
From: Bert Sheridan
Sent: Friday, 28 March 2008 9:00 AM
To: Legal and Constitutional, Committee (SEN)
Subject: Fw: EUTHANASIA LAWS REPEAL

D

----- Original Message -----

From: Bert Sheridan
To: legcon.sen@aph.gov.au
Cc:
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2008 6:27 PM
Subject: EUTHANASIA LAWS REPEAL

Peter Hallahan
Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee

Dear Mr Hallahan

Submission concerning the Rights of the Terminally Ill (Euthanasia Laws Repeal) Bill 2008

I am one of the 80% of Australians who strongly believe that voluntary euthanasia should be legalised. I want to have the reassurance that I can look forward to a peaceful, dignified and pain free death in the event that I become seriously ill. Whilst palliative care may be able to successfully address pain in about 95% of serious illnesses, it has a limited ability to alleviate other common symptoms such as weakness, breathlessness, physical abnormalities and/or nausea. Death can become the preferred option. Anyone who has taken a terminally ill pet to a veterinarian to be euthanased knows that an injection of nembutal provides a quick, painless and dignified death.

The knowledge that, in the last resort, a compassionate doctor is legally allowed to consider a request for a medically assisted death is a great source of comfort. In the absence of voluntary euthanasia, many seriously ill people chose to commit suicide whilst still physically capable of the act rather than risk the possibility of a painful, debilitating and undignified illness. For this reason, the introduction of legalised voluntary euthanasia leads to a reduction in rational suicides whilst posing no threat whatsoever to those to whom it is unacceptable.

There is no evidence that laws against voluntary euthanasia prevent harm to vulnerable people. Legalising voluntary euthanasia brings the issue out into the open making it easier to scrutinise what is happening, and thus preventing harm to the vulnerable. Keeping euthanasia illegal does not prevent doctors from practising it.

Since the Euthanasia Laws Act (Andrews Act) was passed, the Netherlands, Belgium and Oregon have adopted assisted dying laws. This means that VE is no longer something no Parliament will consider. It also means that there is a body of evidence building up to disprove the many slippery slope claims that are made.

Desperate, sick dying Australians are making the difficult trip to Switzerland to access an assisted

death. Likewise people are going to Mexico to buy lethal drugs to take their own lives. People are being forced to such desperate action by the lack of responsible VE laws.

Politicians should respect and be guided by what the majority of Australians want rather than by their own personal views. Anyone who values individual liberty should agree that the person whose life it is should be the one to decide if that life is worth continuing

sincerely

.Bert Sheridan