

## To the Special Joint Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying

I am a Canadian citizen, 64 years old.

I wish to address the Special Joint Parliamentary Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying.

**1)** I oppose Physician-Assisted Dying and Euthanasia for the simple reason that someone has to kill the person.

**2)** This is not a matter of the person's choice. A person exercises their own choice when they kill themselves. As soon as they ask someone else to kill them, it ceases to be their choice and becomes the choice of the person who does the killing.

No one has a right to demand or attempt to force other people to do anything. People are not slaves, puppets or robots. If someone asks me to get them something from the refrigerator, I am free to refuse.

How much more is society free to refuse the demands of some people that the state kill them? The state has a responsibility to feed, clothe and house people. The state does not have the responsibility or the right to kill people.

**3)** It is impossible to kill someone without doing violence to them. Injecting someone with poisonous drugs is no less an act of violence than shooting, stabbing, drowning or killing them by some other means. In fact, those other methods are quicker and therefore more humane.

I know from personal experience. I have undergone chemotherapy twice in six years, in which enough poison was injected into my body to kill the cancer but not to kill me. It was not fun. The poisonous drugs caused severe suffering and have left me with permanent nerve damage in my hands and feet. However, the treatments saved my life so I am grateful for them.

What does it really feel like when the execution drugs attack every cell in the body and cause cardiac arrest? How pleasant is even a simple case of food poisoning?

**4)** The terms "Physician-Assisted Dying" and "Aid in Dying" are euphemisms to make killing acceptable to the public.

If the name of your committee were "The Special Joint Committee on Killing Sick and Depressed People", which is exactly what the euphemisms are meant to disguise, the public perception and support for this practice would be different.

**5)** The suicide rate in Canada is already too high. According to Statistics Canada, an average of 3,777 people killed themselves every year from 2007 to 2011. The total for those five years was 18,885 suicides – this was without any help from doctors. Why do people need help to kill themselves when thousands of people are obviously perfectly capable of killing themselves?

We decry the high suicide rate on reserves, in the military and among first responders. We cannot help people to kill themselves and try to prevent them from killing themselves at the same time.

**6)** People need help to live, not to die, and doctors have always helped people to live, not to die.

In the doctor-patient relationship the patient is helpless. During surgery people are unconscious and have no idea what is done to them.

In discussing treatment options the doctor has all the knowledge and the power. What does the patient know of different drugs and treatments and their side effects? The only protection the patient has is the oath, which the public widely believes that all doctors take (whether they actually take such an oath or not), "to do no harm".

Now, that protection has been taken away from Canadians and doctors are being given the power to kill their patients.

**7)** The justice system does not execute the worst murderers. Why is the medical system being tasked with executing sick and suffering people?

**8)** Has there ever been a time in history in any country or society when the legalization of killing people has turned out well?

**9)** If a deadly new disease that killed 100 people nation-wide suddenly appeared, we would be terrified and do everything to try to stop it. We panicked when SARS killed about 700 people worldwide. "PAD" and "mercy killing", if legalized, will kill many thousands more, like it has in the places it has been legalized. It is 100% deadly; yet it is also 100% preventable.

**10)** As for a Right to Die being included in the Right to Life, let us test that assertion.

Does the Right to Liberty include the Right to be Jailed?

Does the Right to Freedom of Speech include the Right to be Censored?

Does the Right to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly include the Right to be Prevented from Assembling Peacefully?

Does the Right to Obtain Counsel include the Right to be Prevented from Obtaining Counsel?

**11)** Everyone suffers at some point in their lives. How can murder and suicide protect people from suffering? They epitomize suffering.

**11)** I call upon all levels of government in Canada, and on the judicial and health care systems to continue to reject the killing of innocent people by any means, for any reason, as they have always done.

Today, if we do not kill anyone. Today, if we do not intern anyone. Today, if we do not take anyone's children away from them. Today, if we do not oppress anyone. We will not be left with a shameful and bloody legacy.

Seventy years from now, people will judge us like we judged the German people 70 years ago.

Jule Koch