

PRO
End of Life Options Act Testimony HB 933
Elijah Cummings and Shane Pendergrass Act
March 10 2023

I'm Susan Lyon. I was raised in a staunch Catholic family, and I live in Rockville, Maryland.

I've witnessed *first-hand* what's possible once we pass the *End of Life Options Act*.

I was with my friend, Leah Ray, in Washington DC, when she raised her hand and sipped the legal, physician-prescribed medicine that ended her suffering.

Brilliant and kind, Leah embraced life. She daily celebrated her husband, Daniel. She'd been a reporter in Japan. She rode horses, created art, tutored Latin, pampered three dogs, and loved silent films.

Then, for six years, Leah's body was ravaged by cancer. She had spent years in both traditional and NIH experimental cancer protocols. But each eventually failed. In her last three months, her body sat in a chair from which she could not move. For three weeks, she could not eat.

But on November 15, 2019, Leah was back in charge. She wrested power away from the cancer that had ruled her life.

She determined the where and the when. Not the cancer. Not anyone else.

Leah died quickly and peacefully. Not among machines of a sterile hospital. but with those she treasured and who cherished her.

She died how she lived, with agency, dignity and resolve.

No one is forced to avail themselves of medical aid in dying, but for those who need it—and for those who love them—it is a godsend.

Please - pass this bill. And pass it *now*. Thank you.