

Judiciary Proceedings Committee of the Maryland Senate

Testimony in Support of SB0701 – End-of-Life Options Act

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Greetings from Garrett County to the Chair and members of the Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee. My name is Ron Krug, I live in Grantsville, and I'm with you today to express my unequivocal support for SB0701, the End-of-Life Options Act, which I ask you to pass. Thank you very much for providing me with the opportunity to share my story.

I'm a five-year-plus survivor of stage III pancreatic cancer. The five-year survival rate for my cancer is only 3%, so I am a very grateful member of a very small club. Fighting the cancer was tough, but fortunately it was never terminal. I was never given the terrible news that I had only weeks or months to live.

With Garrett County having a small population, people learned quickly about my survival. Because of this, complete strangers who became informed that a loved one or friend had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer would contact me, asking to meet with me or to have me meet the person who had received the unfortunate diagnosis. I always said yes. Inevitably, I would remain in close contact with these folks throughout their ordeal, including frequent visits to hospitals. Unfortunately, only one of them survived more than a few months.

And here is my point: every one of these good people suffered terribly at the end of their lives. Most were in great pain, often excruciating pain. They were profoundly sad, as you would expect. And they were often worried about the costs that were piling up just to keep them alive, with no hope for recovery and with the knowledge that the pain and suffering would only become more acute until death finally brought relief.

Some of these patients told me specifically that they wish they would pass away, or that they couldn't wait for the end to come. One even stated that we treat dogs and cats more humanely than people, since we put them out of their misery when the pain becomes unbearable.

So, I ask you to please support SB0701, the End-of-Life Options Act. Give people who qualify the choice to end their lives with grace and dignity. Let the people and their families decide what is appropriate under their particular circumstances. Again, thank you very much for your time.