

**Testimony by Chaplain Roslyn Sellman in Support of
End-of-Life Option Act HB1328
(The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings and The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass Act)**

Good afternoon, Delegates. I greet you in the strong and mighty name of Jesus Christ. I want to begin by offering my deepest gratitude to the Health and Government Operations Committee, and specifically to Chair Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk.

My name is Reverend Roslyn Sellman, and I stand before you today as an Itinerant Elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, a Board-Certified Clinical Chaplain, and a Pastoral Counselor with the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy. I have dedicated much of my chaplaincy to Home Hospice care, working with individuals from all walks of life—atheists, Jews, Protestants, Catholics, Indigenous people, Euro-Americans, and more. Through this work, I have learned the sacredness of death, a process often filled with tears, comfort, and compassion. These experiences have led me to a heightened sensitivity to the End-of-Life Option Act.

But today, I do not stand before you cloaked in titles or achievements. I stand here as a Black woman in the United States of America. A nation that has historically, and continues to, deny Black people their autonomy. A nation that has failed to pass the Elijah Cummings Voting Rights Act. A nation that denies truth and seeks to erase Black history from our textbooks. A nation that has weaponized access and choice, telling me what to do with my own body. A nation that seems intent on repeating history by using the Word of God to enslave us—all in the name of making America "great" again. For as long as I can remember, Black people have been fighting for the right to choose.

SB926 does not seek to constrain; it seeks to liberate. The bill does not advocate for impeding the most sacred time in anyone's life. Instead, our work is rooted in the belief that informed choices can lead to dignified, peaceful end-of-life experiences. This bill acknowledges that both life and death belong to the Creator and the creature.

Contrary to the spirit of supremacy that has polluted America, Black people possess the intellectual and moral capacity to make informed and wise decisions. We are made in God's image, endowed with wisdom, and created to be free from the constraints imposed by men's limited imaginations. We believe that having the freedom to make informed choices will lead to dignified and peaceful end-of-life experiences—where conversations about death and dying are normalized, and where individuals are supported in making choices that align with their desires and dignity.

If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, then you know that His personal relationship with God guided Him to understand when His mission on earth was complete. Jesus chose to die not apart from God, but in communion with God.

As the Psalmist says:

"Where can I go from Your Spirit?

Where can I flee from Your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, You are there;

if I make my bed in the depths, You are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn,

if I settle on the far side of the sea,

even there Your hand will guide me,

Your right hand will hold me fast." (Psalm 139:7-10)

Delegates, there is only one God, and it is only through Him that we have our autonomy. I urge you to be sober-minded as you consider this important issue, and do not allow the power of this world to diminish the rights of your citizens—especially the rights of Black citizens who have overwhelmingly raised their voices in support of their autonomy.

The central question that Bill SB926 presents is this: Will the Senate stand in opposition to the supremacist movement and uphold the rights of its citizens, including Black people? I pray that this Senate will make the right choice, will stand on the right side of history, and will remove the shackles from our autonomy.

Thank you.

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