

**Testimony of David Meyers, MD**  
**Support for HB643 and SB701**  
**The Richard E. Israel and Roger "Pip" Moyer End of Life Options Act**  
**February 28, 2019**

My name is David Meyers. I am a Maryland physician and I have glioblastoma, a terminal form of brain cancer. I am not afraid of death, but I am afraid of the decline and final weeks of dying from cancer. I am likely to experience severe agitation and possibly intractable pain as I die. While doctors and nurses will offer some relief, it is unlikely to be complete. The thing I am most scared of is the severe cognitive and personality changes caused by this cancer. The prospect of losing the ability to think and treating those I love badly terrifies me. Their memories of me will be shaped by those experiences. This law gives people like me the option to have control over how we leave our loved ones.

As a family physician I have cared for people across the lifespan, attending births and deaths. I have extra training in hospice and palliative care, and I know that despite medical progress, some illnesses, including metastatic cancer, ALS, and Parkinson's disease, continue to rob patients' dignity and self-determination at the end of life.

I recognize that others feel differently about medical aid in dying. This act does not question their rights or values. A fundamental principle of the practice of medicine is patient autonomy, the right of individuals to apply their own values in making health decisions. It is not appropriate for me as a physician to override the decisions of competent patients. Even before I developed cancer, I would have provided medical aid in dying, were it legal, to my terminally ill patients who requested it.

When this act becomes law in Maryland, I intend to go through the process to get the medications. Whether I eventually choose to take them or not, once I have them in my possession, I will be more able to focus on living with less fear of pain and loss of dignity.

As a person with terminal cancer and as a Maryland physician, I strongly encourage each of you to vote YES for the End of Life Option Act.

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