
Sent: Saturday, 29 March 2008 12:53 PM
To: Legal and Constitutional, Committee (SEN)
Subject: Inquiry into the Rights of the Terminally Ill (Euthanasia Laws Repeal)Bill 2008

I wish to make a submission to the Senate Inquiry in support of the Rights of the Terminally Ill Bill 2008.

To the

Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs.

Inquiry into the Rights of the Terminally Ill (Euthanasia Laws Repeal) Bill 2008.

My submission is in support of Senator Browns Private Members Bill.

I have

experienced the death of my father and a close friend from cancer. My father died at home of cancer of the colon and stomach. He was nursed by his children. Palliative care nurses came regularly as did my fathers GP. My father begged his doctor to end his life. The doctor could only say "it wont be long". There was no end in sight. My friend Jan died in February this year. Her cancer started in the lung and spread to her spine and brain. Her last 4 months were spent in a haze of pain, panic and distress, partly caused by her cocktail of prescription drugs.

In both cases no amount of palliative care or drugs could have improved my father or Jan's quality of life or desire to endure further.

In contemporary society it is considered humane to end the suffering of animals who will die.

Concern regarding possible abuse of an Act to terminate life is understandable. Part 2 Section 7 of the proposed Bill requires exacting conditions be met by both general practitioner and patient, before allowing a patient to die a comfortable death with dignity.

It could be argued these conditions are onerous on a person terminally ill. They are intended to ensure the patients decision to end his or her life, has been made freely, voluntarily and after due consideration.

The Bill ensures the medical practitioners prognosis, that the patient is suffering with no chance of a cure, be confirmed by an independent practitioner experienced in the treatment of the terminally ill, and by a psychiatrist.

The proposed Bill protects the patient from coercion and the practitioner from civil or criminal action.

I believe the Bill and Regulations address all issues regarding the voluntary termination of life, thoroughly. It was deemed so in the past.

It is difficult to understand why the right of a person, to choose to die in these circumstances, can be denied by others. This Bill will enable those terminally ill and suffering to die humanely and with dignity. It should be their choice. No-one should have the power to prolong the suffering of others.

I ask for your support of this Bill.

Yours sincerely,

Pam Harris