

To: Members of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights

I am writing to express my concerns about Bill C 14 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make related amendments to other Acts (medical assistance in dying)*

While it covers some of the main aspects of the Supreme Court ruling it also disregards some crucial intent of that ruling and also disregards advice from an all-party parliamentary committee.

The committee tackled the three most contentious issues head-on, recommending that:

- Psychiatric patients should not be denied assisted death, but they must be deemed competent;
- Patients with dementia can provide prior consent to assisted death, but can only do so after diagnosis and while still deemed competent;
- Teens and children should be able to request assisted death, but the definition of the term “mature minor” must be clarified.

The bill fails to address these issues, saying a person must be competent and over 18 to request assisted death and dismisses the rights of psychiatric patients, mature minors or those diagnosed with dementia.

The requirement that, for a person to be granted a medically assisted death, their demise must be “reasonably foreseeable.” is particularly troublesome as it is not clear what that means. It seems to suggest that a person must be in the terminal stages of illness, **something the Supreme Court explicitly said was not necessary.**

The family of Ms Carter has said that their late mother would not have qualified for medical help to end her life under the restrictive provisions of the bill in response to the top court's ruling. Instead, they say their mother and people like her would be forced to endure unbearable suffering, potentially for years.

I am about to be 70 and what I fear most is any form of dementia or being in a vegetative state and warehoused in a long term care facility possibly for years. This bill has done nothing to alleviate my fears since my hopes for advanced consent are denied. I am part of the baby boom generation that has watched our parents suffer and know we don't want to go through what they were forced to endure. **The Supreme Court recognised the right to advance decision making but the bill does not.**

This bill is not respectful of the wishes of the majority of Canadians. Until now many people who have wanted to die but had no legal recourse have gone to extreme and painful measures to end their lives. I think this bill will not change this situation significantly but force people to take their own lives too early, or die a horrific death

We don't need more study. We have evidence from jurisdictions that have had such legislation for years e.g. the Netherlands. We know that very few people take advantage of physician assisted death but we also know that having such an option provides tremendous peace of mind.

I urge you to address the issues that I and many others have raised and introduce amendments that would respect and reflect the Supreme Court's intent and be compliant with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Yours truly,

Maureen Spencer