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**Testimony in Support of HB 140**  
**May 16, 2023**

As you deliberate on whether to support HB 140 (The Ron Silverio/Heather Block End of Life Options Law) and allow it to be discussed on the House Floor, the League of Women Voters calls on you to represent the will of the people. Our membership fully supports this measure, as does a supermajority of the people of our state.

In early 2020, a national public opinion research organization, GBAO, conducted a statewide survey of likely November 2020 voters to determine their views on legislation to authorize end-of-life options as envisioned in HB 140. Respondents were asked whether they ‘favor or oppose allowing an adult with decision-making capacity, who is dying of a terminal disease with no hope of recovery, the right to bring about their own death.’ Delaware voters said they favor such an approach by a measure of nearly 5-to-1 (72 in support; 20 percent opposed).

A breakdown of the responses can be found at:  
<https://www.compassionandchoices.org/state-advocacy>

In addition, a survey conducted by NüPOINT Market Research in May and June of 2022 found that nearly three out of four Delaware physicians surveyed (74%) say they support current legislation that would allow terminally ill adults the legal option of medical aid in dying to end their suffering.

As you make the decision whether to support this measure, please consider this: the question is not whether you personally would select the option offered in this bill. Rather, the issues are: should the government stand between an individual who has a terminal disease and his/her medical team. Should the government be allowed to take away personal choice in a matter that is truly one of life or death?

In the words of League member Joann Hasse, who recently passed away and thus will not be able to continue the advocacy she carried out so passionately:

“I am 88 years old and suffer from an incurable illness called AGE. Although at this point, I have no need to avail myself of the provisions of HB 140 if it becomes law, I believe the option should be available to me. I believe it is a logical extension of my current widely-accepted right to consent to or refuse treatment. I don’t think one could find anyone who thinks that strangers, including elected bodies, should have the right to dictate such decisions. Why then would we agree to have strangers set needless boundaries on the manner or conditions of our deaths when we are terminally ill?”

You are undoubtedly being bombarded with messages from persons opposed to this legislation, people who fear what it would mean. Such fear is unfounded. The proposal embodied in HB 140 establishes a series of strong safeguards to ensure that the individual selecting this option has the capacity to make his/her own decisions, can self-administer the medication and wishes frankly to end a life filled with unrelieved pain that even the best of medical science cannot alleviate. This year’s bill has even more safeguards than prior versions had. It’s now time to make it the law.

What benefit is it to society to force someone to continue an existence characterized only by suffering? How can society stand up against an individual's right to make this most personal and heart-wrenching choice? You have the power to grant Delawareans this right.

Thank you.