

LETTERS PUBLISHED IN THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

MAY 17 2017 - 12:05AM

Keep the politicians out of the right-to-die decision

Governments are intervening increasingly on our lives, Now they want to intervene in our death ("Push for right to die from age 25", May 16). When one takes away all the adjectives such as "dignified" and the adverbs "voluntarily", then all that remains of this latest proposal is euthanasia. This proposal may have long-term unintended consequences that one cannot imagine. Such moral issues are not the preserve of government. This is a matter for the people to decide, not the denizens of Macquarie Street.

James Athanasou **Maroubra**

There is no point in allowing assisted dying if close relatives can object. They can already challenge your will and try to negate your right to dispose of your own assets as you see fit. Now they'll have the power of life and death over you? Madness.

Keith Binns Goulburn

A heartfelt thanks to the NSW parliamentary working group on assisted dying on developing a bill to be introduced to State Parliament. I have experienced the end of life of six much-loved family and friends. I have attended many talks and discussions and read widely on this topic. I wish to have this choice. Many other countries allow it with suitable safeguards in place. Having this choice would give me solace.

Bea Hodgson Gerringong

I was one of the many who signed Anne Gabrielides' petition. I signed it so she could choose to end her life with dignity and in her own time. I also signed it because of the strict, and carefully thought out, guidelines that have been put in place in the draft legislation. However, I am concerned that these very necessary guidelines will be watered down by other politicians in the future. That did cause me to hesitate when adding my signature.

John Cotterill Kingsford

I read with scepticism the response of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney to the draft Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill. How can an institution with its record on sexual abuse think it retains any authority to pronounce for the rest of us on "the right to die with dignity"? One might listen to them on such life and death questions if they had demonstrated a level of compassion for their hundreds of young victims that had enabled them their right to live with dignity.

Sue Lubbers Killara

Please publish the names of NSW politicians who vote for and against euthanasia. Thanks to regular polling, we know that a voluntary euthanasia bill with suitable checks and balances has the consistent support of a large majority of voters. So it would be interesting to know how our so-called "representatives" vote.

Joe Wolfe Coogee

The vote on assisted dying had better be a true conscience vote, unlike the recent bill to decriminalise abortion. The Coalition voted as a bloc to defeat it. They are literally playing politics with people's lives. Will they condemn Anne Gabrielides to a terrible death?

Penny Hackett Willoughby

Could the spokeswoman for the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney who said that euthanasia activists should be advocating for more resources into palliative care please outline just what resources, apart from the inevitable process of feeding via a tube into the stomach, are available for a motor neurone disease sufferer that could possibly alleviate the difficulty of breathing and swallowing? Better still, could the spokeswoman and her organisation just butt out of the lives of people coming to terms with such a cruel, debilitating and incurable disease?

Max Fischer Scarborough

If "dying is not a crime" terminally ill people should have the legal, personal and dignified option of euthanasia if they believe it is best for them and not have to face legal, religious or medical stigma. Arguably doctors do harm by prolonging patients' suffering.

Steve Ngeow Chatswood

We support palliative care, but no amount of palliative care will alter the fact that Anne Gabrielides has already lost her ability to speak and is facing a cruel death. Assisted death for Anne is not "killing". Anne cannot choose between living or dying – but with legally assisted dying she could decide to die peacefully and quickly at a time of her choice. People such as the spokesperson for the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney would be equally free to not ask for assistance and endure whatever suffering they feel necessary.

Ian Wood spokesperson and national co-ordinator, Christians Supporting Choice for Voluntary Euthanasia, Mittagong

<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/smh-letters/the-people-should-have-the-right-to-decide-20170515-gw5mis.html>