**Testimony in Support of End-of-Life Options Act**

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I am a Humanist Celebrant and Officiant, as well as a Board Member of HumanistsMN, a secular community for ethical living. On behalf of HumanistsMN, I am here to speak in support of the Minnesota End-of-Life Options Act.

As humanists, we believe in individual autonomy and the right for people to make decisions about their own lives as long as they are not harming others. This includes the right to NOT prolong one's life in the face of unbearable or unnecessary suffering.

Further, we do not believe in a higher power that directs our lives. As conscious, rational creatures, we are responsible for ourselves and to each other to help create a world where each can determine the course of their own lives and contribute to the well-being of all.

We acknowledge and accept, however, the diversity of experiences, practices, and beliefs among people in society. Hence, we also champion the separation of religion and government. One person's or group's beliefs -- religious or otherwise -- should not dictate public policy -- as some are trying to do here with medical aid-in-dying. In a diverse society like ours, people should be given the OPTION to make end-of-life decisions based on their own values and beliefs.

Like most Americans, humanists feel grateful and privileged to have benefitted from the incredible advances in medical science that keep us healthy and extend our lives. Just as so many of us have benefitted from these advances to live good long lives, we should also be able to access that same medical science to have a "good death" when we know the end is near.

We see the End-of Life Options Act as a humane and compassionate approach for people who are suffering as they near the end of their lives. Instead of prolonging one's pain, an individual can choose the time of their death and gather loved ones around to support them as their life comes to a close. This legislation makes that possible.

We urge our state legislators to pass the End-of-Life Options Act this session and for Governor Walz to sign it so that each of us can maintain as much bodily autonomy as possible at the end of our lives.

Thank you.