

SUBMISSION

Family Life International (Aust) Ltd
P O Box 205
Broadway NSW 2007

Contact: Gail Instance

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs
Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia
Email: legcon.sen@aph.gov.au

We at Family Life International totally oppose the introduction of the ***Rights of the Terminally Ill [Euthanasia Laws Repeal] Bill 2008*** as currently being examined in the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee. We consider that the bill proposed by Senator Bob Brown seeks to white ant the very foundation upon which society rests, that is the preservation by law of innocent human life. The passage of the original Act, Euthanasia Laws Act 1997, upheld the view that the right of an individual to kill himself or have himself killed would compromise the principle of the sanctity of life that underpins our society.

Legalising euthanasia and institutionalising that practice opens the way to abuse by individuals and governments in later years. When Doctor of Jurisprudence and Philosophy, Karl Binding and Doctor of Medicine, Alfred Hoche, published their arguments in favour of euthanasia in 1921, they could not have foreseen the horrors of the Nazi euthanasia programme that followed. However, their book was blamed by both defendants and prosecutors at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials after World War II, for the deterioration in ethics, which resulted in the Nazi killing programme, and for the killing of innocent human beings in unprecedented ways and numbers. (See trial transcript, trials of war criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunal under Control Council Law No 10, the medical case, trial transcript page 7633)

Those who argue that there is a difference between Binding's and Hoche's arguments and the arguments today in favour of voluntary euthanasia obviously have not read the former.

It is not to the point that polls are produced that indicate that a majority of Australians now favour a right to voluntary euthanasia. With very few exceptions, Holland being the obvious one, every Parliament or Congress in the world that has considered euthanasia legislation seriously, has voted overwhelmingly against it. In other words, when the matter is investigated diligently, the dangers in proceeding become obvious.

A 'right to die' soon becomes a 'duty to die'. The experience in Holland, for example, shows that frail and/or elderly individuals are terrified of being hospitalised for fear someone on the staff may decide that their quality of life has so diminished that they would be better off dead. It has become common knowledge that doctors in Holland routinely euthanase individuals and then falsify documents to cover their activities.

It is interesting to note that the Senator was more than happy to support the use of international law to overrule the Tasmanian government over the Franklin Dam, but, now that it suits him, he wants to repeal the Federal Government's right to overturn Territory laws.

Senator Bob Brown's bill must not be passed. It should not be forgotten that submissions in support of the Andrews' Bill, which overturned the Northern Territory's euthanasia law, numbered over 12,000 while those against were fewer than 1000.

The natural moral law, which is inscribed in every human heart, regardless of race or creed, prohibits the intentional killing of innocent human beings, either by suicide or murder.