

This is my written testimony opposing HB403, the bill that would legalize and promote assisted suicide. I support the protection of human life at every stage and condition.

- Legalizing Assisted Suicide enables health insurance and medical providers to deny life sustaining care to patients and evade liability for the death of patients.
- There are no standard requirements that each patient receives mental health screening and counseling. A screening from a doctor untrained in mental health is not sufficient to assess a patient's true needs.
- No family notification is required.
- One in three patients who fill the lethal prescription-typically 100 pills, decide against taking it. There are no safeguards to ensure the unused drugs stay out of the hands of children and prescription drug dealers. This is particularly irresponsible, as we are experiencing an opioid crisis nationwide.
- No doctor or nurse is required to be present when the patient ingests the lethal dose. If something goes wrong, any physical or emotional complications must be handled solely by the patient and those witnessing the death.
- Assisted Suicide laws make suicide socially acceptable. States which have legalized Assisted Suicide have experienced increased suicide rates.
- Taxpayers foot the bill to pay for the lethal drugs and doctor visits.
- The poor as well as those with disabilities would be faced with choosing suicide as an option so as not to become a burden on their loved ones. To the most vulnerable, a right to die may become a responsibility to die.
- The American Medical Association (AMA) recently re-affirmed its opposition to assisted suicide because it is fundamentally incompatible with the physician's role as healer.

Pushing an assisted suicide measure will further divide our state. This measure may be labeled by some as "progressive", but it would be antithetical to authentic human progress. Real progress is measured not by devaluing the lives of the sick and the elderly, but by expanding the sphere of protection for all.

Again, please reject HB403, the Assisted Suicide Measure.

Joseph P. Gillin

21 Castle Cliff Court, Silver Spring, MD 20904

LD14