

Written Testimony of John J. Dyer IV

Senate Bill 701

End of Life Option Act

I OPPOSE the End of Life Option Act

February 28, 2020

My Name is John Dyer and I have been a lifelong resident of Maryland, even while serving on Active Duty in the Military. My family and I currently own a home at 11602 Hunters Run Drive Cockeysville MD.

The following reasons are my personal testimony as to why I request you also Oppose Senate Bill 701.

First, in 2004, following the birth of our oldest daughter in 1998 and after 3 subsequent miscarriages in 1999, 2000 and 2001 we decided to pursue the adoption of a child. Circumstances lead us to adopt a 1-year old little girl we named Olivia from Russia on November 30, 2004. Olivia like many of these children from Russia suffers from Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder which has led to her being diagnosed with multiple mental disabilities. She also has learning disorders as well. She suffers from anxiety very low self-esteem and makes statements that she wants to take her own life.

Because of this my Jackie and I are very concerned about her mental health and she is already on multiple prescribed medications.

I Oppose Senate Bill 701 in this instance because I have a disabled daughter with mental illness and in no way do I want the State of Maryland to make it easier to have a legal mechanism to end her own life at her own hand or by a medical providers hand once she becomes an adult in a few short years. **(The Senate Bill 701 reads she "may" take the drugs which also means she MAY NOT which means someone else would administer the poison which is actually Euthanasia NOT Assisted suicide.)**

Second, Since March of 2018 my siblings and I have been involved with the medical care of both of my now 90-year-old parents Kitty and John Dyer 3rd. My mother in particular survived colon cancer 2 years ago and she suffers with heart failure and her and my father both take multiple medications. They too are life long residence of Maryland and last Labor Day they were presented with the Key to Ocean City by Mayor Meehan since they met there in 1951 and they have spent many days there opening their little townhouse on the bay to innumerable family and friends since 1972. Unfortunately for my parents since last fall 2019 they have 5 combined Emergency Room Visits between the two of them. My Mother for infections, swelling and open sores in her legs and my Father for a hand infection. Four of those for my Mother. Since I have been the sibling that most often goes with them to the ER, I can personally attest that is very difficult to get the medical providers, be they primary care Dr's, Home Nurses, Wound Care

Centers etc., to provide adequate if any pain medication. I sense that there is a real fear that they will put their license in jeopardy if they prescribe any medication that has any level of opioid in it. No matter how legal. IN FACT, during my Mother's last visit to the ER NO pain medication was provided to her to alleviate her suffering. None.

I Oppose Senate Bill 701 in this instance because I feel that if this law is passed, Maryland's medical providers will be more inclined to prescribe the poison pills to end an elderly person's suffering because it will be legal and there will be plenty of legal and political protection for their licenses to prescribe these pills in lieu of an adequate pain pill for citizens like my parents.

Additionally, I hear that this is a matter of the heart and so-called compassion for the suffering and that is why the poison pill needs to become legal in Maryland. I disagree I contest this is a matter of the head and I would rather use my brain instead of my heart to fight for the proper care of my Parents then just to say it is somehow more compassionate to provide them the choice of a pill that will end their lives.

Third, 22+ of our Nation's Veterans are taking their own lives each day. Already over 1000 at this writing. As a veteran like my Father both of us serving over 30 years in the Maryland Air National Guard and the Air Force I am very concerned about making it easier here in Maryland for a Veteran to take their own life. Instead of this I would rather our efforts be focused on legislation to help them save their lives.

In fact, I am personally involved as a volunteer in a local chapter of the Military officers of America and for the 3rd year in a row we are hosting a fundraiser for an organization called "pws4vets". Organizations like this are making a REAL life saving difference in providing highly trained services dogs to our struggling Veterans. I chose the Pooch over the Poison Pill.

I Oppose Senate Bill 701 in this instance because there are proven ways like paws4vets to help our Veterans and to protect them from the seductive call of Suicide. Why would we choose to fight against this great organizations by making it easier for our Veteran's to end their own lives her in Maryland.

Respectfully Submitted,

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