End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill

John F Robins

I wish to register my support for the End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill. I do so as an individual and not on behalf of any organisation.

In the last two weeks as part of my job with an animal charity I have had to persuade two dog owners that it was time to have their very old dogs put down by the vet as the animals were in pain, unable to move their hind legs and were suffering. I had to tell one owner, who was very reluctant to take his Alsatian to the vet, that if he did not do so he could be prosecuted for neglect and cruelty for failing to take action to alleviate his pets pain.

Thankfully we can give our beloved pets a painless end when there is no longer any hope for recovery or any degree of quality of life. I see no reason why a beloved relative should not be given the same consideration.

It concerns me that should I ever be in the position where I wished to end my own suffering or assist a close relative to do so, we would have to travel to Switzerland. This may force people to end their lives several months before it was absolutely necessary as you need to be physically and mentally strong enough to make the journey.

The alternative to End of Life Assistance is to write a “Living Will” forbidding medical staff from providing medication and/or sustenance. If someone did this to an old pet dog or cat instead of taking the animal to the vet for a lethal injection, they could quite rightly be jailed!

It is strange that many of those who oppose this Bill are people who believe in an afterlife where they will no longer suffer. I’m a bit more realistic – I don’t believe in an afterlife and I would like the legal right to have help to painlessly end my one life when the quality of that life has been eroded and replaced with pain and suffering.

John F Robins
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