



Scottish Christian Forum on Assisted Dying

Convenor:

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{Name} MSP
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Handwritten salutation Dear ...

Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill – A Christian ethical case for support of the Bill at Stage 3

On behalf of the Scottish Christian Forum on Assisted Dying (SCFAD), I am writing to thank you for supporting Liam McArthur's Assisted Dying Bill in the Stage 1 vote last year.

We are praying for you and all MSPs at this crucial time as you consider the Stage 3 amendments this week, and the final Stage 3 vote on Tuesday 17 March.

As we said in our evidence to the Health Committee, we believe this Bill, once it takes effect, will offer a huge reduction in human suffering for those who would otherwise experience very painful or very distressing symptoms at the end of life. From a Christian perspective, we cannot see how it could ever be right to force someone to continue suffering massive pain, distress and indignity if he or she genuinely wants to die.

We fully appreciate the need for safeguards to ensure that no one takes the path of an assisted death unless that is their genuine wish. But we believe this Bill has really effective safeguards clearly built in, with a five stage process before anyone could actually be provided with drugs to end their life.

Of course, we also support the best possible palliative care, but we cannot agree with those who want to delay this legislation in the hope of improving palliative care. Any delay will simply mean more suffering for those who genuinely want to die.

The Bill has received very careful scrutiny by the Health Committee at Stage 2, with a range of broadly sensible amendments passed. But we consider most of the amendments tabled for Stage 3 are designed to make access to an assisted death so limited that hardly anyone will meet the criteria. Some of them may be well-intentioned by the proposers, but we suggest you imagine yourself in the position of someone with a terminal illness who desperately wants help to die, but who is expected to negotiate near-impossible hurdles, or who is pleading with medics who cannot offer an assisted death because of fresh limitations on them.

We would thus encourage you to support the amendments tabled by Liam McArthur but to oppose the others except where Mr McArthur indicates his support. However, do feel free to get in touch if there are any specific amendments where you would appreciate our reflections.

When it comes to the final Stage 3 vote on 17 March, please show compassion to those in great suffering and give the Bill your full support. This could be the most important piece of legislation ever passed by the Scottish Parliament.

Yours sincerely

Hand-signed: GM

Gareth Morgan
Convenor – Scottish Christian Forum on Assisted Dying convenor@scfad.org.uk