

Support HB 403 – End-of-Life Option Act

TO: Chair Luke Clippinger and House Judiciary. Com.
FROM: Phil Caroom
DATE: 2/16/24

HB 403 is subtitled the “The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings and the Honorable Shane E. 4 Pendergrass Act.” Appropriately, it also could recall a third name - the Honorable Aris T. Allen, M.D.

Dr. Allen, after his military career, became a medical doctor, was active in civic and community affairs (serving on boards for the Anne Arundel County School Board, the American Cancer Society, his church-Mt. Moriah A.M.E., and many others). He also was a lifetime member in the NAACP.

Elected to the Maryland House of Delegates and State Senate, he also served as the first African-American chair of the state Republican party and ran as a Republican nominee for Lt. Governor in 1978.

Ultimately, Dr. Allen’s admirable life came to an end when he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 1991. Familiar with the painful prognosis and his short life expectancy, Dr. Allen ended his own life with a gunshot. He understood that he had few more palatable options under the laws of Maryland. And those laws as to legal medical assistance for a terminal patient have not changed significantly since then.

Please pass HB 403 to give Marylanders with terminal illnesses, their families and their physicians an option that is more peaceful and humane.

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PLEASE NOTE: Phil Caroom files this testimony for MAJR and not for the Md. Judiciary.