

**Testimony in Support of HB 1328 -  
End-Of-Life Option Act (The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings  
and the Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass Act)**

TO: Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Chair, and  
Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee and  
Luke Clippinger, Chair and Members of the Judiciary Committee  
FROM: David Dabney  
DATE: March 3, 2025

My sister, Lora, 74 years of age, is suffering from Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) disease, which was definitively diagnosed late last year in 2024. It is a neurological disorder that affects motor neurons, the nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord that control voluntary muscle movement and breathing.

Her case is one that has advanced rapidly, such that her overall quality of life has declined significantly and precipitously. The condition started in her throat muscles and has steadily progressed through to other muscles in her body, most noticeably in her legs, affecting her mobility. One small step in elevation is an immense challenge. She has reached the point of having trouble speaking, breathing, and swallowing.

Her prior condition and general health did not contribute to her current state in any reasonable way. As an acupuncturist, she was more focused on holistic medicine and eschewed medications and prescriptions. She led a very healthy lifestyle, i.e. moderation in all forms.

She has been an independent person, and managed the majority of her personal affairs herself. She has requested my wife's and my help putting her affairs in order, preparing for her imminent demise, but wanting to find a way to die with dignity. We have offered to have her stay with us for the terminal period with care, but that is unfair in her view. Why should she become a burden on others, why should she not be at liberty to decide her fate when death is imminent?

Her doctor diagnosed that she is in the terminal stage, whereby her life expectancy is less than 6 months. She is considering going to another state, where they allow non-residents to participate in Medical Aid In Dying. This appeals to her because it becomes her decision predicated upon the medical evidence defining her dire situation. Her anxiety levels are extremely high, and are exacerbated as her condition worsens and her future outlook diminishes. We feel her pain and see her anger at being imprisoned physically and mentally.

I am writing this letter with my wife and sister to appeal to you, the MD Government and law makers to approve **HB 1328**. But, this is more than a show of support for the passage of a bill, this is an appeal for personal consideration. We all have experienced death directly and indirectly in some form. We know that—regardless of the situation or condition of the person—we wished that they might achieve the final act with dignity, without pain, and with the knowledge that leaving this life was their own choice and supported by those around them.

Please pass this bill.

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