

**Testimony in Support of SB 443
End-Of-Life Option Act (The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings
and the Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass Act)**

TO: Senator Will Smith, Jr, Chair and members of the Judicial Proceedings
Committee
FROM: Lynn Cave
DATE: February 8, 2024

Hello. I'm Lynn Cave. When I first heard of Medical Aid in Dying as an option—years ago, when I was a healthy 20 something—I thought why should people who were facing imminent death have to suffer for any prolonged time. I was all for it. It made perfect sense.

Now I'm a 60-something in poor health. And having the option of Medical Aid in Dying could play a pivotal role as I face a cancer that will claim my life. I don't want my disease to choose when I die. I want to make that decision for myself when pain and suffering are all I have left.

Here's my story. I worked at the National Institutes of Health for 38 years, mainly in public affairs where I wrote press releases and pamphlets and ran public education campaigns. I also spent a few years in the part of the National Cancer Institute that ran cancer clinical trials.

Ironically, I'm now in a clinical trial to stabilize my metastatic eye cancer. My cancer has spread to my liver. It will never be cured, and I probably only have about two years to live. Eventually, the cancer will choke out the normal liver cells, which would normally cleanse toxins from my body. I expect there to be terrible pain. Once this cancer destroys my liver, most likely I will have about two weeks before all my internal systems slowly collapse, and I pass away.

Would you want to wait two weeks knowing you're going to die? Does pain ever enhance life? I don't want to perpetuate my own suffering for two long weeks, nor do I want my family to endure the agony caused by days and days of watching me die.

Believe me, I'm doing everything I can to live. I spend nearly five hours on the road between my home and Philadelphia every month for my treatment because a world renowned team there works to tame this cancer. And, If this clinical trial stops working, there are some limited options. But, once I've been through everything my doctors know to try, I don't want to extend my life if it gets to the point that I will suffer and die, no matter what my doctors do.

I hope you can make Medical Aid in Dying an option for me. It would be such a kindness for the Maryland legislature to pass this act. Some of us will thank you sooner, some later, but many of us with deadly illnesses will be glad for the opportunity to choose the time we die. Having the promise of a dignified death on my own terms is my greatest comfort for what's ahead.

So, I plead with you to follow the compassionate will of the Governor and the people of Maryland, over 70% of whom support Medical Aid in Dying, to make this choice a reality for Marylanders now. So they—so YOU—so I—don't have to suffer needlessly, when a prolonged death is what we face.

Thank you.

Lynn Cave

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