



Unfavorable Statement
HB1323 - Health Care Decisions Act –
Surrogate Decision Making – Hospital Surrogate Committee
By Laura Bogley-Knickman, JD
Director of Legislation, Maryland Right to Life

We Strongly Oppose HB1323 Euthanasia and Death Panels

On behalf of our 200,000 followers across the state, we strongly object to HB1323, which would authorize the creation of “Death Panels” that could **EUTHANIZE** vulnerable patients who **DO NOT HAVE THE CAPACITY** to give informed consent.

This means that any form of euthanasia by the hands of hospital providers, which could include withdrawing or withholding life sustaining support, would be **INVOLUNTARY EUTHANASIA**, which is currently considered a crime against the person in the Maryland criminal code. This bill would put Maryland’s most vulnerable populations at risk of euthanasia, including the elderly, individuals with disabilities, those experiencing poverty, individuals in need of treatment for mental illness, our veterans, and those suffering from drug addiction.

The language that we object to is as follows:

Article-Health-General

Section 5-601

(Z) “UNREPRESENTED PATIENT” MEANS A PATIENT: (1) WHO HAS BEEN CERTIFIED TO BE INCAPABLE OF MAKING AN INFORMED DECISION UNDER § 5–606(A) OF THIS SUBTITLE;

and

Section 5-605 (c) (4) (II)

(2) THE DECISION OF THE SURROGATE COMMITTEE MAY INCLUDE THE PROVISION, WITHHOLDING, OR WITHDRAWING OF TREATMENT.

There is no way to safeguard this bill to ensure that patient rights and health are the priority over greed and cost-saving measures by hospitals and corporate insurance. Universal healthcare and socialized medicine further exacerbate medical scarcity and shortage and would further encourage hospital death panels to euthanize patients rather than continue to fund their care.

By enacting this bill into law, the Maryland General Assembly will be legalizing euthanasia and hospital death panels. Instead the State should prioritize investments in compassionate end of life care including improvements to hospice care and medical innovations in pain management and life sustaining measures.

For these reasons we urge your unfavorable report on HB1323.