End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill

A and B Fleming

We, the undersigned, wish to respond to Margo Macdonald's proposed End of Life Assistance Bill.

- The scope of the Bill is very broad, offering assisted suicide to thousands of seriously ill or disabled people suffering from relatively uncommon illnesses to conditions like heart disease.
- The Bill seems to allow a Doctor, not only to prescribe but also to administer lethal drugs. This means that those we turn to for help and cure, medically, will become those who administer death. How awful. How would we continue to have faith in our doctors? Would there be records of doctors' participation? Again, there seems to be no provision.
- There is no mention of a conscience clause, enabling medical practitioners to be permitted to opt out.
- The Bill is very vague. Who decides what 'intolerable' is? There is no definition. Who can say that a person has only 6 months to live?
- Is the means to ending life clear and definitive? We do not think so.
- Are there sufficient safeguards, ensuring that pressure has not been exerted on the patient? Again, we do not think so.
- The Bill states that its purpose is to 'enable a person to die with dignity and a minimum of distress' This is already provided through good health care and palliative medicine.
- The vast majority of medical practitioners and all the Royal Colleges of Medicine do not support assisted suicide.
- The Scottish Parliament has already convincingly rejected two previous attempts at considering this.
- A society which accepts assisted suicide or euthanasia is agreeing that some lives no longer have worth. It sends a message to vulnerable, ill, elderly and handicapped that they are burdens.
- Evidence from both Holland and Oregon shows that it is impossible to prevent abuse.

As a family, we have cared for all our relatives who have reached a very vulnerable state. This has been to our enrichment and something we would do again and again. It's a manifestation of love. Incurable and debilitating illness is very sad but it is never a good idea to change the law, particularly one with such wide ranging effects, because of the 'hard cases'.

For all of these reasons, we hope that any form of assisted suicide or euthanasia will never become the law in Scotland.

A and B Fleming
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