28th April 2010

The End of life Assistance Bill Committee
T3.60,
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh EH99 1SP

For the Attention of the Above Committee

I write because of my concerns regarding, "the End of Life Assistance Bill."
The scope of this Bill is amazingly wide with no definitive boundaries or safeguards for the very vulnerable. It seems to open the facility as a free for all for anyone, even those with non-threatening disabilities, or slight dependency on others. The aged would be especially put at risk.

At what point and who decides lives no longer have any meaning, value or worth. I am a trained nurse and I can assure you the apparently "disabilitated" are often the section of the community that are bringing the most in-depth meaning to society. They are first and foremost "people" and do have much value and worth and many are doing amazing things, and spur the rest of us on.

Perhaps as a society many have lost the plot as to what is valuable and what true worth is and there should be some kind of return in society requiring an Education Bill.

Are the members of the committee aware that in recent years when this issue has been debated on several occasions, there has been opposition to assisted suicide, or, that the Professional medical bodies and the British Medical Association do not support assisted suicide. Can this be because they also have had experience and do see the value and worth these people bring.

I have just been to visit a friend who has Motor Neuron Disease and he has encouraged me so much and he is getting on with what he can do and I can tell you he has an enormous influence for good. I wonder what he thinks when you perpetuate flogging a "dead" horse in this way that has been discussed so many times. I doubt "you are the people making him feel valuable" I doubt whether "you are the people" making old people feel valuable. In fact who are the disabilitated in society? It's a question worth asking!

How much do all these committee meetings cost in terms of time and money when you could be helping to make a better society. I doubt this is the way! How are you going to prevent the abuse of such a heinous act? There is evidence that it is impossible ie the Netherlands and Oregon. Already existing there is good health care and palliative care. Where this is not so that must be improved.
So I do ask that you would ponder these questions I have raised, and yes we need to improve the lot of the suffering and make sure they are provided with the best care they can have.

We need to ensure they know they are valuable and of great worth, as they are.

I do not believe bringing forward another committee at this time answers any of these questions.

So I leave you with my opposition to your “End of Life Assistance Bill” but I truly hope you will really think about the consequences of what you are doing even as you do it.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Irene Stead