

Testimony of:

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Good afternoon, Chair Smith, and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee.

My name is Dr. George Taler, I live in Severna Park in Anne Arundel County, but my practice is in Washington, DC and Baltimore Maryland. I am a geriatrician and all my patients have serious illnesses and disability. My team cares for >600 patients in their homes and in the hospital. Although these are the people most likely to request physician aid in dying, and I am prepared to honor those requests, none of the patients in my practice has asked in over 20 years, largely, I believe, because we have been able to meet our patients' needs and expectations, from lessons I have learned through the physicians' aid in dying movement.

I strongly support Senate Bill 0701, the End-of-Life Options Act, based on the effects that passage of the Death with Dignity Act had on the conversations people with serious illness had with their physicians and on the practice of medicine in Oregon. The results: Referrals for palliative care and hospice services increased dramatically, as did prescriptions for medications mostly used for symptom control. Fewer patients went to the hospital to die, and there was a commensurate increase in the numbers of people who died at home, in their own beds with their family beside them. In other words, the citizens of Oregon enjoyed better care, had a better care experience and at lower costs.

As a jurisdiction that has a special waiver with CMS, The Maryland All-Payer Model, we need to have that kind of societal change in the conversation between patients and their physicians, here, in our state. The End-of-Life Options Act is pivotal to that transformation.

I would like to thank the Committee for your support.