End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill

Ken Cochran

I am writing to urge you NOT to change the laws of Scotland to allow doctors to kill patients.

3 years ago my father, a former doctor himself, was terminally ill. For a rather prolonged period he received care at home and in the end stages in hospital. I am so glad that at no time was he ever made to feel he was a burden or should end his life. He died peacefully in hospital with the best of care at all times. The whole process was a credit to the NHS and community care staff who attended him; something I have often extolled to relatives overseas.

The NHS and our healthcare workers have always had the role of preserving life and relieving suffering. If properly administered, palliative care is very effective in relieving the suffering of terminally ill patients.

If doctors are allowed to kill their patients we will begin a downward spiral where right-to-die becomes duty-to-die and inevitably, despite the alleged safe guards, some people will feel pressured to cease being a "burden" to their families, their care homes or the NHS.

It is especially scary that the bill as proposed would specifically allow care home staff, with a vested interest in cost cutting, to witness the signature of an elderly resident.

While everyone has sympathy for Margo MacDonald, she is clearly someone who can stand up for herself. Elderly or terminally ill patients may not have her strength and, unlike Margo, may capitulate to external pressures.

I urge you not to proceed with allowing physicians to kill their patients.

Ken Cochran
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