



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON END OF LIFE CHOICES IN THE ACT

Ms Bec Cody MLA (Chair), Mrs Vicki Dunne MLA (Deputy Chair), Ms Tara Cheyne MLA,
Mrs Elizabeth Kikkert MLA, Ms Caroline Le Couteur MLA.

Submission Cover Sheet

End of Life Choices in the ACT

Submission Number: 381

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From: Thomas Bielenberg
To: [LA Committee - EOLC](#)
Subject: I am an ACT resident, here is my submission to the inquiry
Date: Thursday, 22 March 2018 8:02:13 PM

Re: I am an ACT resident, here is my submission to the inquiry

Dear Secretary,

I am very concerned about proposed end-of-life options being considered for the ACT. Euthanasia and assisted suicide is serious – a matter of life and death, or really – death over life. I am firmly in favour of good palliative care and firmly against euthanasia in any form. I am concerned that the ACT will put assisted suicide in front of adequate funding for palliative care. Palliative care provides a humane, decent and caring end of life and should be fully supported. Clare Holland house provides this care in the ACT. I support a review of the usage level of Clare Holland house and subsequent expansion as demand requires. Belgium is an example of a country with euthanasia. Since the introduction of that law it has been widened to include ways that children can be euthanised! This is terrible. And euthanising the mentally ill – where will it stop? Statistics of almost half of those using assisted suicide speak of being a burden to family and friends. No-one should be forced to be killed / kill themselves because of feeling that way! As a society, and as individuals in that society, we should love and care for all people and not make them feel like a burden. Assisted suicide is never the right thing to do, for any reason. I am confident that if assisted suicide become legal, some people will encourage their remaining parent / parents to choose assisted suicide so that they have access to their inheritance sooner, or to avoid the ‘hassle’ of looking after aging parents. The AMA statement on euthanasia indicates its disagreement with the option of euthanasia. Why would a government go against the recommendations of the key health body in the land? The Hippocratic Oath states "I will use treatment to help the sick according to my ability and judgment, but never with a view to injury and wrong-doing. Neither will I administer a poison to anybody when asked to do so, nor will I suggest such a course. " Euthanasia / assisted suicide clearly goes against this oath. Australia already has a significant suicide rate, something that all government are, or should be, concerned about. To allow assisted suicide will send a message that it is OK to suicide, when that is in no way the case. In summary, I disagree with assisted suicide and support better palliative care. The risks that assisted suicide are too great to allow it and the concept goes against good medical practice and advice. Allowing assisted suicide signifies that suicide is OK, when it is not, when Australia already has a significant suicide problem.

Sincerely,

Thomas Bielenberg



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