman Paulin, Senator Hoylman-Sigal and all those who have worked tirelessly for so many years to get this bill passed. And I want to say thank you to Governor Hochul for her very respectful consideration of this bill. I do hope that she will decide to sign this bill into law. When that happens, I will have the comfort of knowing that I have the option available to me when my time comes, if I choose to take it.”

Eric Wessman, Pelham resident and grieving community Medical Aid in Dying advocate said, “Six years ago, I had the unfortunate experience of watching my brother die of cancer. He had been suffering for two years. He was a very positive person and had a love for life. Although he loved life, he knew there was no way he was going to survive, and he loved to have the option. And it is just that - an option. If this is made available, you don’t have to take it, but it’s there for those who want it and who are suffering.”

“A year ago this week, I was diagnosed with glioblastoma, an aggressive form of brain cancer. Your likelihood of living is a year to a year and half, and the death is excruciating. So, I hope, by the time I get to that, New York has passed this bill. I hope the Governor will sign it, and it will be available to me and that I can have the choice. Maybe I won’t take it, but it will mean so much to me to have it,” said **Iris Dudman, Hastings-on-Hudson resident diagnosed with glioblastoma**.

Eugenie Rosenthal, Scarsdale Democrats member and President-Elect of the Scarsdale Rotary Club said: “My mother died after a prolonged, excruciating illness. It would give me great peace of mind to know that I and others if in such circumstances, at least towards the very end, would have the option to die in peace and dignity on our own terms. I am grateful to Assemblywoman Amy Paulin for fighting for this right. People talk about the right to life and right to freedom. Few things are as fundamental as the right, if you are of sound mind, to die, as we live, in harmony with our values, spirituality, and vision for ourselves.”

“New Yorkers overwhelmingly support medical aid in dying – by margins of two-to-one or more in every poll,” said **Corinne Carey, Compassion & Choices’ senior campaign director for New York/New Jersey**. “The Legislature passed the Medical Aid in Dying Act this spring, after years of consideration. Countless New Yorkers have died – many unnecessarily suffering – while waiting for New York to join New Jersey, Vermont and nine other states plus Washington, D.C. in authorizing this compassionate end-of-life option. All eyes are on New York and Illinois, where the Legislature has also approved a medical aid in dying law. The time for action is now. Dying New Yorkers are very much watching a ticking clock.”

“We are proud to stand with so many in our community and others who have been so helpful in getting us to this point,” said **Mandi Zucker, Executive Director of End of Life Choices New York**. “We know Governor Hochul will do the right thing on an issue which so many of her constituents throughout New York State overwhelmingly support. As we head into the holiday

season, there are so many families who have loved ones suffering from incurable illnesses and - if given the choice - would want to be with them to the very end. That's what Medical Aid in Dying would allow those who choose to utilize it would do. We are hopeful that the Governor will give them and so many others in the future the option."

The evening closed with calls for unity and action, as attendees held candles aloft in solidarity with those living with terminal illness and their families.

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