



Dear Sirs:

I am writing this email in response to the amendment to Bill C - 7 expanding euthanasia to include persons with mental illness.

First of all due to the nature of the illness, there are **NO** safeguards that you could put in place that would **definitively** say that a person with suicidal ideation could never change their mind and desire to live at some point. This happens all of the time. People with mental illness go in and out of episodes of depression.

Let me tell you about my daughter. She had a breakdown at 19 years of age. It took 8 months of watching her go through bouts of extreme depression and anxiety before getting the diagnosis of Bipolar 1. During this 8 months she had unrelenting, continuous thoughts of suicide. Her brain kept telling her to kill herself, that she'd be better off dead, that things would never change. She had no hope. Outwardly she appeared anxious all of the time, no longer looked after her hygiene, wore the same black clothes day after day, lost her personality, her life force, her essence. You can only imagine what it is like as a parent to witness someone you love more than anything go through this. After getting her diagnosis and going on meds, lithium, within a few weeks her personality started to come back, her appearance changed and she no longer had the depressive thoughts. It was such a relief. I wish I could say that this was the end of it but 7 months later she ended up in the hospital with mania.

The next 7 years were times of searching for stability. Episodes of extreme depression followed by times of hypomania and normal mood states. There were months where suicidal thoughts were ever present. One failed attempt. Visits to the psychiatrist for med changes, dose increases, decreases. Therapy, programs, a wonderful psychiatrist who allowed the whole family to be in on the efforts to give my daughter a quality of life worth living.

She has now been stable for 2 years. Absolutely no depression. Normal moods. She is an advocate for the marginalized. She is using her experience to help others.

She suffered those 7 years. A lot. Some would say too much. That's enough. If she wants to end her life why not. But what about the last two years where she has definitely turned a corner. Now is excited about her future.

It took 8 months to get help, 7 years to gain stability. When is the correct time to end this life? Was it 4 years ago when she wanted to die? Or 3 years ago when she wanted to die?

Can you, a politician, really make that decision. Should politicians be making this decision?

We abolished Capital Punishment because "what if we sentence an innocent person to death".

What if we sentence an ill person who just hasn't got the right treatment yet to death? It can take many years to manage a mental illness but people often do get there with the right support, treatments and with advocacy.

People do not understand mental illness. There is still so much stigma. People don't want to die, they just don't want to feel pain anymore. We are not a compassionate society if all we have to offer our mentally ill people is death. We have failed them. Failed them in treatment, failed them in not providing proper affordable housing. failed them in not having enough psychiatrists or programs. And now we are going to fail them again by 'compassionately' killing them. We can do better than offer death. We must do better. Please do not allow this to pass, **ever**, in this country.

A very concerned parent

Cindy Beatch