

Good afternoon,

I am Rev. Thea A. Wilson, Director of Civic Engagement of the First Baptist Church of Glenarden International; I am here representing my Pastor, John K. Jenkins Sr, and our congregation to express our strong opposition to the End of Life Option Act.

Our vast community of parishioners in Prince George's County and across the state fear that this bill would cause significant harm. Black and Latino communities have for too long faced adverse medical outcomes at an alarmingly higher rate than any other community, and the risk of doctors, health insurance companies, and even family and friends seeing physician-assisted suicide as an affordable option for terminally ill patients is real.

In our community, where the trust between doctors and patients is critical for seeking medical attention, the introduction of physician-assisted suicide presents a severe challenge to this essential bond. Our recent experience with challenges related to COVID-19 vaccine acceptance in our congregation highlights the importance of maintaining and reinforcing trust in the healthcare system. Allowing physicians to participate in the termination of patients' lives directly undermines efforts to foster and maintain this trust.

In conclusion, our church's opposition is deeply rooted in our belief in the value of every human life. This bill is not just immoral but also dangerous for the most vulnerable and marginalized in Maryland. We strongly urge you to oppose this bill. We believe there are more compassionate and dignified ways to address end-of-life care through palliative care, hospice services, and comprehensive support for patients and their families.

Thank you.