

Deborah Brocato
Senate Bill 701
Opposed

Good afternoon,

I am here to encourage you to withdraw SB701, the End of Life Option Act.

This bill cannot be fixed because the very premise of the bill is wrong. For all intents and purposes, this legislation creates a right to suicide and a right to have others assist in that suicide. Suicide is not healthcare and should not be considered an option for those who are suffering.

Thirty-four years ago, my father used an industrial electric cord to hang himself. He suffered from alcoholism and depression. In his despair, he thought it would be better if he no longer lived. He was wrong. Our family became even more disjointed and anguished. If he had lived, each day was another day for him to conquer alcoholism and depression. Today, we have a better understanding of treating addiction and mental illness.

Sadly, every day, many people successfully commit suicide, and they do it without legislation telling them they have a right to do it and how to do it. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide has been the tenth leading cause of death for the past ten years with a total of 47,173 deaths by suicide in 2017. That comes down to roughly 129 people committing suicide every single day of the year.

Twenty-three years ago, my mother died of cervical cancer. For the last 3 months of her life, she was bedridden, and my siblings and I cared for her at home. She had plenty of pain medicine and we used it to manage her pain. There is a difference between managing pain and overdosing someone to end their life. Every day mom lived was another day of hope. Every day, she hoped for a cure or a miracle. Near the end, she refused pain medicine because she wanted to be more awake until she died.

Supporters of this bill claim it is limited to those with a terminal diagnosis, but this legislation confers a new right, a right to suicide, to a certain group of people along with a right to have doctors assist in the suicide. Laws cannot give rights to only certain groups of people so we know this will expand to other groups who consider themselves terminal. The word "terminal" demonstrates how a law like this could be broadly expanded. It all depends on how and who is defining "terminal." Supporters of this bill also claim that suicide is a healthy alternative. Suicide is an end result of depression and despair. Suicide is not a treatment solution for the suffering.

What our suffering fellow citizens need is a message of hope and caring. Until there were antibiotics, there were no antibiotics. Until there were chemotherapy drugs, there were no chemotherapy drugs. Until there was open heart surgery, there was no open-heart surgery. Every day, there are researchers, doctors and scientists working to find new cures, new

medicines, new treatments. Every day that an ALS patient or a CF patient or an addict lives is another day they might see a breakthrough. We do not know the day when the right protein will be found to fight multiple sclerosis or the day when cervical cancer will be cured or the day when the right combination of therapy and medicine is found to successfully treat schizophrenia, depression and other mental illnesses.

All of these suffering people need to be reminded that medical advances happen every day. They deserve hope and appropriate treatment for their suffering, not a death solution.

This bill does not serve the best interests of the citizens of Maryland and needs to be withdrawn and shredded.

Thank you for your time.