



NEWS RELEASE

April 14, 2016

Senator Denise Batters, Q.C.

OPPOSITION FORCES TRUDEAU GOVERNMENT TO PULL BACK ON PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED SUICIDE LAW

Senator Denise Batters expressed cautious optimism that Government legislation on physician-assisted suicide introduced today is not as wide-ranging as had been expected.

“Clearly, the opposition from Conservative Parliamentarians and concerned Canadians forced the Trudeau Government to rethink some of the more outrageous recommendations made by the majority of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on this issue,” said Batters. “We also made them climb down from their initial plan to whip the Liberal vote on this legislation.”

Senator Batters has opposed the inclusion of psychological suffering in physician-assisted suicide legislation since last year when the issue was raised in Private Member’s Bills before the Senate. Since that time, she has worked hard to keep the issue prominent in the public eye. She strongly opposed the recommendations of a majority of the Liberal-dominated Joint Parliamentary Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying, which included extending physician-assisted suicide to Canadians with psychological suffering (in the absence of physical illness), “mature minors” (those under 18), and not requiring that qualifying illnesses be terminal.

Conservative Members of Parliament on the Joint Committee filed a dissenting report opposing these recommendations.

“Overwhelmingly, Canadians have expressed to me their strong concerns about physician-assisted suicide being too easily obtained by those without terminal conditions, and especially those with solely psychological suffering,” said Batters. “Recent polls on this issue have supported those findings.”

The Government’s proposed legislation allows physician-assisted dying for mentally competent adults with “grievous and irremediable medical conditions” whose natural death is considered “reasonably foreseeable.”

“I still have a number of concerns about this new legislation,” said Batters. “It does not require terminal illness. Furthermore, some of its language is quite vague and open to wide interpretation, and we will have to consider that carefully in our study of this legislation. Canadians have demanded strict safeguards on physician-assisted suicide, and my Conservative colleagues and I will continue to insist this law meets that expectation.”

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For more information, please contact:

Lana Fawcett Helman, Office of Senator Denise Batters, Q.C.

P: (613) 617-1894 / E: lana.fawcethelman@sen.parl.gc.ca