I am emailing about concerns which I have regarding the proposed End of Life Assistance Bill. This issue has already been debated on several occasions both in the Scottish and Westminster Parliaments and there has been clear opposition to assisted suicide. Furthermore, the professional medical bodies and the British Medical Association do not support it. Another area of huge concern for me is that the wording of the Bill is vague (e.g. no definition of what constitutes an 'intolerable' life) and that the safeguards contained in it are seriously defective.

The Bill is intended to 'enable a person to die with dignity and a minimum of distress'. This is already provided through good health care, for which our country has been renowned, and particularly through palliative medicine. When my Father was dying of cancer, he could not have had more dignity than he was given in the hospice where he was a patient, and he passed away peacefully with no visible distress. The loving care given was a major factor in our family coming to terms with our grief.

I firmly believe that, if society accepts assisted suicide, it means that many lives will no longer have any value or worth and, consequently, the Bill will promote what it aims to prevent.

Mairi C Ferguson
12 May 2010