

Testimony of Ethel B. Hill in Support of SB 443
February 8, 2024

Good afternoon.

I am here to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 443. My name is Ethel B Hill, Esq. I am a long time Howard County resident and currently live at the Residences of Vantage Point retirement community. At 91 years old I have a lifetime of experience and a specific point of view to share.

My 56-year-old brother, District Justice William L. Brown Jr., died October 12, 1990, died six months after his terminal lung cancer diagnosis. He suffered hallucinations, excruciating pain, and pleaded for relief. His wife removed firearms from their home to prevent self-harm. The memory of watching my brother's suffering, as an incurable illness ravaged his body, is still fresh in my mind. I wish he had had the compassionate option to choose a peaceful transition.

No matter how present we are for our loved ones in their time of need, we cannot accompany them for their entire journey. They walk the last mile alone.

This bill gives them control over how and when they reach the final resting place, allowing them to act according to their own conscience as informed by their personal faith and beliefs.

I hear concerns that church affiliated African Americans do not support this bill. Not so. I am not a unicorn but represent the views of many in my community who believe legislators should not regulate this deeply personal decision or vote against the bill because of their or others' religious views.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I urge your passage of Senate Bill 443.