



Testimony is respectfully submitted on behalf of the nationwide Association of American Physicians and Surgeons - to the Maryland General Assembly in opposition to SB 443/HB 403 in March 2024 by Dr. James Kelly- a Maryland physician and adult, child, adolescent and forensic psychiatrist for 37 years.

I am a Maryland psychiatrist treating incarnated Marylanders. Maryland outlawed the death penalty for violent murders. This bill reestablishes the death penalty from law abiding citizens; it approves the use of the same deadly drugs for self- murder / assisted suicide that are used for the death penalty.

Incarcerated citizens are a vulnerable population. They have less choices and less control over their health care. Profits will always be greater to substitute death in place of medical treatment especially for a vulnerable population.

Research has shown that most people seeking legal assisted suicide do so for **emotional, social and financial reasons** such as depression, feeling unwanted and a burden and **NOT** due to physical illness terminal illnesses, or unbearable pain.

People suffering from unbearable pain or terminal illnesses want to live and do not want to kill themselves generally, until they become depressed, feel unloved and a burden to their family. Research has shown that suicides tend to be a “contagious” and that children of parents who suicide have a 300% increase of suicide. This bill is asking you legislators to personally decide if you vote that **SELF-MURDER/ SUICIDE** is a good thing -that the government should legalize, legitimize and promote or is suicide a tragedy!!!

What is the point of all of the funding of suicide prevention programs if now the Maryland legislature is going to say that the M.G.A. is against suicide -- except when someone is actually suicidal and wants to kill themselves???

Please do not be deceived this bill is **NOT** about providing compassionate care options or providing autonomy to suffering people. Every year there are over 800,000 suicides in America -that means every 40 seconds someone kills themselves.

The choice, methods, time and place of suicide have always been tragically available and under the control of each individual - this is proven by a suicide every 40 seconds. This bill is about replacing helpful treatments with legitimizing and promoting self-murder /suicides.

Promoters of suicide claim that all people suffering from depression or any mental illness will be referred to a “mental health care provider” for a “mental health assessment”. But the truth is far different from their claims.

Research has shown that such claims are never true. Recent research has shown that the majority of people requesting assisted suicide have symptoms of depression illness by that only 1%- 3% of patients in Oregon actually have a mental health assessment- and such assessments are rarely comprehensive psychiatric evaluations done by expert psychiatrists.

Proponents of the bill claim that many well-documented continual neglectful circumstances and abuses of physician assisted suicide observed in other countries and other states will never of course occur in Maryland --as it has occurred everywhere else in the world and in other states that have legalized physician assisted suicide.

Proponents of this bill -in an effort to gain your approval -claim that this bill provides plenty of adequate safeguards- but they know very well that those hypothetical safeguards will be reinterpreted, challenged in court, changed and eliminated and will be at best only temporary.

This bill gives providers/facilities legal protection and justification, and the means and power to prescribe deadly experimental unproven poisons to the most vulnerable people in our communities. This bill demands that physicians become liars. It demands that physicians lie by documenting that the patient died from some potential future natural cause instead of reporting the truth- that they were killed from prescription poisons. This bill gives doctors the power and authorization to arrange the deaths of vulnerable desperate people. It legitimizes abandoning the physicians' Hippocratic oath and promise- to never abuse or harm their patients, and to become liars. Once this **permanent damage** is made to the doctor-patient relationship how can we ever **trust our physicians again?**

Please do not be fooled by the professional suicide promoters who are claiming that this bill will actually help a few people. They may have solicited some supporters who may actually believe that this will help some people -- but the real net result will be **promoting, legitimizing and increasing death and suicide** and establishing new Maryland-based **for-profit government- approved suicide industries**. It will also legitimize **denying care** to people and **encouraging suicides** in an effort to **save money and increase profits**.

The Association of American Physicians and Surgeons respectfully requests that you **DO NOT** give doctors or the healthcare industry approval to **prescribe deadly poisons**.

Please vote **NO** on **SB 443/HB 403**