Submission Cover Sheet

End of Life Choices in the ACT

Submission Number: 117
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Dear Sir/Madam,

Mine is a personal submission.

I write as a former General and Midwifery SRN, grazier, and mother. I looked after my aged mother (death aged 92), my late husband who died of cancer in 2008, and have, for several years, visited and taken Holy Communion to housebound parishioners in the Deakin/Yarralumla area, and residents of ‘Morling Lodge’, now Baptist Care Griffith.

As a Christian, I regard life as a gift—through my parents, but ultimately of God—and I am convinced that despite many personal and institutional failures through the centuries, the Judeo-Christian roots of our society are the basis of civilisation as we know it.

There is great lament in society at present about ‘lack of respect’. If we abandon the most basic principle of the right to life of every person (as we have already done by condoning abortion of the unborn), why should we be surprised at the escalation of violence in our midst? Either life is sacred and to be respected and preserved, or it is not. To allow by law, the intentional termination of anyone’s life will quickly descend into the subjective evaluation of who is fit to live and who is not, which has been shown to occur time and again in any jurisdiction that has introduced so-called ‘voluntary euthanasia’. This will lead to further disintegration of society.

In my experience with the aged and infirm, I have dealt with many in difficult and burdensome situations, and old age itself is no picnic, but not one person has seriously expressed the desire to die. Yes, some feel a burden to their families, and some are distressed as dementia sets in, but all respond to a bit of personal interest, a loving word, a bit of encouragement and respect for the lives they’ve lived. Personally, I find it a real privilege to be involved with the frail aged—they have great wisdom, wit, patience and perception, and I find them quite inspiring. It would be a sad state of affairs if we were so selfish that we couldn’t offer them the support they need. It’ll be our turn one day!

I would like to mention the wonderful work the Palliative Care Team and the Hospice staff do. It is a great service for people to be supported in their own homes where possible, and that is where any extra funds ought to go. It is rare that a patient cannot be kept comfortable with adequate medication and loving support. Isn’t that a more desirable option? One that will make us a more considerate, respectful, and peaceful society?
Yours faithfully,

[Signature]

Judith Blundell
11/02/2018