
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 24 June 2021 5:56 AM
To: Health and Environment Committee
Subject: in support of voluntary assisted dying laws

I am writing this in memory of my husband Peter Blums. Peter died in October 2020 after a protracted, debilitating and cruel illness associated with an autoimmune disease of his lungs. The final year, or more, of his life was mostly spent sitting and sleeping in a lounge chair. If he slept at all, then on waking he needed to begin a medication and physiotherapy regime to clear secretions that had built up in his lungs overnight. This took anywhere between one and a half to two hours every morning. It was labour intensive but if he wanted to get air in and out of his lungs there was no option. There was never a day off for him. Clearing secretions was made all the more difficult because he had so little lung function left that he didn't have the physical strength to be able to cough adequately. As his condition deteriorated this became even more difficult until he was left drowning in secretion. This entire procedure was usually necessary two or three times a day and sometimes overnight. Because he was permanently breathless, despite being on oxygen all day and night, it was a struggle for him to eat or drink or speak and over time he wasted away and was skeletal towards the end. His lack of physical activity compounded by the medications that he was taking caused swelling of his legs. The fluid tablets given to counteract this caused frequent visits to the bathroom; every visit an epic and terrifying journey. We bought an enormous television which he enjoyed but in the months leading up to his death he had very little pleasure left in his life. As he often said, *if you can't breathe you can't enjoy anything.*

Had voluntary assisted dying laws been in place Peter would have had control over his life and his death.

I urge you to pass these laws.

Kind regards

Colleen Blums

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