
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 22 June 2021 1:12 PM
To: Health and Environment Committee
Subject: I oppose the "Voluntary Assisted Dying" Bill

Re: I oppose the "Voluntary Assisted Dying" Bill

Dear Health Committee Members,

I oppose this bill for a great number of reasons. A large one is the inequitable access to palliative care vs euthanasia. As a compassionate society that cares about people, we need to be addressing the fact that people are unable to access care to enable living their life with their prognosis. We can do better than offering people a choice between pain and death.

I am also very concerned about the particulars of this bill that give no protection for practitioners or members of the public who disagree. No healthcare worker who joined their profession to care for others and save lives should not be forced to assist in ending lives. Offering an alternative view point and hope should not put me at risk of a jail term.

Doctors who are not specialists in end of life care should not be signing off on euthanasia. When a person is not a specialist they do not know what options are truly available and cannot provide the best care. I have personally suffered the effects of knowledge gaps in generalists that a specialist in the field pointed out immediately in healthcare.

It's just a fact of life, generalist cannot replace specialist advice in any profession. The popular phrase "you don't know what you don't know" is very pertinent to this.

The lack of mental health check is also incredibly disturbing. When feeling depressed it is so easy to give up on life (speaking from personal experience and the experience of people around me). People need to be supported through their problems rather than told giving up and dying is a great and easy option. There is a huge amount of collateral damage to families that is not being considered either. Multiple countries that have legalised euthanasia have seen significant increases in their non assisted suicide rates. Pushing this bill through will make a bad situation worse.

As a community we need to be focusing our efforts on reducing the suicide rates and improving our health care and aged care.

I am personally concerned for a couple of elderly people who would be at risk of being pressured into "voluntary assisted dying" by family members- this pressure would be easily hidden during a telehealth appointment and from people without specialist training. This bill does not have anywhere enough safe guards in place.

Please do not support this bill. Please remember that all lives are valuable and deserve access to great healthcare at every stage of life - particularly elderly people, who tend to be forgotten, so many of them have given so much of themselves to build our beautiful country. They deserve better than this bill.

Sincerely,
Jessica Odgaard