

MARYLAND PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY



March 10, 2023

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Re: March 7th Hearing on SB845: Inaccurate Testimony

The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee
House Office Building Room 425
6 Bladden Street
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

Dear Chairman Pena-Melnyk:

During the March 10th hearing on House Bill 933, End-of-Life Option Act, Michael J. Strauss, MD presented favorable testimony and quoted findings from a recent Maryland Psychiatric Society (MPS) survey. The information he presented was **inaccurate and inflated**.

Dr. Strauss, who has no affiliation with our organization, noted in his testimony that "57%" of MPS members support medical aid in dying. **This is not factual**. When asked, "In principle, a person in this situation (*a competent person with a terminal condition who has significant pain, suffering and/or functional deterioration, despite adequate treatment*) should have the right to elect to end their life" only **47.7% of respondents noted they "agree"**. In response to whether a physician should prescribe lethal medication to these patients, **only 26.7% agreed**. It is important to note that only **23% of our members responded** to the survey. Because the rate was so low, we did not publish the findings, and they were only shared internally. In addition, respondents were advised that this survey was not meant to assess your position on any specific piece of legislation that might be proposed in Maryland.

It is troubling that Dr. Strauss not only chose to quote a non-published survey but also misrepresented the findings and skewed them to support his testimony. **The MPS opposes this bill as written**.

Please contact MPS Legislative Committee staff person, Meagan Floyd (mfloyd@mdpsych.org) with any questions or concerns you have regarding this letter.

Sincerely

The Maryland Psychiatric Society Executive Committee

cc: Members House Government and Operations & Judiciary Committees