

Admin, LACO

Subject: FW: Submission to Committee on End of Life Choices from Chief Rabbi Dovid Freilich

From: Rabbi Dovid Freilich

Sent: Wednesday, 18 October 2017 1:15 PM

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

Subject: Submission to Committee on End of Life Choices from Chief Rabbi Dovid Freilich

***RABBI DOVID Y A FREILICH OAM
CHIEF RABBI PERTH SYNAGOGUE***

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Dear Ms Sanderson

Firstly, as the Chief Rabbi of Western Australia, I submit the Jewish view in regard to people making their own end of life choices. Judaism condemns any deliberate induction of death and considers it an act of murder even if the patient requests it. Life is not ours to terminate. It is therefore absolutely forbidden to administer any drug or institute any procedure which may hasten the death of the patient, unless such drugs or procedures have significant therapeutic potential. The discontinuation of instrumentation and machinery such as a respirator and cardiac pacemaker which are specifically designed and utilised for the treatment of critically ill patients would only be permissible if the physician is certain that in so doing the physician is not interrupting life. Such a determination seems impossible for the physician to make with absolute certainty and therefore, once instituted, instrumental support of vital life processes should not be interrupted, unless and until the criteria of death (either brain death or heart beat or pulse) has been established. If the patient in extremis is in severe pain and no therapeutic protocol holds any hope for that person's recovery, it may be proper to withhold any additional non-routine medical services, so as to permit the natural ebbing of the life forces.

Secondly, apart from the religious aspect there are matters of ethical consideration here. Not the least being that giving people end of life choices creates in law two classes of human beings.

1. Those whose lives should be preserved and those who would be "better off dead."
2. It is not for human beings to judge who should live and whether one's life should be terminated based on quality of life or the value of life. It is only the creator of life that has the right to do this. Who would be the judge under a proposed new civil regime? What safeguards can be put in place to ensure not only the morality and integrity of this process, but also to ensure that a terminally ill person is not subjected to any pressure, be it overt or subtle, to express a desire to end their life
3. A licence to allow assisted suicide gives the wrong message to those who are considering committing suicide. It gives some authenticity to those, who in the course of their lives, wish to end their lives.

Realising that there are those who suffer excruciating pain as a result of their terminal illness we must treat these situations with compassion. This does not mean assisting them in dying. It means assisting them to ease their pain. If in the administration of pain killers a side effect might be the termination of the patient's life, this is not to be regarded as murder.

Rather than giving people end of life choices in terminating their life it would be far better if more government resources were put into hospice care enabling those who are terminally ill to have a far more comfortable and, if

possible, pain free end. Improvements in palliative care would certainly lessen the number of terminally ill patients who want to end their life

With every blessing.

David Freilich OAM

Chief Rabbi of Western Australia

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