

Vermont approves doctor-assisted suicide

Posted: Wed, 22nd May 2013

The Governor of Vermont this week signed into law a new bill legalising doctor-assisted suicide. This makes it the third US state to approve such legislation.

At the same time, a new YouGov poll for the Huffington Post shows that legislation similar to the Vermont measure would be supported by [50% of Americans](#).

Vermont– a mostly rural state in New England, which has a tradition of liberality and progressive thinking (it was the first to permit same-sex marriage) - follows the states of Oregon and Washington in legalising assisted suicide. It is the first time assisted suicide has been brought in through legislation rather than through voter demand through a referendum.

Under the Vermont law, terminally ill patients who are given no more than six months to live can ask their doctors to prescribe a lethal dose of drugs to hasten their death.

Several safeguards are built into the law. These include a requirement for two medical opinions, the option of a psychiatric examination and a 17-day waiting period before a life-ending prescription can be filled.

A Pew Research Center poll found that 84% of Americans support allowing a terminally ill adult patient to decide if they want to be kept alive.

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