



Feb. 6, 2015

*February 06, 2015 is a day that will go down in infamy. Today the Supreme Court of Canada sanctioned assisted suicide, sending the message that, if you are seriously ill, your life isn't worth the protection of the law. The Canadian federal Attorney-General had argued: "An absolute prohibition sends the message that all lives are valued, and worthy of protection from those who may subtly encourage vulnerable people to terminate their lives." But the Court did not listen. Nor did it heed the concerns of disability rights activists or the many others who warned that legalizing assisted suicide will put the most vulnerable among us at risk.*

*In response to this irresponsible court decision, we must redouble our efforts to renew reverence for life in healthcare, to protect the medically vulnerable and to ensure that pro-life medical care is available to every person in need of healthcare providers who will work with them to alleviate their suffering, anxieties, and depression as part of ongoing treatment.*

*-The Pro-life Healthcare Alliance*

## **The Supreme Court of Canada has decided not to protect people from assisted suicide**

Alex Schadenberg  
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The Supreme Court of Canada has made an activist decision by giving physicians the right in law to cause the death of people by assisted suicide.

The Supreme Court is naïve to think that assisted suicide will not be abused, when abuse already occurs.

Dr. Leo Alexander, an American psychiatrist, who was a medical advisor at the Nuremburg trials and who was part of the Nuremburg code, stated in an article in the New Journal of Medicine (July 1949):

*"Whatever proportions these crimes finally assumed, it became evident to all who investigated them that they had started from small beginnings. The beginnings at first were merely a subtle shift in emphasis in basic attitude, basic in the euthanasia movement, that there is such a thing as a life not worthy to be lived."*

This is the experience that the Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland have had with assisted death, and unless Canada's Parliament resists this same direction, this will be the same experience in Canada.

Recently, a depressed healthy man who was recently retired, but alone and lonely, died by euthanasia in the Netherlands. In Belgium, a healthy depressed woman died from euthanasia after experiencing the break-up of a long-term relationship. In Switzerland, a man died by assisted suicide after receiving a wrong diagnosis.

Giving doctors the right to cause the death of their patients will never be safe and no amount of "so-called safeguards" will protect those who live with depression or abuse. There will always be people who will abuse the power to cause death and there will always be more reasons to cause death.

Assisted suicide creates new paths of abuse for elders, people with disabilities and other socially devalued people. The scourge of elder abuse in our culture continues to grow.

Depression is common for people with significant health conditions. Assisted suicide is an abandonment of people who live with depression who require support and proper care.

Assisted suicide undermines important mental health and suicide prevention programs. Assisted suicide has had a suicide contagion effect in the State of Oregon.

The Supreme Court gave Parliament one year to provide a legislative framework.

Parliament must first use the notwithstanding clause to continue to equally protect every Canadian. Then Parliament and Provincial governments must commit to: improving access to end-of-life care, create awareness to change social attitudes towards the lives of people with disabilities and the reality of elder abuse, and to focus on effective suicide prevention strategies to provide the care that Canadians require and deserve.

The Euthanasia Prevention Coalition will work to protect people from euthanasia and assisted suicide. We will not abandon Canadians to the false lure of assisted suicide

and someday the Supreme Court will overturn this activist decision.

For more information: Euthanasia Prevention Coalition - 1-877-439-3348  
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About the author: Alex Schadenberg is the executive director of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition (EPC) since 1998 and the chair of the International EPC. The EPC works to: preserve and enforce legal prohibitions and ethical guidelines prohibiting "mercy killing"; increase public awareness of truly ethical hospice/palliative care; promote improvement in the quality and availability of hospice/palliative care, and effective methods of controlling pain and suffering; develop and build compassionate care community services as alternatives to "Mercy Killing"; educate the public on the harm and risks associated with the promotion of euthanasia and assisted suicide through the use of pamphlets, information seminars, media campaigns and research articles; co-ordinate and disseminate research and information on issues related to euthanasia, assisted suicide; and represent the vulnerable and, where appropriate, advocate before the courts on issues related to euthanasia and assisted suicide. Alex is also a founding member of the Pro-life Healthcare Alliance as well as a member of the PHA speakers' bureau.

**Human Life Alliance has developed an informational fact sheet on "The Ten Quick Reasons for Opposing Legalization of Assisted Suicide" If you would like a copy, please contact HLA at 651 484 1040 or email [aolson@humanlife.org](mailto:aolson@humanlife.org)**



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