Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to express my concern regarding any proposals to legalize assisted suicide and euthanasia. Several issues with Margo MacDonald's bill do not sit well with me.

1) I do not agree that a person should be able to request end of life assistance - I feel that the sort of person whom this bill is designed to 'help' will be both physically and psychologically vulnerable and may feel under pressure to make this request from family, friends and certain aspects of society which give them the feeling they are no longer valued or respected members of the community.

2) I am not satisfied with the age requirements or the requirement for connection with Scotland, principally because I do not believe that people of any age or any nationality should be assisted in dying.

3) No I am not satisfied with the categories of people who would qualify. 'Having a terminal illness' and 'finding life intolerable' are both vague definitions. Terminal illnesses are never set with absolutely definite timescales, with many patients who receive good care from doctors aiming to restore them to health, alleviate their pain through palliative care defying medical prediction. As to 'finding life intolerable', how can we be sure that the patient makes that statement autonomously? And in my opinion a much better way of helping with this life view is through dedicated palliative care - meeting physical and psychological needs through care, medication and the basics of simply showing an interest in the patient, the reasons behind their unhappiness of life and their desire for human contact.
4) No I am not satisfied with the consent and verification process involved. Requesting two requests a minimum of fifteen days apart does not, in my opinion, give the patient a suitable time period in which they can come to term with news of illnesses or to recover from a stressful period of their life.

5) No I do not consider the nature and level of safeguards to be appropriate. It seems like a ridiculous idea that any official requirement to be met can fully justify decisions of huge moral and psychological implications.

6) My basic concerns are not regarding the wording of the bill or it’s exact statute, but rather the general idea behind it that any form of assisted dying should be legalized or encouraged in Scotland. A much better use of NHS finances and resources would be to provide a detailed and comprehensive system of in-depth palliative care to the vulnerable member of society who may wish for death but who really just want love and care.

I write this letter independently from any organisation as a third year medical student and hope that this bill will be seen for what it is and definitely not passed through parliament.

Many thanks,

Angus Ramsay