End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill

Jeanne Neal

I am deeply concerned about the Bill that Margo McDonald is bringing before the Scottish Parliament which would allow assisted suicide for the sick and vulnerable and would expect the medical profession to assist with this.

I cared for both my mother and twin sister as they coped with cancer which ended their lives. When my mother died the pain treatment that she was given at home was not very advanced, but when she went into a hospice she had a better quality of treatment and found peace through the appropriated care that she was given. A few years later when my twin sister was dying, more advanced drug treatment was available and we were, with the assistance of McMillan nurses, able to care for her at home. The care we gave to her at this time was precious to us all and she was not made to feel she was a burden because of her weakness and diagnosis. Modern drug treatment meant much better handling of pain and the time the family spent lovingly helping her die with dignity, helped her and us her family, handle loss.

A Bill to end a person's life through assisted suicide with minimum of distress or loss of dignity seems to me an insult an on all the good care by families, hospitals and hospices. There is a range of good pain-killing treatments to help through this difficult time, specialist hospice care and the support of people like the McMillan nurses.

Also dignity is something people are given by others. This Bill may say to many dying and vulnerable people that their lives are not worth anything any more, so they might as well finish them quickly. Having enquired about the Bill I've found that it is very wide ranging and people would also be at risk of being offered assisted suicide if they are vulnerable or old. This seems to me not where our civilized society, where we previously cared for the vulnerable, should be going.

I wonder if the medical profession is happy about being asked to provide drugs and kill people as part of their jobs? I think this may not be the case. Can a Bill insist doctors kill people?

I do believe that Margo is bringing this Bill to parliament with the best of intentions, but it could be supported by those with less charitable ones. Some that might feel that NHS support for the older generation and vulnerable people is expensive and this would be one way to save money. This would have nothing to do with dying with dignity. Also if in place, could unscrupulous people want old and vulnerable people they know to die, to their own financial advantage? It has been know in recent times.

As you can tell from the above, I'm completely against any Bill like this being part of Scottish society and wish to have my views represented as part of your consultation.
Jeanne Neal
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