

HB 2217 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Judiciary

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Meeting Dates: 5/9

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires life-ending medication prescribed under Death with Dignity Act to be self-administered. Prohibits administration on behalf of patient by any other person. Defines "self-administer" to mean a "qualified patient's affirmative, conscious and voluntary act to take into his or her body medication to end his or her life in a humane and dignified manner." Takes effect 91 days after adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon Death with Dignity Act (DWDA) was enacted by initiative petition in 1994, but implementation was delayed until 1997. Since that time, over 2,200 prescriptions for life-ending medications were written and 1,459 deaths resulted from those prescriptions. To request a prescription under DWDA, a person must be an adult who is capable, a resident of Oregon, and for whom an attending physician and consulting physician have determined is suffering a terminal disease, and who has voluntarily expressed his or her wish to die. See ORS 127.805. If a person meets the requirements and follows the process for obtaining the prescription, and the person chooses to utilize the prescription to bring about their death, the person is responsible for "taking" or "ingesting" the medication.

House Bill 2217 A requires the patient to self-administer the medication to end life and specifically prohibits any other person from administering the medication.