

TESTIMONY ON SB 926 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
The End-of-Life Option Act

TO: Chair Smith and Vice Chair Waldstreicher and members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Cindy (Cecile) Brach, Silver Spring MD 20910

Date of Hearing: February 27, 2025

My name is Cindy Brach. I am a resident of District 20. I am submitting this testimony in support of the End-of-Life Option Act SB 926.

I recently retired from a federal agency where I worked on helping health systems communicate better so people could understand their options and make choices that are both informed by evidence and consistent with their values, goals, preferences, and circumstances. I believe in personal autonomy and no decision is more fundamental than whether to continue living with a terminal illness or die at a time of one's choosing.

I understand that some people are fearful that patients will be pressured to end their lives, especially uninsured, undereducated, and minority patients. However, there is no evidence of coercion in states that have passed similar legislation long ago. In fact, in Oregon and Washington most of the people who requested medical assistance in death were insured, non-Hispanic white individuals with some level of college education. Furthermore, in those states people are more likely to die at home – where most of us want to die – and less likely to be in an ICU in their last 30 days. That means that we can save money on healthcare expenditures while honoring people's last wishes.

However, I am not testifying in my professional capacity, but as a friend of Dr. David Meyers, who testified in favor of this bill twice. As a person with glioblastoma, David spoke emotionally about the importance of having options as his disease inevitably progressed. As a family physician, he understood the desire of medical professionals to extend life, and he was grateful for the five years that he lived fully after his diagnosis. But he ardently believed that it should be his choice as to when to call it quits. I visited with him 4 days before he died and I asked him, "If the End-of-Life Options Act had passed, would you have used it?" He replied with an emphatic yes!

I am also testifying as the daughter of a 93-year-old woman who fears a long, lingering period of dying more than of death itself. I want to be able to show her the same compassion that I would give my dog if it were in pain.

I am also testifying as a 63-year-old woman. We never know what life has in store for us. I would like the comfort of knowing that if the worst were to come to pass, I would be able to end my own suffering.

Please help me honor my dying friend's wish and return a favorable report on the Access to Care Act SB 926.