

Care Not Killing Scotland responds to the decision of the End of Life Assistance Committee to reject euthanasia and assisted suicide bill

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Care Not Killing Scotland welcomes the fact that the End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill Committee has rejected Margo MacDonald's attempt to legalise euthanasia and assisted suicide in Scotland. The Committee overwhelmingly rejected the Bill by 5 votes to 1 vote.

We are grateful that the Committee has comprehensively assessed the Bill and identified its manifold dangers. The breadth of people has been described as extraordinarily wide .

The inadequacy of the safeguards against undue influence on people to end their lives has been identified in the report as has the negative impact such a Bill would have on the disabled.

It also firmly comes down on the side of protecting the interests of society rather than allowing the notion of personal autonomy to be stretched to permit assisted suicide and euthanasia.

The Bill's lack of objectivity and clarity have also been criticised indeed the committee recognises that it even fails to use the terms voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide.

The lack of a conscience clause and the question of the level of competence of those involved in any such process show that regulation of the medical profession would have to be examined if such an option were ever available.

All in all this a comprehensive rejection of a Bill which would have posed an enormous danger to many people and would have seriously undermined the dignity of sick and dying people in society.

Dr Gordon Macdonald, Policy Officer for CARE Not Killing Scotland, said:

"This Bill poses a serious threat to public safety. We are delighted that the Committee has overwhelmingly rejected this dangerous proposal. This is a victory for common sense which will protect many people who find themselves in a vulnerable situation."

Ends

Editors Notes

Care Not Killing is a UK-based alliance bringing together around 50 organisations – human rights and disability rights organisations, health care and palliative care groups, faith-based organisations groups – and thousands of concerned individuals.

We have three key aims:

" to promote more and better palliative care;

" to ensure that existing laws against euthanasia and assisted suicide are not weakened or repealed during the lifetime of the current Parliament;

" to inform public opinion further against any weakening of the law.

We seek to attract the broadest support among health care professionals, allied health services and others opposed to euthanasia by campaigning on the basis of powerful arguments underpinned by the latest, well-researched and credible evidence.

Key groups signed up to Care Not Killing include: The Association for Palliative Medicine, the United Kingdom Disabled People's Council, RADAR, the Christian Medical Fellowship, the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, the Church of England and the Medical Ethics Alliance.

For more information, broadcasting bids and media inquiries please contact Alistair Thompson of Media Intelligence Partners on 07970 162225 or 0203 008 8145.