I feel it is my duty, to present to you my concerns regarding the End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill. After considering the content of the Bill, I urge you to reject it completely.

To implement a legislation that if you had a terminal illness or incapacitation, and found life intolerable, you would be allowed to request end of life assistance, sends out a message that there is a set standard of life. If you’re not in good health or independent you are of less worth compared to those who are. It suggests that if you find yourself in such a position, you should be considering ending your life as it isn’t worth living anymore. Rather, we should be focusing on care and support, and aiding the person through this difficult time. By legislating the act, public opinion would be influenced and intensify pressures on the individuals, families, healthcare and future legislation.

When a person goes into hospital, they go in to be looked after, one shouldn’t be in fear that at some point they may be asked if they had considered assisted suicide, or ultimately, euthanasia. One should feel comfortable and safe under Doctor or nurse care. It’s a worry that if this bill were to be legislated, our Doctor’s and nurses would be trained how to kill. Indeed it is something one would have to learn, as I understood Doctor’s and nurses, they are there to heal and care, not present such options to us whilst we possibly aren’t feeling positive.

Furthermore, it’s a very unfair position to put our Doctor’s in. They would have to make horrific decisions, and if they were to reject a request, they still would have to refer the person to a Doctor who would be willing to take part. This erases the autonomy of a Doctor’s decision and the options they have. Instead, they would be told how to administer their care. What’s more, they could be approached by a 16 year old, not an adult, and have the whole process cleared in up to 2 months, is there opportunity to change one’s mind in such a quick process? No.

We should be looking further into palliative care, social care, looking after people and valuing each individual life. Instead, this bill sends out the message, “you’re life is less valuable, we agree with what you say, we won’t focus on preventing others from feeling the way you do. Let’s get this done.” I am against this bill, and as my representative, I would ask you to reject it. I look forward to hearing from you.

Elizabeth Bennett
11 May 2010