

**Testimony by Jessa Gillis in Support of
Maryland End-of-Life Option Act ([HB1328](#))**

My name is Jessa Gillis and I live in Rising Sun, Maryland. I would like to thank House Health & Government Operations Committee Chair, Delegate Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk and committee members for considering my testimony.

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

Washington, DC and ten states allow medical aid in dying. If Maryland chooses to do so, we would join these states, the first of which, Oregon, made its decision in 1997.

I was diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer in 2020. While my health is currently stable, I know it is just a matter of time before I run out of options. I am currently on my fifth line of treatment. With each new treatment, the cancer becomes harder to treat and the side effects become more challenging.

Last weekend, I went to my friend Ruth's funeral. Ruth had stage 4 ovarian cancer and was in hospice for three months before she passed. She was a strong proponent of medical aid in dying, but was unable to make that choice for herself, because of her state of residence. By the end, she was unable to eat or drink and was in significant pain. I wish she had been able to choose a kinder passing.

I would also like that for myself. Seeing Ruth's passing made it clear to me that the time has come for Maryland to join the states who allow their terminally ill citizens a kinder death. I plan to continue treatment as long as the results justify the side effects, and treat those side effects as they come, but I know there will come a time when there are no more available options. I know that you may not personally believe in this legislation, but I hope that you will help me gain the opportunity to choose an easier death.

Please pass medical aid-in-dying legislation this session.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, I would be happy to speak with you.

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