

The Secretariat,
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee Room
Room S1.61, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

20th August, 2004

Dear Members of the Secretariat,

Re the Inquiry into the Provisions of the Criminal Code Amendment (Suicide Related Material Offences) Bill 2004.

I am writing to express my strong support for the above proposed Bill.

I am however very concerned about the potential misuse of the Proposed amendment protecting the Constitutional right to freedom of political communication. This amendment appears to be totally unnecessary in that the Bill quite plainly places no limitation on political communication regarding laws relating to euthanasia or suicide. It is quite incorrect to provide special privileges for the advocates of euthanasia or suicide.

I am in favour of the Bill, because, it is on the public record, that Dr. Phillip Nitschke has no qualms about providing information on how to suicide to vulnerable people. For example, in an interview with "America's National Review On Line", on June 5, 2001 at 9.10am, Dr. Nitschke said, "So all people qualify, not just those with the training, knowledge, or resources to find out how to "give away" their life. And someone needs to provide this knowledge, training, or recourse necessary to anyone who wants it, including the depressed, the elderly bereaved, [and] the troubled teen. If we are to remain consistent and we believe that the individual has the right to dispose of their life, we should not erect artificial barriers in the way of sub-groups who don't meet our criteria."

It is irresponsible and dangerous to use the internet to promote suicide. Youth suicide rates are already alarmingly high. Therefore vulnerable, troubled youth and depressed people should instead be directed to Life Promotion programs rather than being directed to suicide websites. Terminally ill patients should not be encouraged to suicide, but instead to obtain palliative care from a caring ethical doctor, with the support of family and a community that values each individual.

I, therefore urge the Committee to support the proposed Criminal Code Amendment (Suicide Related Material Offences) Bill 2004.

Yours faithfully,

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