

Testimony for End-of-Life Option Act

Hello, my name is Rosie and I am a hospice clinical social worker here in the Twin Cities. I first began studying medical aid in dying during my masters program. It was the focus of my clinical research project which went on to be published in a medical journal and resulting in speaking opportunities on the national and local levels. I have spent hundreds of hours of my life learning about MAID. I have also dedicated my career to supporting, educating, and advocating for individuals living with a life limiting condition and those that love them the most. I believe in what hospice and palliative care provide. A vast majority of the time, we are able to manage the physical symptoms and support the emotional and spiritual journey that comes with death and dying. I have also had a front row seat where this doesn't happen as some diseases are horrific and rob people of a dignified and peaceful death, no matter how skilled the medical team is. I am standing in front of you, as a clinician who has supported hundreds, if not thousands of Minnesotans die. Who has held the hands and had the tough conversations. Who has facilitated depression and suicide assessments to ensure hospice patients get the mental health support needed. Who knows of patients taking their own lives in traumatic ways because they didn't have an option that allowed them to control their death. Who has consoled patients who don't understand why this isn't an option. Someone who has had countless conversations with my colleagues about their support. A social worker who stands proudly with the National Association of Social Worker MN and their support for this legislation. As a person who understands that this topic is complex and we can have an array of values surrounding this. And at the end of the day, this is about upholding and respecting Minnesotans right to choose MAID. It's about compassion. It's about trusting the health care professionals in Minnesota to implement this option in a way that upholds our patient's autonomy and protects those who are vulnerable. I am asking you, actually, I am begging you to trust me, as someone on the front lines of end-of-life care and a content expert. Please move this forward.

Sincerely,

N. Rose Gaston, MSW, LICSW, APHSW-C