



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

February 8, 2024

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Room 2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: Senate Bill 443 - The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings and the Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass Act - Support with Amendments

Dear Chair Smith and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this letter of support with amendments for Senate Bill (SB) 443 – *The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings and the Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass Act*. The bill would establish a process for an individual suffering from a terminal illness to request aid in dying with protections to ensure that the individual has the capacity to make the decision. The bill also requires the Department to establish regulations regarding the collection of data around the option and to publish an annual statistical report surrounding the process.

The Department supports this important legislation. In recent years, more states have adopted this option in recognition of individuals' right to bodily autonomy. The legislation, as noted above, contains numerous protections to ensure that individuals suffering from a terminal illness electing an end of life option have the capacity to make the decision.

The Department will submit proposed amendments around the reporting language to ensure that the reporting complies with best practices.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov or (410) 260-3190.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary