

It's Time To Talk

Spring 2016

FACTS ABOUT EUTHANASIA/ASSISTED SUICIDE IN CANADA

On February 6, 2015, the Supreme Court of Canada unanimously overturned a legal ban on doctor-assisted suicide. On April 14, 2016, the federal government introduced legislation (Bill C-14) that, if passed, will amend the Criminal Code to make euthanasia/assisted suicide legal in Canada. Legislation is expected to be in place by June 2016.

According to a recent Nanos poll of 1,000 Canadians:
75% of Canadians believe physicians should *not* be forced to provide euthanasia.

What is euthanasia?

Euthanasia is the intentional killing of someone, with or without consent, either by act or omission. The person who commits euthanasia must intend, for whatever reason, to kill the other and must cause his or her death. There is a great difference between "allowing to die" and "making die."

What is assisted suicide?

Assisted suicide is when a person kills himself/herself with the help of another person, who provides the means to carry out the act.

What does the Catholic Church teach?

Life is a precious gift, to be cherished from the moment of conception to natural death. The Church fully supports the right people clearly have to accept, to refuse and/or discontinue the use of life-sustaining treatment and to allow death to occur.

What can be done to help those suffering?

As only 30% of Canadians have access to palliative (end of life) care, all Canadians should be given improved care options that offer effective medical control of pain and, even more importantly, loving accompaniment as they approach the inevitable end of life.

Thank you for taking action! *We still need your help.*

Thousands of concerned Canadians have contacted their elected officials, respectfully expressing their concerns.

We are grateful for these efforts. Now that legislation has been introduced, there is still much work to do.

Why we need to act today:

- The draft federal legislation does not include specific protection of conscience rights for health care workers and institutions that oppose euthanasia/assisted suicide. The draft legislation suggests that this may need to take place at the provincial/territorial level. We need to let both the federal and provincial/territorial governments know that no health care worker, hospital or facility should be forced to provide euthanasia/assisted suicide or arrange for it to take place (referral).
- Until 100% of Canadians have access to quality end of life (palliative) care, there are fears the vulnerable will be at risk in a country where euthanasia/assisted suicide will be seen as another form of health care.
- No foreign jurisdiction in the world that has legalized assisted suicide forces health care workers or facilities to provide euthanasia or arrange for it to take place (referral).

TAKE ACTION TODAY!

1

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ISSUE

Go to www.CanadiansforConscience.ca and find out what the legalization of physician-assisted suicide will mean for the vulnerable and for health care workers and institutions.

2

CONTACT ELECTED OFFICIALS

Visit www.CanadiansforConscience.ca and use the tools there to write to key elected officials at both the federal and provincial/territorial levels. You may also send a letter by post (no postage required) or email. See reverse for a sample to guide you.

3

TALK TO YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

It's time to have a difficult conversation about death and dying. Share your letter or this publication with your family or friends to help raise awareness.

“Care and concern for the final stages of life is all the more necessary today, when contemporary society attempts to remove every trace of death and dying... Euthanasia and assisted suicide are serious threats to families worldwide.”

Pope Francis, April 2016

Now that assisted suicide legislation has been tabled in Parliament, please contact your elected representatives to urge them to:

- ❶ **Ensure that the federal legislation (Bill C-14) includes protection for health care workers and institutions, ensuring they do not have to provide or refer for euthanasia/assisted suicide.**
- ❷ **Expand palliative care and support services for the vulnerable.**

Please address your letter to:

- **MINISTER OF JUSTICE**
The Honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
284 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0H8
Fax: 613-954-0811
Email: mcu@justice.gc.ca
- **MINISTER OF HEALTH**
The Honourable Jane Philpott
Brooke Claxton Building
Tunney's Pasture
Postal Locator: 0906C
Ottawa ON K1A 0K9
Fax: 613-941-5366
Email: hon.jane.philpott@canada.ca
- **YOUR LOCAL MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT**
Find contact information for your Member of Parliament using your postal code at www.bit.ly/findlocalmp

**No postage is required when sending mail to elected officials.*

Sample Letter to Legislators

Feel free to use this sample letter but personalize wherever possible.

Dear Minister Wilson-Raybould,

I am aware that the government has recently tabled Bill C-14 that will legalize euthanasia/assisted suicide in Canada. While I am opposed to any form of euthanasia/assisted suicide, I write today asking you to protect the vulnerable and to respect the conscience rights of health care workers, hospitals and other care facilities.

I ask the government to provide legislative protection for health care workers and facilities that object to euthanasia/assisted suicide because of their moral convictions and/or institutional mission and values. Those who oppose euthanasia/assisted suicide should never be forced to perform the procedure or arrange for it to take place (referral). No foreign jurisdiction in the world that has legalized euthanasia/assisted suicide has forced health care workers or facilities to act against their conscience.

The Government of Canada has stated that it wishes to have this legislation implemented consistently across the country. If that is the case, legislative protection of conscience rights at the federal level would provide such consistency.

I would also encourage the Government of Canada to move quickly to implement a national palliative care strategy and enhanced resources for the most vulnerable. More than ever, alternatives to assisted suicide must be accessible to every Canadian.

Sincerely,