

**Statement by Linda Lampkin in support of
SB 845, The End of Life Option Act**

My late husband Ron Dickey would have liked to have been here today to present his position on SB 845 – as he said in his **October 2022 op ed published by the Baltimore Sun:**

“For someone who is already dying, I want to say when I’m ready to go, not when the cancer is ready to take me.”

Unfortunately, he passed away on November 7.

In Maryland, we have affirmed that we should protect privacy over one's own body. Maryland legislators have made it a priority to ensure that health care needs are protected and private. But that principle of bodily autonomy needs to be extended to the end of life, not just the beginning.

Ron didn’t have a choice – a choice to avoid more suffering when he was out of options. A choice that he would have had if we lived in one of the 10 states plus DC that allow an End of Life Option. One in 5 Americans lives in a jurisdiction where there is a choice. But Maryland is not one of them.

And this is a choice – safeguards are built in and there is a long history of no problems. If you personally don’t think this choice is for you, then don’t use it. However, do think of others who want this option to end their suffering and pain. And that is clearly what my husband wanted.

Please let Ron’s frustrating experience energize your efforts to enact this bill to give terminally ill Marylanders a say in the peaceful ending of their lives. It’s only for those who qualify and those who want to use it. Marylanders have said they want this – 71% of them, according to a January poll.

When Ron was diagnosed with prostate cancer 4 years ago and there was only palliative care left for him, he said:

“I urge Maryland lawmakers to pass this bill, whether or not I’m still around. There will be someone right behind me that can benefit. I still want lawmakers to enact this bill for those that follow.”

Ron is not here today, but let’s get this done for the ones right behind him. The time is now!