

Catherine L Smith

C-7 AN ACT TO AMEND THE CRIMINAL CODE (MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING)

I submit this brief as a private citizen and taxpayer in the hopes that the hard hearts of the Federal Government will be softened by some facts which they seem to be ignoring.

In June 2016 when the Criminal Code was amended to allow for wide open access to assisted suicide, which it should be called, many citizens expressed their concern that this was a slippery slope and we would be back at this again to allow anyone to be killed by a doctor or medical professional. These same professionals have no right to conscience protection and that remains the case four (4) years later.

Three Canadian palliative care physicians, Doctors Leonie Herx, Margaret Cottle, and John Scott, have published "*The Normalization of Euthanasia in Canada: the Cautionary Tale Continues*" in the *World Medical Journal*, April 2020. These physicians are struggling to maintain respect for the dignity of human life in face of the on slot of euthanasia. This is being promoted by the Federal Government and is unacceptable. On one hand we shut down a country to save less lives than die every day from all sorts of causes. But then we turn around when all these poor souls locked in nursing homes for 9 months are suffering from not seeing their loved ones and offer them a quick solution: WE CAN KILL YOU and you don't even have to wait. Just say the word and we will be there with the death dealing product. That is exactly what this Bill C-7 is about.

As I mentioned many citizens expressed their concern that what is being proposed would happen.

It is unconscionable to think that this is being proposed. The role of laws is to protect citizens from bad public policy and here we are suggesting that mentally ill persons be allowed to be killed if on a very low day, they say they do not want to live. My concern is for those with disabilities who fear more than anyone that they will be on the hit list. Put them in a home and then suggest euthanasia since "their lives have no worth". It is so disgusting.

I remember going into a long- term care facility a week after the law came into effect, and seeing a sign posted at the entrance to the facility, that they were now offering Medical Assistance in Dying! I could hardly believe my eyes. Then I got in the elevator and there was another sign, at eye level to someone in a wheelchair. When I phoned the people in charge and asked why they would be placing these signs like this, I was told "Oh that was a mistake, those shouldn't be advertised, they should be in the staff room." Oh sure ! They might as well have started a chant "YOU CAN DIE, YOU CAN DIE AND WE CAN HELP YOU".

This Bill should not even be contemplated when we do not have proper Palliative Care throughout the whole country. Anyone who deals with infirmed and elderly people knows that they need a purpose to live – heck all people do.

Dr. Harvey Chochinov, a Canadian palliative care researcher, studied why society allows some people to die. In the course of his research he found that a process called "**dignity therapy**" helped patients to improve their quality of life, spiritual well-being and have a sense of worth. Dignity therapy is a perfect example of a truly compassionate and ethical response to suffering at the end of life.

Receiving treatment such as dignity therapy relies on access to support measures and palliative care at the end of life. It is said that 56% of Canadians have NO access to palliative care. Greater mental health resources and disability support prior to the need for palliative care is also necessary to ensure that people maintain their sense of worth. Many people accept assisted suicide because they fail to see the value in their own lives.

Every year we see the glossy ads about Mental Health Week and "Let's Talk" but this all rings hollow since it appears that it all talk and ads and no real support to assist people who are struggling with mental health issues. It is such a sad reflection on Canadian society.

We spend millions of dollars in other countries and pat ourselves on the back even though that money is usually tied to abortion. And in our own country we are trying to kill our own citizens as well.

A country should be proud to have peaceful and happy citizens who believe in their worth and those of others. That of course is not the case here in Canada when groups are trying to encourage death and forcing those in the medical profession to kill people. This is unacceptable.

I ask that you do some research to see that there are alternatives to offer those who are depressed and Lonely and IT IS NOT ASSISTED SUICIDE.

Cathy Smith