

Testimony by Renee Cantori in Support of
Maryland End-of-Life Option Act (HB403/SB443)

Hello -

My name is Renee Annette Cantori. I have spent much of my life in Pasadena and Annapolis, Maryland, and I support the Maryland End-of-Life Option Act (SB443).

I would like to thank Chair Peña-Melnyk, Chair Clippinger, and members of the House Health & Government Operations and House Judiciary Committees for considering my testimony. I am writing this testimony for myself, as well as for my children, my grandchild, who live in Maryland. I also am writing this testimony on behalf of other family members and my friends and any terminally ill Marylander who wishes to have autonomy in this most important, personal choice. Additionally, I have written testimony on my mother's behalf every time this legislation has come up for consideration. My mother, however, recently passed away in hospice. She was 100 years old.

I mention hospice because I think it's important for legislators to know that supporters of medical aid and dying (MAID) are not adverse to hospice. In fact, my mother-in-law, in addition to my mother, my mother-in-law, and my father used hospice services.

I, like many supporters, view MAID as one additional tool to allow mentally capable, terminally ill adults additional end-of-life care options, in this case the option to obtain prescription medication they can decide to take to peacefully end their suffering if it becomes unbearable.

In many cancer patients towards the end of life, there is breakthrough pain that cannot be managed through pain medicine.

This happened to the husband of a friend of mine in Maryland, as well as to a relative of mine in New Jersey. They died in complete agony. It was very difficult to hear the stories, especially when realizing that had MAID been legal, they could have had the option to avoid this suffering. However, this option was denied to both of them. Cancer - the same form that my relative in NJ had - is what runs in my own family.

You likely know there has been no evidence in any of the 10 states and Washington, DC, that authorize a form of medical aid in dying, that this legislation has ever been abused. As you can see, the way the bill is written there are multiple safeguards to ensure that only those who are capable of making a decision and physically capable of taking this prescription medicine can opt for MAID.

I also don't have to tell you that there is overwhelming support in Maryland for MAID as polls year after year show.. Even if you personally would not choose to use this option, I ask that you allow it for those who potentially would wish to do so.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Renee Cantori