



HB 1328: End-of-Life Option Act (The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings and the Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass Act)

Testimony of the Maryland Independent Living Network

OPPOSE – Against

House Health & Government Operations Committee, March 3, 2025

The Maryland Independent Living Network is a coalition of the Maryland Statewide Independent Living Council and the seven Maryland-based Centers for Independent Living (CIL). CILs are created by federal law. CILs work to enhance the civil rights and quality of services for people with disabilities. There are seven CILs located throughout Maryland, operated by and for people with disabilities. CILs provide Information and Referral, Advocacy, Peer Support, Independent Living Skills training, and Transition Services to individuals with disabilities in their communities.

The Independent Living Network submits this written testimony in **opposition** of HB 1328.

HB 1328 allows licensed physicians to legally prescribe lethal medication at the request of a patient who has been deemed “capable of making a medical decision” and has a terminal illness.

The Maryland Centers for Independent Living believe that all lives are worth living. HB 1328, if enacted, would endanger all vulnerable populations, such as the elderly and people with disabilities. Furthermore, HB 1328 has opened the door for abuse and coercion.

HB 1328, if enacted, would allow Maryland doctors to prescribe a lethal drug overdose to patients deemed to be terminally ill with less than six months to live. The extensive range of negative possible outcomes makes this bill dangerous rather than compassionate, and it destroys dignity rather than preserving it.

If enacted, HB 1328 has the potential to exploit disparities within the health care system in the most heinous way possible. Vulnerable, ill people would have the option to choose death because they feel like they are a burden on family and friends rather than basing that choice on their dignity and value.

Doctors' terminal diagnoses are speculative at best, and they are not accurately able to predict timelines, thus opening the possibility for ending life prematurely. There are no safeguards that can truly protect against the coercion and abuse of vulnerable populations that would surely occur if this bill is enacted.

The Maryland Centers for Independent Living **strongly oppose** HB 1328 because it fails to consider the negative impact it would have on vulnerable populations and those living with significant illnesses.

We appreciate the consideration of these comments.

The Maryland Independent Living Network **strongly opposes** HB 1328 and requests an unfavorable vote.

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