

## FAQ for Endorsements and Letters of Support

**1) Why do we seek endorsements?** Endorsements will help educate Arizona voters, grow our grassroots volunteer base, and encourage advocacy when a bill is proposed. For groups that support our cause, we can offer webinars to their members and write articles for their newsletters. Lawmakers will begin to see that we are bigger than just AzELO; we have the backing of medical associations, faith leaders, political organizations, senior groups, etc.

**2) What is our strategy for obtaining endorsements?** From the Compassion & Choices (C&C) booklet "[A Policy to Improve Care and Expand Options at Life's End](#)" we have [a list](#) of the national organizations that endorse MAID, the national groups that remain neutral (or engaged neutrality) and the state-specific groups that have endorsed.

Approaching the AZ state chapters of national groups that already endorsed in other states should be the low-hanging fruit. However, endorsement is not automatic if other state chapters approved. For example, even though the National Association of Social Workers endorsed in five states, the AZ chapter will only consider endorsing if it is endorsed at the national level. This is disappointing but we can now attempt a neutral position.

Approaching groups is similar to the 7-Touch campaign. We start with sending our Fact Sheet and introducing AzELO. From there we begin to build a relationship. Subsequent contacts may include a C&C handout specific to their type of organization with statistics (i.e. "Faith Leaders and MAID"). If their executive board is going to vote on endorsement, we can ask what handouts will be helpful. In addition to endorsement, our goal is to be the "go to" AZ source for any MAID questions (in addition to C&C and Death with Dignity).

**3) What format are we looking for?** Endorsements come in various forms, ranging from as short as two sentences on a platform or position statement to as long as two pages of written or oral testimony. They may also be an article in the organization's newsletter or website. The booklet mentioned above has links to all the endorsements but some are on a C&C Google Drive and we don't have access. I have been able to find most of them through group's websites.

When we don't have a bill in front of the legislature, the simplified version supporting MAID in general should suffice. Here is a sample of the short position statement from the League of Women Voters in Maryland:

a) The League of Women Voters of Maryland believes state laws should grant the option for a terminally ill person to request medical assistance from a relevant, licensed physician to end one's life.

b) The League of Women Voters of Maryland believes such legislation should include safeguards against abuse for the dying and/or medical personnel.

Other groups might prefer to endorse once a bill is slated. For example, ACLU Arizona has offered support via advocacy and social media once the legislature is in session.

**4) What about letters of support or statements of support?** Marylanders for End-of-Life Options have quotes on one page of written and/or oral testimony before committees of the Maryland General Assembly in February 2019. Quotes include just one or two sentences from federal legislators (including Elijah Cummings), a civil rights attorney, a psychotherapist and former president of a county medical society, family physician/cancer patient and a psychiatrist. Even though we do not yet have testimony, we can put together a similar one-page document from professionals that have already come out in favor of MAID in Arizona.

**5) When and why is a neutral (or engaged neutral) position sought?** If the organization's members (or the executive board) does not want to fully endorse MAID, the next best thing is to ask for a neutral position. This is helpful because when there is public testimony about a MAID bill, they would refrain from arguing *against* it. Engaged neutrality is important because it is a way groups that are intimately involved in end-of-life care can weigh in without committing to a full endorsement. When a MAID law passes they know they will be involved in training and educating their members and even implementing the law. The spirit of moving from opposition to engaged neutrality was expressed by a AAFP member: "Changing our position to engaged neutrality shows that our members can respectfully disagree about medical aid in dying, but still agree about our role in supporting our patients no matter what care they choose at the end of life."

**6) Should we seek individual endorsements?** Absolutely, especially if the person is influential in their field. They may publicize AzELO through social media or be an influencer to others in their line of work.

**7) How will we publicize our endorsements?** We will be listing the national groups that endorse (or are neutral) on our website and then we will add AZ chapters as we get them. We will also be announcing them in our newsletter. Death with Dignity can also show our endorsements on their [Arizona page](#).

New Mexico has a great way of acknowledging [their endorsements](#): they include a short blurb about the organization with a link to their website, a quote from the letter of support/endorsement and then a link to the full letter on letterhead.

Providing a link to the organization's website is a way to subtly show we share some of the same values and goals. Their endorsement may even help increase *their* membership or publicize *their* issues.