

**Testimony of Stephanie Packer in Opposition to HB 403**  
**February 16, 2024**

I am Stephanie Aguayo Packer, a Latina California mother. In 2012, I was diagnosed with scleroderma and given three years to live. As you can see, I have outlived that prognosis and am relieved that I am alive to care for my children.

Shortly after California passed its law to legalize assisted suicide, my doctors prescribed an expensive new treatment. When I asked my insurance company about coverage of the treatment, my request was denied. I asked if they would cover a lethal dose of drugs under the new assisted suicide law and was told they would for a co-pay of a mere \$1.20. I was stunned that much cheaper lethal drugs would be available to me rather than treatment to save my life. Fortunately, I eventually received coverage for the treatment I sought.

My health journey has not been easy. I have been in and out of hospice for the past six years with predictions that I only had six months or less to live. Each time, I qualified for lethal drugs and lived in fear that with my next prognosis, treatment would be denied in favor of cheaper lethal drugs. My children need me, and as long as I can bear the treatment offered, I want to live. And, my situation has improved so much that I recently married, am now the mother of seven children and have a job.

Please don't place mothers and other people in Maryland in the position I found myself in where months and years of life could have been denied. Legislators must vote against **HB 403**.

Thank you.