



## **OPPOSE HB403 - TESTIMONY BY KATHY KELLY, DEMOCRATS FOR LIFE OF MARYLAND**

Democrats for Life of Maryland, which is a chapter of Democrats for Life of America (DFLA), opposes HB403, End of Life Option Act sponsored by Delegate Terri Hill and other delegates. Democrats for Life opposes Assisted Suicide, and notes in its Issue Statement on this matter, that pain is not even among the top reasons that people request assisted suicide, but rather people seek it because they fear they will be a burden on others. For this reason, Democrats for Life supports palliative care, and points with caution to the example of the Netherlands, where euthanasia was first limited to perceived cases of “hopeless or unbearable suffering,” but later assisted suicide cases involved conditions such as blindness or depression.

We are concerned that Maryland is throwing support to a bill which encourages people to consider seeking assisted suicide instead of prioritizing their need to seek treatment of various health issues (including depression). We also point to the fact that in November 2023, the AMA rejected a resolution to support physician-assisted suicide; indeed, it even rejected an option to be neutral on this issue. Instead, the AMA supported its current code, which states that physician-assisted suicide is fundamentally incompatible with the physician’s role as healer, would be difficult or impossible to control, and would pose serious societal risks. In fact, it maintains that physicians must aggressively respond to the needs of the patient at the end of life. We can see for the need to exercise precaution in the suicide issue by looking to the example of the distinguished physician and scientist Dr. Jerome Lejeune, whose discovery of the genetic basis of Down Syndrome was later used by others to search for and target preborn children with that condition for death, rather than keeping a focus on more research into this condition and additional support for those who bear it. With assisted suicide, there are similar slippery slopes.

To learn more about the drawbacks of assisted suicide, we encourage you to view the documentary by The Dignity Mandate, a Maryland nonprofit dedicated to raising awareness of policy issues that undermine human dignity:

*Shining the Light on Assisted Suicide*

<https://thedignitymandate.org/documentary>

Democrats for Life of Maryland encourages you to table this bill, and not allow it to go to a vote on the Senate floor.

Kathy Kelly

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