

## **HB403 -Fav**

The Hon. Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair  
The Hon. Bonnie Cullison, Vice-Chair  
Health and Government Operations  
Committee

The Hon. Luke Clippinger, Chair  
The Hon. J. Sandy Bartlett, Vice-Chair  
Judiciary Committee

February 14, 2024

### Re: Testimony of Ethel B. Hill in Support of HB 403- End-of-Life Option Act

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 403.

My name is Ethel B Hill, Esq. I am a long time Howard County resident and currently live at the Residences of Vantage Point Retirement Community in Columbia. At 91 years old I have a lifetime of experience and a specific point of view to share.

My 56-year-old brother, District Justice William L. Brown Jr., died October 12, 1990, six months after being diagnosed with terminal lung cancer. The memory of watching my brother suffer, as an incurable illness ravaged his body, is still fresh in my mind. He experienced hallucinations and begged for relief from the excruciating pain. His wife removed firearms from their home to prevent self-harm. I wish he had had the compassionate option, offered by this bill, to choose a peaceful transition.

No matter how present we are for our loved ones in their time of need, we cannot accompany them for their entire journey. They walk the last mile alone. This bill gives them control over how and when they reach their final resting place, allowing them to act according to their own conscience as informed by their personal faith and beliefs.

I understand some have expressed concern that church affiliated African Americans do not support this bill. Not so. I am not a unicorn but reflect the views of many in my community who believe legislators should not regulate this deeply personal decision or vote against the bill because of their or others' religious views.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I urge your favorable consideration of HB 403.

Ethel B. Hill  
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