End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill

Paul Burgess

I am strongly opposed to any change in the law in the U.K. on this issue. Along with many disability organisations I have supported the increasing opposition to change, this change in any case being unwarranted, and once again due to a small but vociferous group.

Many disabled persons live in actual fear of these ideas. There is evidence from Holland and from Oregon, of numerous pressures, often quite subtle, being brought to bear on both disabled and elderly persons, to 'get out of the way', not to put too fine a point on it.

I sympathise with persons with incurable medical conditions, (and have had two family members in that position) but there is no need, with modern palliative care, for such extremity. If effort is to be expended, apply it to increasing the support for those groups.

And note the numbers: there are comparatively few persons in these unfortunate positions; there are far, far more disabled or elderly persons who will be put at risk. This is not what a modern, civil society should be doing.

A final point: in the recent Guidelines in the U.K. which the Head of the CPS issued, the original draft actually included a clause in which disability or terminal illness would have mitigated an offence. Then, as now, I am astounded and horrified at the sort of attitudes such statements reveal, and in such high places.

Paul Burgess

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