I am against the above Bill and would like to submit the following points and concerns for your consultation.

a) I am concerned about the breadth of the Bill which includes not only those considered to have a terminal illness but anyone over 16 who can be permanently incapacitated but with a non-life threatening condition. I believe that this sends out the wrong signals to those who are disabled and their carers.

b) The term “intolerable” is not defined, leaving open a big area of ambiguity.

c) There does not appear to be any specified reporting procedure by doctors of their involvement in the process. This is worrying as evidence from Netherlands and other places indicate that abuses can occur.

d) I am concerned that no “conscience clause” for doctors is included which would allow them to opt out of any stage of this process. My father was a GP who had great concern and care for his patients and fully ascribed to the Hippocratic Oath. He would have been distressed and horrified at the proposals within this Bill.

e) The phrase “to die with dignity and a minimum of distress” is the aim of the Bill. This however is surely the aim of good health and palliative care and this should be the area of focus, building on the good reputation which Scotland has in this respect.

f) Finally, I would personally like to say that this Bill is against the true human dignity of a person, that is, the intrinsic worth of each individual, no matter the circumstances of that person’s life and which is stated in the UN Declaration of Human Rights and which cannot be taken away from them.

Alina Armstrong
11 April 2010