



Testimony respectfully submitted on behalf of **The Association of American Physicians and Surgeons** – by Dr. James Kelly to The Maryland Senate – March 6, 2023.

The A.A.P.S. recognizes that so called “assisted suicide” is actually killing **vulnerable** people and encourages the Maryland General Assembly to vote **AGAINST SB 845/HB 933**.

As a psychiatrist, every day I have patients who feel **suicidal and hopeless**; and every day my staff and I help them overcome their suicidal ideas and want to live again. We do this by treating their underlying medical and emotional illnesses and by affirming their value as persons and their personal dignity in the midst of their suffering. Most people suffering from chronic pain and terminal illnesses want to live - until they are told and get convinced that they are a **burden** and are **worthless**, unloved, unwanted, and become depressed, and give up hope.

The major reason people give up on life is **NOT** from their **terminal illness** or physical pain it is because they are suffering from **depression, hopelessness** and emotional pain. We should be **helping people** who are suffering **not killing** them or helping them kill themselves. Proper treatment, even for those in great pain and those who have given up all hope, is effective, improves their quality of life and saves lives. Legalizing “assisted suicide” is actually licensing people to legally murder **innocent vulnerable**, depressed and distressed persons.

One of the worst things that can happen to a family is for someone in their family to die from suicide. Suicide tends to be “**contagious**”. Once there is a suicide in a family, the suicide rate in that family skyrockets. This phenomenon is known as “**Suicide Contagion.**” Suicide contagion will be even worse in a family that helped in killing their family member. Legalizing suicide will only increase the suicide rate in Maryland. Suicide is already a major crisis in Maryland. Last year **MD Senate Bill 94** was passed in order to address the suicide crisis and help reduce the suicide rate. We should not pass legislation that will increase the already high suicide rate. **SB 845/HB 933** will **definitely increase the suicide rate** in Maryland.

One of the great historic accomplishments for Maryland has been our historical medical breakthroughs and our worldwide reputation for excellent “Maryland Medicine”. There may be good but misguided intentions by the proponents of SB 845/HB 933 - but legalizing “assisted suicide” will totally change healthcare from a profession only devoted to saving and improving lives - to a **new industry** that will **PROFIT** by **DENYING HEALTHCARE**, encouraging **death** over treatment and create a new industry that profits by killing vulnerable people to increase profits. Suicide for any reason is still suicide. **Killing for any reason is still killing.** Legalizing “assisted suicide” will forever change Maryland’s reputation from “great **Maryland Medicine** to **Maryland Murders**”.

Please vote **NO** on SB 845/HB 933