

FAVORABLE

SB 845 End-of-Life Option Act (The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings and the Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass Act)

To: Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair, Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice-Chair, and members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Rev. Linda Boyd

My support for SB 845 derives from my faith and my life experience. First, as a follower of Jesus Christ, I believe that each of us is made in God's image and each of us deserves dignity and respect. My reason for believing that God is in favor of the possibility of assisted dying is based in God being both loving and perfect. I cannot believe that God would demand that we suffer unnecessarily. It is incompatible with my conception of God that a patient be effectively tortured by being kept alive with no hope of anything but pain and deterioration. My sense of God is that God would not want that to happen to me much less any child of God.

Having been created in God's image, my faith tells me that, based on my understanding of the life and works of Christ, I will have to account for the choices that I make. The teaching of Christ is all about refusing to accept conventional religious wisdom, which would be easy but thoughtless, and instead steadfastly making one's own moral choices. Jesus chose to die rather than compromise this point. The gift that God has given to me is not life, but choices: to use my God-given gift to make my own moral decisions and be responsible for them. No one else can decide the value of my life for me, when it has no further use, if I choose to end it – with or without assistance. I will expect to have to explain myself to God.

My other basis for supporting this bill is my life experience---watching my beloved, elderly father be tortured by bone cancer until he died. Never would I have wished such suffering on anyone, much less my father. He was a man of intense faith—not the kind that you wear on your sleeve, but rather, he lived it daily. He never missed an opportunity to show love to his fellow human beings, regardless of their social and economic status. Because he did not have access to the choice that this law would provide, he was tortured for months. Morphine did not work after a while. He screamed out in pain over and over again.. No child of God should have to endure that.

The presence of this law would allow a dignified end to those wanting to have one, without requiring others to die against their wishes.

I ask you to support this bill. I ask for a favorable report.