

Please oppose SB845/HB933 End-of-Life Option Act. Assisted suicide sends the message that some lives are not worth living- individuals with disabilities, minorities, those experiencing poverty, individuals being treated for or have a history of mental illness, our veterans, and those suffering from prescription or other drug addictions.

Consequently, in a dollar driven health care environment, the inexpensive cost of assisted suicide is a great concern, as it can be used to reduce the amount of health-care dollars spent per patient. There are many stories of incorrect diagnoses and predictions, as well as numerous cases where people have lived far beyond their doctor's predictions, and some people who have been cured from their terminal disease. Do we want patients being pressured to end their lives with suicide as a "duty" to die to save money? Or to reduce the "burden" of living on those caring for them?

The Maryland General Assembly has already rejected some form of this bill in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019, and 2020. Here are the facts:

- This bill poses many dangers to those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- There is no standard requirement that each patient receive mental health screening and counseling prior to being assisted in their suicide.
- No family notification is required.
- There are no safeguards to ensure the unused drugs stay out of the hands of children and prescription drug dealers. This is particularly irresponsible, as we are experiencing an opioid crisis in our school system.
- No doctor or nurse is required to be present when the patient ingests the lethal dose. If something goes wrong, any physical or emotional complications must be handled solely by the patient and those witnessing the death.
- Assisted Suicide laws make suicide socially acceptable. States which have legalized Assisted Suicide have experienced increased suicide rates.
- Suicide and killing is against God's Law. God command, Thou Shall Not kill has no exceptions.

People living with terminal illness deserve more than the offer of a physician to facilitate their suicide. They merit true compassion and that is not found in a bottle of pills. True compassion is when people come alongside you in this journey.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask that you protect Maryland's most vulnerable citizens. I urge you to make an unfavorable vote on SB845/HB933 End-of-Life Option Act.