

Admin, LACO

Subject: FW: Legal euthanasia and assisted suicide will inflict terrible mental stress on the elderly

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From:

Sent: Sunday, 15 October 2017 7:18 PM

To: Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices <eolcc@parliament.wa.gov.au>

Subject: Legal euthanasia and assisted suicide will inflict terrible mental stress on the elderly

Please accept my submission to the inquiry into end of life choices.

I strongly oppose the legalisation of euthanasia and ask that you rule it out at an early stage from your consideration of legitimate end-of-life choices.

This is because even the availability of legal euthanasia would inflict terrible psychological pressure on elderly or severely ill people to prematurely end their lives when they would otherwise have no desire to do so. And this pressure will only increase if euthanasia were ever to become the dominant method for disposing of old people. In such a climate, effective palliative care would be scarce and much more expensive, increasing the pressure to submit to doctors' and relatives' wishes especially when there are fewer people of working age to bear the cost of medical care for the elderly as the population ages.

At this juncture I draw your attention to the article titled "Proper end-of-life care would avoid this social experiment" by Editor-at-Large, Paul Kelly published in the Weekend Australian, Inquirer section 14-15 October 2017, Pg 15 and continued on Pg 19. A copy of this excellent report needs to be read by each member of the Joint Review Committee. Part of this article the author critiques The Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2017 in Victoria which is up for debate in that Parliament this Tuesday 17 October 2017 and states that it fails to protect the vulnerable in our society. Mr Kelly also goes on to include various integral statements made by Mr Michael Gannon, President of the AMA, which the Committee must take into consideration and which I quote below.

Mr Gannon speaking from Chicago tells the Inquirer, "Once you legislate this you cross the Rubicon. Our position is we need to do better with end-of-life care and we say that doctors should have no role in intentionally ending a patient's life. The medical profession is concerned because we will be expected to be involved".

Mr Gannon states "...that the AMA is a group of individuals with varying views, but of the 109 national medical associates representing different countries, 107 oppose euthanasia!"

Mr Gannon states "We greatly fear there will be coercion". "It is frankly commonplace for patients to tell doctors in the presence of their loved ones that they feel they are a burden on their families".

Paul Kelly states that the AMA President very accurately identifies the core dilemma ie, emotion versus reason!!! What a disgrace when our elected representatives, choose to place emotion over reasoned and well thought out objective principled argument!

I could go on quoting Mr Gannon and he if anyone represents a very credible voice whose views should be taken seriously by the Committee in its deliberations. Furthermore members on the Committee must acquaint themselves with the AMA Position Statement.

May I remind you that the dangers of undermining the value of human life, especially for the vulnerable, by introducing state-sanctioned killing whether by euthanasia or assisted suicide cannot be understated. The medical profession know the dangers, the AMA repeatedly warn against euthanasia while calling for an increased focus on IMPROVING Palliative Care!

For your information in 2014 Belgium became the first country to allow the euthanasia of children. This is an example of 'scope creep' which describes how euthanasia always expands to include more and more groups of vulnerable people. Should we give Belgium a medal for being so "progressive"? I think not, but this is where the slippery slope will lead to and NO, do not accuse me of scare mongering, Belgium is the reality - why not Australia as well?

I therefore strongly urge the committee use the opportunity presented by this inquiry to safeguard Western Australia from these outcomes before the financial arguments begin to weigh more and more heavily upon the debate. In order to protect the availability of effective palliative care choices, I again strongly urge that you will recommend that euthanasia not be legalised.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Lorraine Schroeder

NB: Original letter signed and sent for Attention of: Principal Research Officer,
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