

Admin, LACO

Subject: FW: End Of Life Choices - Submission

From: adrian BERTINO-CLARKE

Sent: Monday, 23 October 2017 4:41 PM

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

Subject: End Of Life Choices - Submission

Dear Committee Members,

As both a scientist and philosopher, I would like to bring to your attention a number of points:

1. To introduce euthanasia laws perverts the nature of health care. As rational beings we do our every act with a final cause (purpose or end) in mind. Without a final cause, a rational being cannot act. Everything a health care professional does, research, patient care, treatment, etc., has to be driven by the same end: to save lives. When a competing end is introduced, i.e. to end life, everything about health care is affected detrimentally. If a health care professional can either save or kill lives, then their purpose for acting has to become something else: "make the patient comfortable", or "assist them in getting whatever they want"; in essence their nature as health professionals is altered irrevocably. The patient then becomes the decision-maker on matters outside their competence. If a doctor is not recommended to self-diagnose, self-treat or operate; it then follows that a patient without medical knowledge cannot make judgements on matters of medical or psychological treatment either.

As another example, let's consider Police Officers; let's define their purpose as "prevent crime". If a competing end was introduced, i.e. "aid crime", their purpose would similarly be defined as "prevent or aid crime", which completely destroys their reason of being.

2. To introduce euthanasia laws will lead to increases in suicide generally. To allow euthanasia means that people have the right to kill. Therefore any person would have the right to take their own lives. Unfortunately, this new "principle" would be most receptive in those most vulnerable e.g. people suffering depression, despair, suicidal thoughts, etc. (all curable temporary conditions). With an increase in drug and alcohol abuse which leads to depression and psychotic episodes, it becomes extremely dangerous to remove societal moral norms anchoring people to life. Research data from countries that have introduced euthanasia laws confirms this statement.

3. To introduce euthanasia laws perverts the nature of justice. If a health professional has the right to end innocent lives, it becomes very difficult to argue against anybody else ending innocent lives when the victim is consensual in the act of being killed.

4. To introduce euthanasia laws is unnecessary. If somebody is dying, to give them the right to kill themselves seems redundant. It would seem their final cause may be to end or prevent suffering either caused by the process of dying or of unnecessary painful and/or de-humanising treatments. Discontinuing medical procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary, or disproportionate to the expected outcome are legitimate choices patients may make, i.e. the refusal of "over-zealous" treatments. Here one does not will to cause death; one's inability to impede it is merely accepted. The decisions should be made by the patient if he is competent and able or, if not, by those legally entitled to act for the patient, whose reasonable will and legitimate interests must always be respected. Palliative techniques have developed to the degree that no patient needs to suffer toward their natural end.

There are many more arguments against euthanasia that I'm sure others have mentioned or referred to. Given the short notice, I am forced to end this brief point-form submission here. I hope it is somewhat useful. Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

Adrian Bertino-Clarke