

It was a tremendously uplifting moment for me when I found out that the Supreme Court decided in favour of Kay Carter's right to an assisted death. Discovering the reality of Bill C-14 was like having ice cold water thrown in my face. Prime Minister Trudeau had promised he would meet the requirements of the Carter decision and the charter. Bill C-14 does not meet those requirements. Its major flaws are as follows:

- Requiring a clearly foreseeable time of death is unclear and discriminates against people with unbearable suffering who do not have terminal illnesses;
- It does not allow for Advance directives. This discriminates against people with ALS, dementia and other progressive cognitive disorders;
- It seems strange to me that Bill C-14 requires that a patient must be competent at the time of request and the time of the assisted death. This also discriminates against people with progressive cognitive disorders;
- Bill C-14 rebuilds walls that the Supreme Court Carter decision tore down. Where is the language of Carter in the new legislation? Kay Carter herself would not have been eligible for an assisted death under Bill C-14. Lawmakers need to conscientiously make sure that the law is compliant with both Carter and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

My family has felt the pain of unfair legislation (against assisted dying) twice over the past few years. We still feel the emotional repercussions of the restrictions to this day. My stepdad had cancer. He was in excruciating pain and wanted his suffering to be over, but the law prevented him from doing so. He was forced to endure many, many more months of suffering than he wanted. In the end, he drowned from the fluid inside his own lungs. This is a slow, anxiety provoking, torturous way to die. Having to watch him die this way was also agonizing for my family.

To this day, my mother has PTSD from watching my stepdad die in this way. She has flashbacks and nightmares. She can't even bear the thought of dating because her heart is permanently scarred from what she was forced to witness. My mother and I feel unsafe to live in a world that would let this happen. The law prevented my stepdad from the compassionate, gentle death he deserved. His wishes were very clear, but unfair restrictions were placed on his right to die.

My grandpa recently died of cancer. He was such a proud, independent, good, strong man. He raised me and my brother. Towards the end, the cancer caused him a great deal of pain. He had wanted an assisted death, but the law prevented it. Towards the end, he suffered so much that he would not allow me to visit. He did not want me to see him that way. Not being able to say goodbye has left permanent scars on my heart. I know he wanted to see me, but his love for me prevented it. This was difficult and painful for both of us. No one else should have had a say in when he left. I wish he had been allowed to leave on his own terms with all his pride and dignity intact.

Many of the arguments against assisted death talk about protecting "vulnerable people", but what about inflicting pain and torture on other vulnerable people? How can it be morally justified to protect one group of people at the expense of people with ALS, Parkinson's disease, progressive cognitive disorders, and unbearable chronic pain?

Why does Bill C-14 require that death must be 'in the reasonably foreseeable future'? The Supreme Court stated clearly and effectively that it is "cruel" to force anyone to continue with "a

life of severe and intolerable suffering”. This is ultimately what Bill C-14 does. The new legislation ignores the Supreme Court’s compassion. It callously condemns people like Kay Carter to an unlimited amount of suffering.

Why were nine the twenty-seven intervenors for this legislation members of religious organizations? The majority of Canadians are not religious. Over half of the intervenors were directly opposed to assisted dying; the majority of Canadians are in support of assisted dying.

No bill is better than Bill C-14. The Supreme Court ruling provides better support for our most vulnerable Canadians – the ones with unbearable pain. Everyone should have the right to make Advance Directives and make decisions about their own life and death.

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