

**From:** Sara Fox

**Sent:** February-01-16 7:49 PM

**To:** Physician-Assisted Dying Committee Comité Aide médicale à mourir

**Subject:** A Personal Message Concerning Advanced Directives

Dear Special Joint Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying:

My name is Sara Bennett Fox, I am Gillian Bennett's daughter. My 83-year-old mother took Nembutal to end her life on August 18, 2014. She left a well-publicized letter which we made public (at her request) right after she died. You can read it at [www.deadatnoon.com](http://www.deadatnoon.com)

I wish to speak briefly to the part of the Carter Decision in which our Supreme Court decriminalizes physician assisted dying for competent adult patients who have a “grievous and irremediable” medical condition that is intolerable to them.

1. This being Canada, we all care about equity of access. Not all communities have physicians, so I hope you allow for other medical practitioners to help those who qualify for medical assistance in dying. I'm sure others have addressed that too.

2. I don't think "grievous" is a medical term, so with respect to the Supreme Court I don't think it gives us much guidance. We all have irremediable conditions. We are all going to die. And what is intolerable to one person may be tolerable by someone else. So I think the Carter decision lands us on a number of slippery slopes, that we have to be mature enough to tolerate and navigate. I hope that you create legislation that you know to be right, even though some people may criticize. Be brave.

3. My mother was in the early stages of Dementia. Given that she was determined to die at home and determined not to suffer the natural end-stages of Dementia, she had to kill herself sooner rather than later in order to ensure that she was still capable of remembering and carrying out her plan. That seems unfair to me - unCanadian. Presumably no-one wants to hasten death unnecessarily. The only way to avoid this is to allow for advanced directives that the patient can make while competent and can trust to speak for the patient if and when that competence has gone.

4. My mother, Gillian Bennett, was not scared of dying. Not at all. She was scared of many things - including hospitals, the dark, and physical suffering. I hope that you can lead us, as a nation, in not being scared of dying. We have nothing to gain by being scared. It's going to happen anyway. I have read and answered the 1000+ emails that came into my mum's website after she died: Canadians overwhelmingly want to have sensible, open conversations about dying.

I wish I could have come to speak with you all in person. I greatly respect the work that you are doing, and I thank you for reading my letter.

Sincerely,

Sara Bennett Fox

New Westminster, B.C.