

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

I am writing to express my concerns about Bill C 14 as it is currently drafted.

- As is, the draft legislation does not meet the minimum standard of the Supreme Court of Canada's decision (Carter 2015 ruling). That decision does not require terminal illness, but the government's legislation proposes that a natural death be "reasonably foreseeable", or in other words, terminal. Essentially, people with chronic conditions such as MS, or ALS would not qualify for an assisted death unless their death is imminent.
- Without advance consent, people with a diagnosis for dementia and other degenerative medical conditions, will be faced with a cruel choice: take their own lives too early, or die a horrific death. If advance consent is not included in legislation now, the law should state that it will be phased in within 3 years.
- Of particular concern to me is suggestion that the patient must be competent at the time of request and at the time of the assisted death. In other words, if someone is scheduled to have an assisted death on Monday, but loses competency Sunday (due to a coma or sudden stroke), then they would no longer qualify. Or, if they lose competency during the mandatory 15 day waiting period, they would also not be able to receive an assisted death. This seems particularly cruel to both the individual and to all who were involved in the making of what we can only assume is a very difficult decision for all concerned.

In summary, lawmakers should use the language of Carter in the legislation, as this will ensure that the law is compliant with both Carter and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Yours truly,



Ann Fetherston