

The job that needs to be done

- The impact on older people, the disabled, and those with mental illness who, living in an increasingly uncaring society, may feel a burden on their families or come under family pressure or self-induced pressure to end their lives prematurely.
- The fear and dread that the passing of such legislation might induce in older and vulnerable people, that something might happen to them as they grow older or should they receive a challenging medical diagnosis, especially if they are under the care of the state.
- The knock-on impact on public financial support for palliative care due to the availability of cheaper end-of-life alternatives.
- The impact such a change in the law will have on the insurance industry's approach to life-saving medicines and surgery.

This is not an imaginative list of consequences when one views the impact in countries where euthanasia or assisted suicide has been legalised (including increased numbers of people dying due to euthanasia). This is not only a slippery slope argument saying that more people will die with *indignity* as a result of a new law – although that will be the case, based on the experience elsewhere. These are real direct effects that come into play once the law is changed. It is an acknowledgement that change in the law effects changes in the culture – as one would expect it to do, as per any given clear purpose of any law.

Moral viewpoint

If considered from a general Christian perspective, at a minimum, any argument based on emotion alone cannot be sufficient to undermine the argument from reason against the Bill – as in law-making, reason must rule. Nor does the lawmaker's conscience come into play when faced simply with argument promoted solely on emotion – as a minimum requirement for conscience is that it be informed by reason.

Escaping the Bunker

From a coherent Christian politician's perspective there is no argument that can be made for the proposed law. It is never lawful, even for the gravest reasons, to do evil that good may come of it.

What of duties and common good?

If considered solely from the viewpoint of acknowledging the religious (and not only the Christian religion) underpinning of democratic principles, then the claim of a right to autonomy must be weighed against the duties of the person claiming the right and against the needs of the common good.

There are two hurdles to passing this law which arise due to this consideration:

- The common good would seem an indisputable argument against any change in the law.
- This particular right claimed is a right to decide the time of one's death. To recognise that such a right existed would logically prevent everyone in society from involving themselves in suicide prevention work, as this would be a direct interference with this right.

More fundamentally, however, the right being claimed (to decide the time of one's passing) is not actually what the Bill is about. The Bill is actually about *placing a duty on the state* or its (citizen) agents to facilitate a person's death by killing the person. So, even if the right were defensible, there could be no obligation on the state to vindicate that right as it clearly interferes with the basic right to life (and other dignity rights) of an unknowably sizable number of people by potentially placing their lives at risk.

Put simply, the Christian worldview shows that each human being has a purpose. From the very beginning, each person is a person *from* others, who lives their life *with* others, and who lives *for* others. That co-existent