

Testimony by Neil J. Bixler, Esquire in Support of
Maryland End-of-Life Option Act HB 1328

Dear House Health & Government Operations Committee Chair, Delegate Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk, and Committee Members:

I live and work in Baltimore City, and I have enjoyed practicing law in Maryland since graduating from the University of Baltimore School of Law in 1992.

Unfortunately, I was recently diagnosed at Johns Hopkins with stage 4 pancreatic cancer which is terminal. I understand that the Maryland End-of-Life Option Act (the “Act”) nearly passed in the General Assembly last year. I have followed similar legislation in D.C. and in the 10 states that allow medical aid in dying, and I would like to use some of my time and energy before I die to help get the Act passed in this 2025 legislative session.

Perhaps one important question we should all ask ourselves is: How can we reduce human suffering? First, we acknowledge that such suffering exists. Then we find practical ways like passing the Act that would reduce such suffering, and give real peace of mind and comfort to people with a terminal illness, and to their families and friends as well. This is not some abstract concept; this is real life and death.

Therefore, I would like to respectfully request that the House of Delegates vote to pass the Act. I, and many others, strongly believe that each one of us as a human being has the inherent right to die with dignity and without unnecessary suffering. And unless you are willing to endure the actual suffering for someone else – a physical impossibility – then who among us should have the legal right, much less the moral one, to tell another you must needlessly suffer because my beliefs are different than yours? The question should answer itself, and so too should each of us be answerable to our own conscience, our own faith, or our own belief system when it comes to making the difficult and ultimate decision about dying from a terminal illness.

So please, vote to give your respective constituents the right, the freedom if they should so choose, to pass peacefully from a terminal illness and not in pain. Thank you for your time and careful consideration, and feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

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