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FAV: Testimony in Support of S443

I am submitting this testimony in support of Senate Bill 443, the End-of-Life Option Act. I support this bill because I have always believed in what it stands for, and because I may need it.

At the age of 57, I was diagnosed with cancer. Treatment was not easy. First, over the course of several months, I was infused with three different chemotherapy drugs, with each infusion itself causing extremely painful headaches, followed by post infusion side-effects. That said, one of the chemo drugs I tolerated relatively well (for chemo), but the other two were rougher – increased pain, GI issues, exhaustion, hair loss, and eventually a heart issue. One of these infusions in particular was simply unbearable. I was sent to the ER, and then I was hospitalized with an *extremely* compromised immune system, an infection that needed IV antibiotics, and terrible pain. Because of my immune system's dangerously adverse reaction, my oncologist had to reconfigure my treatment plan, including eliminating two drugs' final infusion and reducing the amount of medicine in what ended up being my last infusion.

After chemotherapy, I had surgery in two sites, followed by twenty rounds of radiation. Finally, I made two multi-week attempts to take standard post-treatment medication to prevent my cancer from reoccurring. Both attempts failed because of intolerable side-effects.

My overall prognosis is good, but it is not great. There is a 20% chance my cancer will return, and if it does, I anticipate a terminal situation. If that happens, I want, and I am entitled to as an independent adult, the option to end my own life and avoid months of needless suffering.

Perhaps just as important to me is that the bill would protect family members who follow the law in good faith from civil or criminal liability, including assisted suicide. That is extremely important to me, because if I need to end my own life to due to cancer, I want to die with my husband holding my hand -- and not be terrified he would be held liable or punished.

I have given this significant thought. In the event my cancer returns and is terminal, I should have the option, the right, to end my own life to avoid needless suffering.

If I am six months from death by cancer, I - and my family - will have suffered enough. Thus, I respectfully request a favorable report for the End-of-Life Option Act.



Julie Reiley