Dear Sirs,

I wish to make a submission on the End of Life Assistance Bill. While I have sympathy for Ms. Macdonald’s personal position, I believe that legislating to permit assisted suicide would be wrong, and harmful to society and individuals.

There are many points that could be made, but the main ones that matter to me are these.

Forty years ago I was seriously ill with an unidentified condition that I feared would not get better, and which was making life “intolerable”. I did consider suicide. I am immensely grateful now that I did not carry that out. Many people go through spells of finding life intolerable and consider suicide, and then come out of it and cope – even if the physical illness does not go away. Please do not make it easier for them to end their lives unnecessarily.

Connected with this is the pressure elderly people will feel to end their lives, not for their own sake, but to avoid “being a burden” to their relatives (either in caring or financially). Again, this is a wrong reason to end life, and certainly not a dignified reason.

If you doubt this pressure, is it not precisely these pressures – difficulty in caring and finance – that lead so many girls to ask for abortions? If abortion is now virtually “on demand”, why should assisted suicide not also end up the same? (Thus hugely increasing the numbers from the very few Ms Macdonald is envisaging.)

The final point I would make is that, if in my case I had asked someone to assist my suicide, I would have been laying a huge burden of guilt on them. This Bill would lay that burden on medical practitioners, without at this stage offering them on opt-out clause on conscience grounds. I believe some doctors would find that situation “intolerable”.

I hope you will consider these points.

Yours faithfully,

Anonymous