End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill

Mr Alexander Lennox

I am writing to oppose Margo MacDonald’s End of Life Assistance Bill for the following reasons
1. End if life Assistance (Euthanasia) would not only be for people who are "terminally ill"
2. Euthanasia could become a means of health care cost containment
3. Euthanasia will become non-voluntary
4. Euthanasia in any form is a rejection of the importance and value of human life
5. And the taking of innocent human life is always wrong

When society decides to play God, when it decides who will, and who will not die, then the door is opened for history to repeat itself, Euthanasia is the rejection of the sanctity, and importance of human life, and equates us with the brute beast, which are put down when they are of no more use.

Assisted Suicide has failed to get the support of the BMA and other professional medical bodies, and in countries like the USA and the Netherlands where assisted suicide is legal shows that it is impossible to prevent abuses from occurring.

USA Problems with Euthanasia

1. Euthanasia would not only be for people who are "terminally ill." There are two problems here -- the definition of "terminal" and the changes that have already taken place to extend euthanasia to those who aren't "terminally ill." There are many definitions for the word "terminal." For example, when he spoke to the National Press Club in 1992, Jack Kevorkian said that a terminal illness was "any disease that curtails life even for a day." The co-founder of the Hemlock Society often refers to "terminal old age." Some laws define "terminal" condition as one from which death will occur in a "relatively short time." Others state that "terminal" means that death is expected within six months or less.

Even where a specific life expectancy (like six months) is referred to, medical experts acknowledge that it is virtually impossible to predict the life expectancy of a particular patient. Some people diagnosed as terminally ill don't die for years, if at all, from the diagnosed condition. Increasingly, however, euthanasia activists have dropped references to terminal illness, replacing them with such phrases as "hopelessly ill," "desperately ill," "incurably ill," "hopeless condition," and "meaningless life."

An article in the journal, Suicide and Life-Threatening Behaviour, described assisted suicide guidelines for those with a hopeless condition. "Hopeless condition" was defined to include terminal illness, severe physical or psychological pain, physical or mental debilitation or deterioration, or a quality of life that is no longer acceptable to the individual. That means just about anybody who has a suicidal impulse.
People for euthanasia say that voluntary euthanasia will not lead to involuntary euthanasia. They look at things as simply black and white. In real life there would be millions of situations each year where cases would not fall clearly into either category. Here are two:

**Example 1:** an elderly person in a nursing home, who can barely understand a breakfast menu, is asked to sign a form consenting to be killed. Is this voluntary or involuntary? Will they be protected by the law? How? Right now the overall prohibition on killing stands in the way. Once one signature can sign away a person's life, what can be as strong a protection as the current absolute prohibition on direct killing? Answer: nothing.

**Example 2:** a woman is suffering from depression and asks to be helped to commit suicide. One doctor sets up a practice to "help" such people. She and anyone who wants to die know he will approve any such request. He does thousands a year for $200 each. How does the law protect people from him? Does it specify that a doctor can only approve 50 requests a year? 100? 150? If you don't think there are such doctors, just look at recent stories of doctors and nurses who are charged with murder for killing dozens or hundreds of patients.

This ignominious Bill places on the shoulders of doctors the responsibility to take a human life, which he has sworn to protect when he took his oath.

**Euthanasia in the Netherlands**

By Thaddeus M. Baklinski

AMSTERDAM, January 7, 2010 (LifeSiteNews.com) - The official euthanasia monitoring body in the Netherlands has reported a significant increase in "mercy killing" deaths in 2009 compared to the previous year.

An article in the Dutch News reports that the number of registered cases of euthanasia rose by 200 to some 2,500 in 2009. The article also reports that, "It is not known how many cases of mercy killing there actually are in the Netherlands," because only about "80% of instances are registered with the monitoring body."

The figures for 2009 include six registered cases of euthanasia on elderly patients with senile dementia which the report says were "in the early stages and able to make their wishes known."

Alex Schadenberg, executive director of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition, commented on the new Dutch euthanasia figures, observing that the actual number of deaths is substantially higher because assisted suicide is a "separate category" in the Netherlands, as is euthanasia without explicit consent from the patient, such as infant euthanasia and terminal palliative sedation.

"In order to have an accurate picture of the number of deaths that are directly and intentionally caused by physicians in the Netherlands, you need to know
that assisted suicide is a separate category in the Netherlands. Therefore you need to add the assisted suicide deaths to the number of euthanasia deaths. The number of assisted suicide deaths was not reported in the article but it is approximately 400 deaths each year," Schadenberg explained.

"Another category of deaths is deaths without explicit consent. The most recent government report (2005) showed that the number of deaths without explicit consent was approximately 550. Many of the 550 deaths are directly and intentionally caused by the physician but not reported as euthanasia because they lacked consent."

Dutch law requires that patients asking to be killed must be suffering unbearable pain, the doctor administering the lethal dose must be convinced the patient is making an informed choice, and a second doctor must concur with the opinion of the first.

Schadenberg points out that figures from 2007 indicate approximately 10% of all deaths in the Netherlands were connected to the practice of terminal sedation.

"Many of those deaths were caused by dehydration, by the physician sedating the patient and then withholding hydration until death occurs, which usually takes 10 - 14 days," he said.

Schadenberg said the Netherlands does not collect information on how many people with disabilities die by euthanasia, nor was information provided in the government report on how many infants born with disabilities are euthanized based on the request of the parents and the agreement of the physician.

The Dutch News report "acknowledged that people with dementia are dying by euthanasia in the Netherlands, but the article didn't mention how many infants died by euthanasia in 2009."

"The Euthanasia Prevention Coalition is wondering how many people with disabilities are coerced into death by euthanasia based on a false concept that living with a disability is a life of suffering," Schadenberg said.

http://www.internationaltaskforce.org/fctholl.htm
http://www.euthanasia.com/page18.html

Assisted Suicide, Euthanasia, Mercy Killing, are about the taking of an innocent life, which when all said and done is Murder.

If Margo MacDonald where asked to support the reintroduction of capital punishment she would refuse, no doubt calling the idea barbaric, she would not be willing to introduce a law that would put to death a guilty murderer, but she is willing to introduce a law that puts to death the innocent.
I oppose this Bill as it now stands, and I will oppose it in all its diluted forms...We are Human, we are in the business of caring for our sick and dying and No MSP has the right to play God where human life is concerned.

In Conclusion:
In 1984 at the age of 44 I woke up one morning paralysed from the neck down, up until that time I had worked every hour that God gave to me, I had a wife and a family who were dependant upon me, on top of that, my poor wife had been diagnosed with cancer, Listen, I know all about depression, I know what it can lead to, but I thank God that there where people there to encourage me, Friends and Doctors. From that day to this I give God thanks for all those who were willing to care for me, my wife died while I was still being treated, and after many operations, I am living with a good quality of life...Perhaps I would not be writing this letter if Euthanasia had been in place then. Abuses can and do happen, read the reports in the links above.

Mr Alexander Lennox
27 March 2010