

Ronan McGinniss



11th October 2017

RE: Committee inquiry into changing laws relating to citizens own choices for ending life

Dear Principal Research Officer,

I write to lodge my personal objection to any proposed changes that the committee may be contemplating.

I have identified 3 major issues with any change, as outlined below.

ISSUE: Changes in medicine are often faster than changes in legislation

It is inevitable that some medical conditions currently classified as terminal will be curable at some point. This should be celebrated and protected. I fear that when breakthroughs occur our society will want to reverse any changes in assisted dying laws so that people are encouraged to live, however at these times it will be a lengthy process to review laws once again, form committees, debate policies and pass legislation. Our society is best directing funding and attention to more breakthroughs than engaging in the lengthy and costly process of changing legislation relating to this matter.

ISSUE: Suicide is a significant social problem

I believe that change in legislation will appear in the community that it is an endorsement of suicide, even if this is not the intention of any change. Social hype and the media will generate this perception. Unfortunately, some people without terminal illness will look more favorably on suicide as an increasingly acceptable means to end life. This would be disappointing.

ISSUE: Society is not able to identify and debate very specific legislation

Should the committee recommend very small and specific changes to legislation this will unfortunately blow-up to a damaging and widespread discussion about unrelated matters. We have seen this recently with the marriage law debate becoming a public hate-debate about all kinds of policies that are not even being proposed. Even one or two wise recommendations will become a hot public debate. This will not be helpful for society at a time when debate about issues such as mental health and homelessness are also highly important and should not be put on the back-burner whilst the public gets hysterical about misconceptions of what the committee might suggest.

Kind Regards,

Ronan McGinniss