

Assisted suicide/euthanasia in Canada

The following letter, to Minister Wilson-Raybould, was submitted to the King Weekly Sentinel.

I am personally writing you to express my objection and concerns regarding the proposed legalization of assisted suicide/euthanasia in Canada, based on moral, ethical, and legal grounds which include the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I do not support taking a patient's life under any circumstances, and therefore respectfully request the Government of Canada protect and promote the preservation of human life.

First and foremost, legalizing assisted suicide goes against our Canadian heritage based on Judeo-Christian values promoting the dignity of human life and the preservation of human life.

Secondly, the interpretation of the Supreme Court of Canada is flawed and inconsistent. The Supreme Court interpreted that the current legislation regarding core decisions about how we live and die, breaches three basic rights: to life, liberty and security of the person, all enshrined in Section 7 of the Charter, and is not justified in a free democratic society. Unfortunately, the court failed to address that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms also protects Canadian citizens, including physicians, against being forced by the state to act against their moral or religious convictions. Consequently, the court has failed in its ruling, compelling a physician to act against his or her conscience or religious beliefs.

In addition, our moral and religious values are enshrined upfront within the Charter - more specifically, the Preamble to the Canadian Charter of Rights which states: "Whereas Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the supremacy of God and the rule of law."

Third, recommendations of the Commons-Senate Committee on Physician Assisted Death do not include adequate protection for physicians' conscience rights, and thus need to be properly addressed.

Fourth, the Joint Parliamentary Committee has recommended that healthcare professionals be forced to refer and that publicly funded institutions must provide assisted death on their premises. Again, this goes against our moral and religious convictions, the Charter and also contravenes the Hippocratic Oath taken by physicians, upholding specific ethical standards.

Fifth, I am also concerned by recommendations that would provide access to assisted suicide for minors (by 2019), those who may be depressed, suffer from mental health issues or other vulnerable persons. I would ask the government instead to protect our vulnerable and those in need and provide greater support for these individuals as well as access to proper palliative care.

Finally, special interest groups promoting assisted suicide/euthanasia in Canada consistently cite assisted suicide as a "better choice" versus someone suffering in pain. This argument is weak given the advances in medicine and technology and the fact that the use of effective pain relief is available by physicians, throughout Canada.

In conclusion, I ask the government to protect and promote the sanctity of life; respect our religions and moral values, faith and commitment of our Physicians to the Hippocratic Oath.

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