I have great concern over the proposed ‘End of Life Assistance Bill’ and would like to make my views known.

Aside from my belief that no one has the right to end a life, even his own, there are other very serious issues with this proposed bill.

Firstly, legalising assisted suicide will inevitably put pressure on people with currently incurable diseases to commit suicide – no matter what measure are put in place to try to ensure this does not happen, it clearly will. Having assisted suicide as a legal option, offered by doctors, would essentially be stating to patients who are under extreme stress, and I expect in most cases in severe pain, that this is a solution. This is a horrific situation to put someone in.

Secondly, please consider the impact this bill would have on doctors – I believe that most, if not all doctors enter their profession with a clear view that they are doing so to save lives and to help and heal the sick. Research has shown that the suicide rate among veterinarians is almost four times the national average and this has been linked to the stress of putting down animals (see http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/4310596.stm). How much more stress would there be on doctors who are effectively being asked to do the same with people?

Let’s put our efforts into better palliative care rather than ‘giving up on life’. Let’s not be a leader in taking life, but instead a leader in care for those who are suffering.

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