

**Testimony in Support of HB 403-  
End-Of-Life Option Act (The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings  
and the Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass Act)**

TO: Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Chair, and  
Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee and  
Luke Clippinger, Chair and Members of the Judiciary Committee  
FROM: Erin Forte, Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland  
DATE: February 16, 2023

I urge you to support **HB 403 End-Of-Life Option Act** on behalf of my grandmothers, both of whom have passed. While they died after protracted battles with cancer and lung/heart issues, these were ultimately NOT their causes of death. Both were in immense pain with little to no quality of life. Their treatment options had (separately) been exhausted, leaving them with little choices.

Both expressed a desire to live while they could appreciate life and to not live once their life was no longer in their control.

Their definitions of this differed, but similarities included:

1. not being able to feed themselves,
2. not being able to walk, not being able to complete their toilet functions independently, and
3. not being able to control their pain.

Despite all of these conditions being met—and being told that they were not expected to live longer than six months—their only options were to wait for a natural death or refuse food and liquids.

I sincerely hope that nobody else has to watch their grandmothers starve and dehydrate themselves to death. It was absolutely horrifying and there was very little we could do to help them in any way—besides bearing witness so they were not alone. They should have had the option of peaceful and pain free ends to their lives.

I hope to live many more years, but I hope that if—and when—I am in the same position that I will have a better end of life option than either of them.

Please support HB 403-End of Life Option Act for Maryland.

*Erin Forte*  
District 33