End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill

Dr R Raeburn

Do you agree a person should be able to request assistance from a registered medical practitioner?
No; no-one should be able to request that assistance. As a registered medical practitioner, that’s not what I signed up for.

Are you satisfied with the requirement for age and connection with Scotland as set out in the bill?
No; there is no justification for allowing one person to kill another.

Are you satisfied with the 2 categories of people who would qualify to be assisted under the terms of the bill?
No; there is no justification for allowing one person to kill another.

The bill contains a several stage consent and verification process that would be required to be followed for an eligible person to receive end of life assistance. Are you satisfied with this process?
No; I believe taking life is fundamentally wrong, no matter what procedures and verification is used.

Do you consider the level and nature of safeguards as set out in the Bill to be appropriate?
No; I believe the only appropriate safeguard for society is to defeat this bill.

Do you have any other considerations on the bill not included in answer to the above questions?
Yes. As a doctor, I took an oath at graduation to “do no harm”. I also believe passionately in good palliative care, which applies not only to cancer patients, but to a whole range of chronic diseases which have a protracted terminal process. The point of this approach is to help patients live up to the point of death, not to help them die. As a doctor, I am also concerned there is no conscience clause. A colleague has already highlighted in his submission that he lost his job despite the conscience clause in the abortion bill, which makes me believe that any safeguards could also be abused. Doctors have often been criticised in the past for “playing God”, but I believe that to allow this change in the law would be doing exactly that. As a Christian I also believe that if we abandon God’s laws for our society, what do we put in its place? If we say that certain categories of people qualify for end of life assistance, how is that so far away from saying that their life is less valuable than another. Who can say a life is not worth living? I cannot make that judgement about another, I can’t even make it about myself.

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