

HB0403_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

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TESTIMONY ON HB#/0403 – FAVORABLE

End-of-Life Option Act (The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings and the Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass Act)

TO: Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#0403, End-of-Life Option Act (The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings and the Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass Act)

Dignity in dying, letting an individual determine the course of their death when facing an incurable and fatal illness, is a very personal decision. Each religion deals with and treats dying differently. Some faiths resist it strongly, others permit it, and still others, especially those without any specific religious belief, are neutral or supportive of death with dignity.

The opposition to this bill has always been based on a specific religious view of the issue. The current laws are based on invoking and mandating that religious view of death on everyone even if that is not their belief. There is no compelling government interest in prolonging suffering for a patient or family that can be physical, mental, economic, or contrary to the patient's religious worldview.

It is time for the government to stop enforcement of one religious code on everyone including non-adherents to that faith based viewpoint. This bill says the government will support an individual's right to decide on their death, subject to rational controls, without penalizing that individual and anyone assisting in implementation of their considered decision. While the bill's effect might violate a religious code and horrify its congregations that does not confer a right for them to override another's faith and competence in making this choice.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB0403.