

To Dr. Jeannine Purdy and the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices

Submitted by Mrs. Betty Bouwman,



I would like to re-submit my letter written two weeks ago regarding euthanasia or assisted suicide. It refers to Terms of Reference number 3, considering what changes might be required in the law. When you make changes, you cannot guarantee that people will not feel pressured into euthanasia against their will. For this reason it is not a good idea to allow it at all – it is far too open to abuse.

I would like to offer the following incident for your consideration in your inquiry:

A few years ago a friend visited us from Holland. After a while we discovered he was not looking forward to going home. He was afraid that if he were to become ill, he would go to hospital and not come out again. He explained that older people live like that: they are scared to get sick, because there are some doctors who will suggest euthanasia if people are old or frail. There is pressure from the family and people do not wish to be a burden. It makes me wonder how many people in Holland are living in that fear. It's when you meet people who have had this experience that you realise how making euthanasia available changes the expectations of the community. Old people feel this pressure even though it is not directly spoken of; even more so if it is suggested. They are less free to say "no" than it would appear by what the law actually says, and this cannot be avoided. Not only do they live in fear of their lives, but what does remain of their lives is diminished because they live in fear all the time.

Yours Sincerely,

BETTY BOUWMAN