



Ella Ennis, Legislative Chairman
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The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chairman
and Members of the Judiciary Committee
The Honorable Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk Chairman
and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Annapolis, Maryland

RE: **HB1328** -- End of Life Options Act – **UNFAVORABLE**

Dear Chairman Clippinger, Chairman Pena-Melnyk and Committee members,

The Maryland Federation of Republican Women strongly opposes HB1328. Legalizing assisted suicide is anathema to the sanctity of life, a central tenet of Judeo-Christian ethics. Our focus should be on providing those services that ensure the greatest quality of life to its natural end.

Physicians cannot definitively forecast how long a patient will live.

- Statistics from the State of Washington for 2016¹ reported that about 1/3 of the prescriptions issued were not used. Some patients died of other causes. Some died from ingesting the death prescriptions authorized in a previous year. This brings into question the ability to accurately project a patient's demise, negating the "likely to die within six months" criteria.

Most pain can be relieved or eliminated with medication or other treatments.

- Oregon's *Death with Dignity Act of 2023 Data Summary* stated, "As in previous years, the three most frequently reported end-of-life concerns were loss of autonomy (92%), decreasing ability to participate in activities that made life enjoyable (88%), and loss of dignity (64%). Uncontrolled pain was not one of the top three reasons for requesting aid in dying.

Patients may be pressured to end their lives.

- Elderly, disabled or extremely ill patients could be made to feel they are a burden on family and society, and that suicide is the answer. "Right to Die" can easily morph into "Duty to Die".
- An individual contemplating "assisted suicide" could be subjected to excessive pressure to choose medical suicide or even unknowingly be the victim of medical suicide as the solution for illness or disability.
- Assisted suicide could be expanded in the future to include teens and children. Parents could choose to eliminate infants if they have a disability.

¹ <https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/Documents/Pubs/422-109-DeathWithDignityAct2016.PDF>



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Patients who decline assisted suicide could be denied treatment and nourishment to hasten death.

- In the Netherlands, assisted suicide has advanced to a point where patients are euthanized without their knowledge. A January 2019 Article in NATIONAL REVIEW² reported:

"Also in 2017, some 1,900 Dutch people killed themselves, while the number of people who died under palliative sedation – in theory, succumbing to their illness while cocooned from physical discomfort, but in practice often dying of dehydration while unconscious [that is, terminal sedation] – hit an astonishing 32,000. Altogether, well over a quarter of all deaths in 2017 in the Netherlands were induced."

Patients with a serious but treatable illness could be denied treatment.

- There were reported cases in Oregon in 2008 where the state-run health system refused to provide physician-prescribed treatment for advanced-stage cancer patients, saying it was "inappropriate" for their situation, but offered to pay for assisted suicide prescriptions.

Prescribed lethal drugs could end up killing someone else by error or intent.

- Oregon's *Death with Dignity Act 2023 Data Summary*: 560 prescriptions issued -- only 367 people died from ingesting the death drugs (including 30 with prescriptions from previous years) -- 82 did not ingest the drugs and died of other causes. That leaves the disposition of 141 prescriptions (25%) unknown. What happened to the unused prescriptions?

People could be denied economic and home health assistance.

- Roger Foley, a 45-year-old Canadian, testified in 2020 via Zoom from his hospital bed to the Canadian Parliament Justice Committee that he had an incurable neurological disorder and had been told he would have to pay \$1,800/day in hospital costs or face a forced discharge, even though he couldn't get the necessary support to live at home. He said that "assisted dying is easier to access than safe and appropriate disability supports to live".

For these reasons, please give **HB1328** an **UNFAVORABLE** report.

Sincerely,
Ella Ennis
Legislative Chairman
Maryland Federation of Republican Women

² <https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/doctors-induce-twenty-five-percent-of-dutch-deaths/>