

I wish to comment on the content and intent of Bill C-14 which is now under consideration by parliament. I am an apparently healthy 71 year old male and I am a member of Dying with Dignity. I find the content and intent of this version of the Bill to be timid, contrary to the recommendations of the Standing Committee and to the decision of the Supreme Court on this matter. Perhaps most importantly I believe this proposed Bill falls short of the expectations of the vast majority of Canadians.

I have a number of areas of concern but I would appreciate the opportunity to comment on just two aspects of these discussions.

I believe the decision to end one's life is a personal decision and in fact a very basic right. Of course we need to build in protections for those people who we may deem to be "vulnerable", but I suspect this group is in fact quite small, relatively easily defined and relatively easily protected. For most of us, these decisions are intensely personal, extremely important and must not be subject to influence or direction from those people or institutions which we may choose not to consult. Such decisions are part of a fundamental package of rights which we Canadians enjoy. Because a decision such as this is a right, the state has a duty to facilitate the assertion of this right in the broadest manner possible. The requirement that natural death be "reasonably foreseeable" is a significant and serious intrusion on this right. I wish you to know that I hold this opinion strongly and without reservation.

I find the absence of advanced consent especially troubling both from a societal and personal perspective. Among my paternal and maternal ancestors are a large number of people who have led rather long lives which all too frequently ended in dementia. I find such a prospect appalling and frankly quite terrifying. I have so far led a very full, happy and satisfying life; I have been almost unbelievably lucky. To have the state tell me that at the end of this wonderful experience I must live with dementia or indeed periods of pain which I may find unendurable is a violation of the right to which I have already referred. The impact of these conditions on my family, which is a very great part of my wonderful life is a very serious consideration from my point of view.

I need not go further. I hope you will consider these views and those of my fellow citizens and the Courts in your deliberations.

Thank you

Jim Norris