

## SUBMISSION ON EUTHANASIA

Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs  
Department of the Senate

I am opposed to the introduction of any legislation which would legalise euthanasia for the following reasons:-

1. Elderly people who are totally or to a large extent dependant on others for their care could come to see, especially if in a depressed state of mind, that they are a burden on their loved ones and society, and could see it a duty to terminate their lives. This could become a dominant factor in their decision making, and influence them to choose to die even though their quality of life might still be quite good.
2. With high pressures in terms of funds and staff on the Health Industry, it could become to be expected that elderly people at the end of their productive lives should choose to die. The quality of care and medication to the elderly could be reduced to unacceptably low standards if they choose not to.
3. Further to the expectancy of the Health Industry for helpless people to choose to die, temptations could be placed on health providers to administer drugs or injections to shorten or terminate their lives without their consent.
4. This actual taking of human life might well extend to people other than the elderly. For example people who are badly injured in an accident, or new born babies with birth defects might be judged to die without consent given.

The above tend to reduce the dignity and value of human life. Human life is precious, and whilst there is a point where life support only increases suffering with no hope of improving quality of life, and should be withdrawn on the advice of medical experts, there is never justification for deliberately taking human life, even when consent is given, since that consent could be given under conditions of incompetency and/or external pressure. To preserve human dignity, dying people should be made as comfortable as possible, and high standards of palliative care administered in a loving atmosphere should be in place.

Frank Reale

