

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

Dear Secretary

I wish to submit the views below to the *Inquiry into the Rights of the Terminally Ill (Euthanasia Laws Repeal) Bill 2008*.

Australian citizens in the Territories do not have the same rights as those in the 6 states. The federal minister for territories can and does intervene in our local planning decisions. Our territory assembly can and does have its laws over-ridden by federal parliament. As a territory we in the ACT and NT are permitted only two federal senators, whereas Tasmania (with a similar population) gets 12 senators.

Collectively, the affected peoples of the Territories comprise the same numbers as the whole of Tasmania. Yet our legislatures can be over-ridden on the whim of a federal minister, whereas the government of Tasmania is protected against such interference.

What sort of democracy is it that allows the rights of half a million citizens in the Territories to be meddled with, whilst imposing no such restrictions on people in the six states?

The *Rights of the Terminally Ill Act* passed by the Northern Territory government a decade ago was a humane, carefully controlled mechanism for allowing sick people to choose death with dignity. Since its repeal, the terminally ill have no option but to suffer pointless pain and indignity.

The Parliament's passage of the "Andrews Bill" a decade ago was an affront to the half a million citizens in the Territories. That obnoxious piece of religious ideology should be repealed. Senator Brown's bill should be applauded and supported because it restores decent and humane choices to the terminally ill, and because it removes an imposition on the legislative authority of the Territories.

Tony Whelan  
  
