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I worked as an Occupational therapist in adult acute care, acute rehab, as well as for 25 years in homecare and hospice. I was a caregiver for my mother at the end – she died of what I have- metastatic breast cancer. I have seen the extent of what neurological diseases and cancer due to a person, their family, and the sense of loss of control over one's life that develops. I had cancer in 2011 with treatment into 2013, and once I passed the 5 -year mark cancer free, I never expected it again. But I found out I had cancer again in May 2021, and that it was throughout my body, including my lungs, liver, lymph nodes, soft tissue, bones, skull, and brain.

One of the worst parts about my cancer this round is not just the cancer and all the damage it has done to my body, but the treatment itself. Brain radiation was the worst thing I have ever done. The first 3 types chemo were horrible, with difficult to control symptoms, and I continued to get worse. Now on chemo number 4, this miracle drug has kept me alive well past any expectations. It has improved my cancer and I was "stable", and had NO actively growing cancer for 4 months. They found 2 new brain tumors less than a month ago. I'm a chemo "lifer" though, and will need to continue every 3 weeks, until I die, or my body rejects it. In my life and activities though, it means only the last 10 days of my 21-day cycle can I have a functional life, as the first 10 days are highly symptomatic and limiting. But I persevere, because in spite of it all, I like life and choose to continue to fight, until I can't anymore.

But with all the cancer damage, and the treatment damage, as well as continued chemo, life is still a continuing declining struggle. Having been a therapist, caregiver, and patient, I know what to expect. I don't want to suffer the way my mother or my patients had to near the end of their lives. My patients used to tell me that they were "done ", "ready", when they were 2 or 3 weeks from their death. That they just wanted to "go home and be with God, and my relatives". I don't choose to suffer or put my family through the taking care of me,... the suffering of the near-the-end pain and dying processes. I want people to remember me for who I am – the funny, playful, devoted, observant, attentive person, ... and the protective friend they have always known. I choose to have a peaceful transition to death. If I remain mentally competent near the end, I would choose to utilize Medical Aid in Dying.

I realize this choice is not for everyone. But it should be another option. Please pass this bill so that people who qualify and are interested in a peaceful transition, could utilize it.

Thank you for listening.