

TESTIMONY OF JESSIE S. BLACKBURN IN SUPPORT OF MARYLAND OF HB1328

My name is Jessie Blackburn.

I am a retired educator and resident of Takoma Park, Maryland, District 20.

I want to thank Health and Government Operations Committee Chair Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk and Committee members for considering my written testimony.

I am writing in support of HB1328

This legislation would allow mentally capable, terminally ill adults the end-of-life care option to obtain prescription medication they can decide to take peacefully and end their suffering if it becomes unbearable.

Washington DC and ten other states allow medical aid in dying, starting with Oregon in 1997.

In 2019, I had a rare form of breast cancer which had a poor prognosis and a high rate of recurrence. During my treatment, my greatest fear was a prolonged and painful death. The option of having medical aid in dying would have relieved much of this anxiety and brought me great comfort. I am now cancer-free, but not knowing what the future holds, I am hoping that I will have the option for a more gentle and dignified death should a terminal and painful cancer return in the future. For this reason, I am asking that the House of Delegates pass the Maryland End of Life Option Act (HB1328) this session.

It's time for Maryland residents to have this gentle dying option.

Thank you again for your consideration of this crucial issue.

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