


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

4th April 2008

Submission to Senate Standing Committee Inquiry into
Rights of the Terminally Ill (Euthanasia Laws Repeal) Bill 2008

I wish to express my support for Senator Bob Brown's Bill regarding this matter.

The Senate Committee will, in the submissions it receives, be again faced with a wealth of reasons, based on freedom of choice, commonsense, compassion, the needs of increasing numbers of an ageing population, the expanding ability of medical research and technology to maintain human existence, plus other aspects such as have been repeatedly put forward in support of law reform in this field. I also support such approaches but would like to add another that should be acceptable to all politicians who profess a belief in democracy.

Well-regulated legalisation of an option for terminally ill sufferers to request and receive (from willing medical practitioners) treatment aimed at providing a dying process as free from distress as possible would be, perhaps uniquely, a true demonstration of democracy. Every citizen is going to die. Each may potentially find him/herself in a situation where help to die peacefully would be sincerely requested. No sufferer would be legally forced to make such a request and no person would be forced to provide the necessary help. Personal choice, on both counts, would be paramount. The requirements of democracy would be further upheld in that a large majority of public opinion polls have repeatedly expressed support for the passage of such legislation.

Active voluntary euthanasia, legally available to any adult, terminally-ill person on request, should be an integrated partner with well-regulated palliative care (PC) in offering acceptable end-of-life options to sufferers. PC, on its own, is sometimes incapable of meeting the needs of everyone in the widely pluralistic society of Australia

I wish Senator Bob Brown every success in his efforts to make possible the re-instalment of a right so harshly removed from the Northern Territory regarding this matter.

Yours sincerely,


Ralph White PhD