

Good afternoon,

My name is Cathy Larner-Beckett and I live in Annapolis. I am a retired special education principal, a cancer survivor, and a Catholic.

I am here to ask you to support the End of Life Options Act because it allows people with a terminal diagnosis to have control and dignity, and the option for a peaceful death, at the end of their lives.

I've watched both my parents, Catholics from birth, die. Despite hospice's administration of morphine, my father was in intolerable pain. We watched helplessly as this combat veteran, Hall of Fame Boxer, scream in pain while his family stood by hoping, and praying desperately for his suffering to end.

My mother, also a devout Catholic supported this end-of-life option prior to her death. When she was going into hospice with a prognosis of 6 months of life, she cried with joy that there was an end in sight to her own suffering.

She did not die in the 6 months the doctors' predicted, but there was no quality of life in that time. They were miserable for her and her family who watched her waste away, literally. This woman, who normally weighed 145 pounds, was a mere 76 pounds at her death. **Her living was not extended but her suffering was.**

The January 2023 Gonzales Poll of Maryland voters revealed that 71% of Marylanders, **your constituents**, support this option. It gives Marylanders the right to bodily autonomy, prochoice rights we protect prior to birth that should extend to the end of our lives.

Over 45 years of combined data from DC and the 10 states that now have this option have shown **not a single case of abuse**. Individuals with a cognitive disability, dementia or mental illness and people who are physically unable to self-administer the medication **are NOT** eligible to use this option. **To persuade or coerce someone to use this option is a felony.**

Lastly, this option is a CHOICE, not a mandate. Please don't deny this choice to all Marylanders. I ask that you vote FOR the End- of- Life- Option Act so that all terminally ill Marylanders have the right to choose a peaceful, dignified death.

Thank You.

Dr. Cathy Larner-Becket,

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