

Crystal Kijesky
11980 Provident Drive
LaPlata, MD 20646

HB933– OPPOSED

Aid in dying is not a “compassionate choice.” Compassion does not include the intentional killing of human beings.

I have loved ones who have passed away in the last two years. In their life, they were given a choice in how they died. This bill, HB933, is not needed.

My mother-in-law passed away in December 2021 after a lengthy battle with cancer. Finally, what took her life was unexplained bleeding and sepsis. She was loved beyond measure and we are grateful for the “extra” sixteen years after her cancer diagnosis. Treatments of chemotherapy and radiation as well as life-saving procedures by surgeons at George Washington Hospital in 2017 helped to extend her life is what compassion looks like.

My father was living pretty well with run-of-the-mill health issues from his 50s through his early 60s plus a rare lung condition from his time in the military. Finally, what took his life was aggressive (turbo) pancreatic cancer. My mom and I were with him until the end in May 2022. My mother, who he was a primary care-giver to for the last 40 years, held his hand as he took his last breath. She continues to cherish the time they had together, as she says, “till the end.” I have attached a photo so you can see what compassion looks like.

Another personal story is about my mom, Rosa. She was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in 1982. She was 24 years old; I was three years old. Thankfully, “aid in dying” was not available to her through coercion and she participated in early trial drugs at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Receiving the first doses of interferon Alpha and Beta. She helped forge the way for new and groundbreaking methods to treat MS. Many in her support group from the 1980s did not live past a few years of their diagnosis; dying from complications of MS.

She went from wheel-chair bound to walking after the early treatments. She then lost her eyesight to MS, becoming legally blind by the mid-1990s. Thankfully, she participated in laser surgery trials at the NIH. She regained enough sight to continue to work in accounting through the late 1990s and read and enjoy every day as a gift.

My mom’s health has ebbed and flowed with highs and lows. She is an absolute inspiration showing my family, including her three grandchildren, that living each day is worth it.

She suffers daily with chronic pain in her arms and legs. She is now in a wheelchair for longer distances and lives in a nursing home after my dad’s passing. She takes advantage of many activities- from concerts to bingo. She brings joy to the nursing staff where she lives and has a group of friends who all look forward to the little joys of the day like sunshine and a warm

breeze. She reads large print books on her kindle and printed books from the library. It takes her a while, but she enjoys what she can do.

Aid in dying would risk the lives of people, such as my mom, who may seem disabled to the able bodied person.

Cost for chronic illness care and treatment have a vast range. The cost for MS interferon dosing is over \$10,000 for each injection.

[Rebif Prices, Coupons, Copay & Patient Assistance - Drugs.com](#)

Also, insurance has stopped paying for life-extending treatments in states like Oregon, where assisted suicide laws have been in effect for years. We have data.

[Oregon Offers Terminal Patients Doctor-Assisted Suicide Instead of Medical Care | Fox News](#)
[Death Drugs Cause Uproar in Oregon - ABC News](#)

Nevada's disability right group compiled a list of confirmed awful cases which should give great pause when hearing and voting on HB933.

[OpenExhibitDocument \(state.nv.us\)](#)

One that struck me is below. Imagine how awful it would be for a family member after two and a half days thinking your loved one is gone, then having them back, with all the ramifications of whatever the pills have done to further decline their mental state.

“• David Prueitt²⁹ took his prescribed lethal overdose in the presence of his family and members of the assisted-suicide advocacy group Compassion & Choices. After being unconscious for 65 hours, he awoke. His family leaked the failed assisted suicide to the media. Oregon OHS issued a release saying it "has no authority to investigate individual Death with Dignity cases." 30”

Maryland does not need to create risk for the well-being of all Marylanders in the name of “choice.”

For all of these reasons, I urge you to please issue an unfavorable report on **HB933**.

Sincerely,
Crystal Kijesky
LaPlata, MD

Rosa and Harry - Mom and Dad – together until the end. Nov. 25, 1977-May 16, 2022

