

PRO
End of Life Options Act Testimony SB 0845
Elijah Cummings and Shane Pendergrass Act
March 7, 2023

I'm Susan Lyon and I live in Rockville.

I'm here because I've witnessed first-hand what's possible for us in Maryland 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 medicines that ended her suffering.

Brilliant and kind, Leah embraced all of life. She was joyously married to her husband Daniel. She had been a reporter in Japan. She created art, tutored Latin, rode horses, sought out and loved silent films and TV westerns.

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

But, on November 15, 2019, Leah chose. She wrested power away from the cancer that had interrupted and ruled her life.

That day, *she* determined the where and the when. Not the cancer. Not anyone else.

Leah died quickly and peacefully. Not among machines or lost in the din of a sterile hospital. but at home with those she treasured and who cherished her. She left 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.