

## **Oppose SB0443/HB0403 End-of-Life Option Act**

**Susan Seifried**

**410-507-8739**

Currently, it's illegal for anyone to help an individual commit suicide in Maryland. Perpetrators of the crime face prosecution and prison time. Existing Maryland laws outlawing assisted suicide provide for equal protection of all Marylanders regardless of race, creed, age, or disability.

That legislatively enshrined guarantee of life-saving protection for all Marylanders without discrimination would end with the enactment of the End of Life Option Act. The legislation empowering physicians to help patients kill themselves targets vulnerable senior citizens who would be the first to have their protections irrevocably stripped away. Other vulnerable populations would soon follow suit, since the Act would supercede and nullify long-standing laws that once protected them.

As many of us know from sad personal experience, suicide is already a far too easy thing to accomplish. The thousands of Marylanders who chose their dying day didn't ask the State's permission to do so. They made an autonomous decision not in accord with any State-dictated protocol.

Do proponents of the End of Life Option Act truly believe that Marylanders want the government to insert itself into this extremely personal, most intimate decision of a lifetime? The stated goal of the legislation is to provide patients with a self-chosen, compassionate exit from this life. Is it possible that an unstated and unintended benefit also could be that physician-assisted suicide is a proven way to help jurisdictions dramatically cut healthcare costs? To reap those benefits, all that needs to be done is to convince vulnerable individuals, vulnerable Maryland constituents, that they'd be doing their families a favor by ending their lives.