

To the Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Submission from:
Leslie T. Kelly

Rights of the terminally ill (Euthanasia Laws repeal) Bill

I respectfully request that the Committee accept this private submission in support of Senator Bob Brown's (Euthanasia Laws repeal) Bill.

I wish to record in the strongest possible terms my support for legalising voluntary euthanasia in Australia, where Australian citizens have made this decision while of sound mind and of their own free will.

Above all, I see the essential element of euthanasia as being VOLUNTARY - where each person speaks only for them self and makes a decision, which applies only to their self.

I personally see voluntary euthanasia is an act of decency and understanding, which spares a person in terminal stages of illness, needless pain, fear and indignity while dying, and gives them the means to a fast, quiet, peaceful death

I personally see it as very unreasonable and narrow minded to portray or describe the act of euthanasia in purely negative terms such as killing or legalised murder, as many opponents of voluntary euthanasia do. I think that we are all entitled to our own personal points of view. However, I do not subscribe to having personal points of view - where they only affect the holder of that view - IMPOSED on other people. Similarly, I think we have no moral right to deny other people a matter, which only affects them.

I am now in my 65th year and my overwhelming wish is for the peace of mind that legal voluntary euthanasia would give me if my dying process became too painful or undignified. It would give me much relief and peace of mind to know that my doctor could legally assist or advise me to how die easily.

The very act of being born has the corollary that we all must die. The aspect of my own death that concerns me most of all is that it be dignified, peaceful and fast. If I found myself in the situation of terminal suffering with no reasonable prospect of a cure, then I feel that I should be able to say "I have had enough," and be allowed to die with peace and dignity.

Every person should legally have the choice available to them of asking for help to die if they are terminally ill and suffering intolerably. My doctor should be free to assist me to die without fear of breaking the law and incurring a penalty.

The current situation places doctors in a terrible dilemma. They dare not discuss or assist in euthanasia because it is illegal to do so. Patients who are denied the prospect a peaceful death are placed in a position of terrible fear and mental anguish for the same reason.

In conclusion I say to the Senate Committee, that I am not simply talking hypothetical waffle as both my parents while bed-ridden died very painful and undignified deaths from malignant cancers after losing control of their essential bodily functions. Both were totally reliant on other people for virtually everything from feeding, washing and toileting.

I myself also underwent surgical removal of bowel cancer some years ago, so I find the prospect of a death similar to that of my parents quite daunting. The loss of control over vital body functions and total dependence on others is a very real concern to me. My concern is not just about dying but rather about the manner and dignity of my death.

It is common knowledge that **some** doctors **do** assist many people die, and most likely often without consent. This position can only be compounded while euthanasia cannot be discussed as an aid to a peaceful death. It would be much more civilised, tolerant and understanding to have voluntary euthanasia legalised and regulated so that it can be brought into the public arena where it was open for scrutiny..

I humbly commend Senator Brown's ([Euthanasia Laws repeal](#)) Bill and plead that the Senate will assist in having voluntary euthanasia available to the people of Australia as a means to a peaceful dignified death very soon.

Leslie T. Kelly

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