

BRIEFING:

WRITING TO YOUR MP ABOUT ASSISTED SUICIDE



The assisted suicide Bill is one of the most significant pieces of legislation before the UK parliament. We believe Christians have a duty to speak into this issue, acting as salt and light, and making use of our democratic freedoms. We'd strongly encourage you to contact your MP.

MPs may be approaching this based on personal experiences of dying family members and friends. We must speak graciously, but also with clarity, because a change in the law endangers the most vulnerable people in our society.

We would encourage you to consider writing a letter to your MP (the format is MP name, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA). Or you can email them using our web tool: care.org.uk/takeaction/assisted-suicide-campaign

Please consider including a personal story when you do this. Perhaps on the experience of caring for loved ones, or fear about the impact of assisted suicide on vulnerable people you know. Some other points you may wish to make are below. Please use your own words.

POINTS TO RAISE WITH MPS

In November, many MPs voted for the Bill in the understanding that it would include oversight of decisions by a High Court judge. This pledge has been scrapped.

Scrutiny at committee has been biased, evidence from key experts has not been heard, and reasonable amendments have been voted down.

The problems with the Bill identified last year still remain. Nothing in it would guarantee against coercion of vulnerable people – a very subtle, and hidden crime.

The charity Hourglass has said that “coercion is underplayed significantly” in cases of elder abuse. I am worried that older people are at risk of this crime.

Prognosis is fraught. Data from the Department of Work and Pensions shows 1 in 5 people given six months to live are still alive three years later.

The Bill could not prevent people choosing to end their lives because they feel like a burden, or don't have sufficient support.

I am worried that the state of the NHS and inequitable access to palliative care would drive people to choose assisted suicide.

Many disabled people oppose a change in the law because of the regressive message it would send – that some lives are not worth living.

The UK Government's suicide prevention adviser Professor Louis Appleby has said that changing the law could undermine wider suicide prevention.

A loophole in Kim Leadbeater's Bill that could allow anorexia sufferers to access assisted suicide has been left open endangering women in particular.



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