
From: Phillips
Sent: Sunday, 30 March 2008 3:28 AM
To: Legal and Constitutional, Committee (SEN)
Subject: Submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee on Repeal of the VE Laws

Peter Hallahan
Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee

When I was a little boy I went to church every Sunday and ultimately became a Sunday school teacher. I believed in God and that my behaviour should be such that God wouldn't punish me. I gave myself to God and felt comfortable leaving my destiny in God's hands.

Over the last 60 years, through formal study and reflection, I have come to the conclusion that I should accept moral responsibility for my own behaviour and never surrender my attempts to control of my own destiny.

As I grow older I can see that the diseases which I have lived with for near on two decades are beginning to erode my quality of life and that control of my destiny is falling increasingly into the hands of the pharmaceutical and medical industries. I accept this situation at this time because I figure that we are all on the same side. I want to stay alive and they are very good at helping me achieve this objective.

Increasingly I visit friends in hospital and they whisper to me that they have had enough and that they just want to be let go. Everyone is solicitous and kind, but no one is in a position to give them, openly and compassionately, what they really want.

There are currently studies of depression amongst the elderly being undertaken at some expense in Australia. Although I don't suffer from it I have studied some of the research protocols. They invariably focus on exercise, supplements, relationships, hobbies etc but never ask the question, "Suppose you reached a point in your life when you thought that your life was not worth living, how would you feel if you knew that there were processes available to help you terminate it?" Of course, it is depressing to think that one might be riddled with cancer for three years, and suffer pain and indignity, but knowing that you could divorce yourself of it, when life's compensations did not suffice-that would be uplifting.

Others will undoubtedly submit to you a plethora of political, historical, social, legal and economic arguments in support of the Repeal of the Euthenasia Laws. Although I am cognisant of the arguments, and whole heartedly support them, they bear no repetition here.

All I seek is affirmation that, through compassionate legal/medical processes, the democratic, open, secular country that I have loved and served recognises my right to determine my own destiny when I come to make my final choice, and opens the path to a peaceful and timely death.

Please repeal the Act.

Yours sincerely

Robert D Phillips Ph.D