



Euthanasia Prevention Coalition

NEWSLETTER

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Bill C-384 will begin again

In our last newsletter, we stated that, with parliament being prorogued, the earliest possible date for a vote on Bill C-384 would be March 24. We were wrong.

We have learned that since C-384, the bill that was introduced by Francine Lalonde MP (Bloc) has not been voted on, it will return to first reading, and once again have a first hour of debate and a second hour of debate before being voted on at second reading.

This means that the prorogation of parliament has delayed C-384 significantly and the earliest possible time that

Quebec Commission

The Quebec National Assembly has established a commission to examine the issues of euthanasia and assisted suicide. The first set of consultations are February 15-18 and March 8-9. A second set of consultations will begin in the fall.

It appears by the agenda for the first set of consultations that the Quebec National Assembly intends to encourage the legalization of euthanasia in Quebec. The first few days of commission hearings are heavily weighted towards presentations that favour legalization.

The issues of euthanasia and assisted suicide are federal issues of justice, but we are concerned that the Quebec government will advocate that the province turns a "blind eye."

We are very concerned about the intended outcome of the commission and we urge the Quebec National Assembly to improve end-of-life care and the care of people living with chronic conditions and to ensure that people with disabilities have full access to a true and dignified life and to reject euthanasia.

it could be voted on is late May.

The Euthanasia Prevention Coalition will continue with its lobbying effort by re-writing our talking points and designing a new parliamentary response card.

We are also working with Members of Parliament to set up a parliamentary committee to establish the most effective manner to turn the tide by promoting a positive response to the issues through

the promotion of better end-of-life and chronic care and improving services for people with disabilities.

To order the new Stop Bill C-384 kit contact the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition. The Stop Bill C-384 postcards are redesigned and cost \$10 for each 100 cards.

Please donate towards our effort.

Victory in New Hampshire

On January 13th, the New Hampshire House defeated measure HB 304, a measure that would have legalized assisted suicide. The measure was strongly defeated with a vote of 242 to 113.

It is sad that the mainstream media ignored this vote because it didn't fulfill their corporate mandates.

Representative Nancy Elliott stated: "It's not the function of government to encourage suicide in the young or the old. It's a prescription for elder abuse."

Wesley Smith, a bioethicist and consultant to the International Task Force on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide stated: "Assisted suicide advocates are cultural imperialists who, while pretending to want only a 'limited' change in law and culture, actually seek to widen and expand the euthanasia/assisted suicide license through the use of loose definitions and broadly worded 'restrictions'"

Kevin Smith from the Cornerstone Policy Research stated that: "... people from all over the country could easily qualify for assisted suicide by traveling to New Hampshire for treatment, then obtain the prescription, and go home. Usually state laws and proposals require that patients asking for assisted suicide be residents."

The Euthanasia Prevention Coalition thanks Margaret Dore and those who were part of the coalition for their hard work. Executive director Alex Schadenberg said, "This vote proves that assisted suicide is a recipe for elder abuse and choice is a lie."

Assisted Suicide Seminar, Seattle - June 5, 2010

An educational seminar on the assisted suicide statutes in Washington, Oregon and Montana. This seminar will update participants on the current statutes and discuss future directions for challenging these assisted suicide statutes.

Saturday, June 5, 2010, 9 am. - 5 pm. At the Radisson Airport Hotel - Seattle-Tacoma. (Room rate is \$99.00

per night. Call 206-244-6666.)

Registration: \$99.00 regular, or \$69.00 for students or people with disabilities.

This seminar is co-sponsored by Euthanasia Prevention Coalition, True Compassion Advocates, Physicians for Compassionate Care, Compassionate Health Care Network & the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition - BC..

Magazine publishes in-depth article concerning the

The March 2010 edition of the *Atlantic Monthly* magazine (www.theatlantic.com) includes an in-depth article by Bruce Falconer about Ludwig Minelli and the Dignitas Suicide Clinic, which he founded.

The article is generally fair, except that Falconer didn't interview Soraya Wernli, the former Dignitas employee who has accused Minelli of ethical and financial improprieties and a lack of concern for vulnerable people.

The article centers on the opening of the new "death house" that Dignitas has called the Blue Oasis. In the past, Dignitas operated out of an apartment but Dignitas was evicted after the residents of the building complained about body bags in the elevator. After being evicted from their apartment, Dignitas rented space next to a brothel and facilitated suicides in cars that were parked in empty lots.

The article explained that there were four assisted suicide groups in Switzerland with Dignitas being the only group that assisted the suicides for foreign suicide tourists.

The Blue Oasis is a two-story blue house situated next to a machine factory in the industrial area east of Zurich. The yard features flowering trees, tall grass, and a round pond with lily pads and goldfish. The interior is decorated with paintings of rural Swiss landscapes. The front hallway has an interesting framed cartoon of a man concealing a vial of poison behind his back and waving off people approaching him with a wheelchair and a box of diapers.

Minelli founded Dignitas twelve years ago, after resigning from the board of one of the other assisted suicide groups, which he had joined in 1992 as legal advisor, because of the squabbling among board members.

Interviews with the workers:

The article features interviews with several of the Dignitas employees.

Silvan Luley, a 39 year-old law student, said that most of the employees came in through friends or family. His mother had been one of Minelli's first employees. Some employees had contacted Minelli for assisted suicide, but wound up working for him instead.

Another Dignitas employee referred to as "Arnold," a chain-smoking man who had swept back greasy hair, grey stubble, a blue polyester shirt and dirty shorts, started working for them in 2004. Arnold estimated that he had assisted the suicides of at least 200 people. The first person was a former British military officer who was suffering the pains of old age. After the death, Arnold stated that "I could not go to sleep, I could only go out and dance." He said he responded the same way after each of the first few deaths.

"Arnold" was featured in the documentary about Dignitas that featured an American man with motor neuron disease (ALS). After viewing the documentary, his landlord changed the locks on his apartment to evict him.

History:

The article explained that assisted suicide in Switzerland was technically legalized in 1942.

In the modern era, the concept of euthanasia was first popularized by an English schoolteacher named Samuel D. Williams. The first attempt to legalize euthanasia was in the state of Ohio where two bills were introduced in 1906 that would have legalized euthanasia for terminally ill adults and "hideously deformed and idiotic children."

In the 1920s, German scientists established numerous academic centers devoted to eugenics. These centers promoted euthanasia as a means of eliminating physical and mental imperfections from the gene pool. They promoted the idea that some human lives are unworthy of life. Their ideas were adopted by the Nazis and led to the T4 euthanasia program and the Holocaust in general.

Interview with Minelli:

Minelli, who is 77 years old, said he was an committed Atheist, but as a child he dreamt of becoming a priest.

Minelli began his career as a journalist but in 1977 he changed direction after reporting on the impending ratification of the European Convention on Human Rights. He entered law school and became a human rights lawyer.

Minelli considers "the right to die" to be the last human right. Last year, a BBC article quoted him as saying assisted suicide was "a marvelous possibility given to a human being."

Minelli does not personally attend the suicide deaths. He stated, "In case something happens on the lower level which is not in accordance with the law, it would not be easy for authorities to open an action against me."

Last year, Minelli promoted four assisted suicides that were done by helium. Minelli promoted this technique to prove to authorities that he didn't need the approval of physicians.

BC Woman died at Dignitas suicide clinic

Kathleen (Kay) Carter, an 89 year-old nursing home resident from North Vancouver died at the Dignitas Suicide Clinic in Switzerland on January 15, 2010. Carter was living with spinal tenosis.

Carter was accompanied by two of her daughters and at least one son-in-law.

In a *Canada.com* article by Douglas Todd, the family described the death: "Lying on her Dignitas death bed, ... Kay swallowed the (creamy swiss Sprungli) chocolate before taking the fatal dose of sodium pentobarbital supplied by Dignitas staff."

After Kay died, the Dignitas staff member offered the family cognac.

Carter is one of more than 1,000 people who have died at the Dignitas suicide clinic since 1998. So far, 564 Dignitas deaths have been foreign suicide or death tourists, including ten Canadians.

The death cost the Carter family approximately \$35,000 which included the Dignitas fees, etc.

Dignitas suicide clinic and founder Ludwig Minelli

Falconer was surprised that Minelli referred him to Hebert Mataré, a 97 year-old German physicist who was planning to die at the Dignitas clinic. Mataré, a strong supporter of Minelli, is experiencing symptoms related to his age, but he is not terminally or even chronically ill. Mataré has become a eugenics researcher who believes that certain populations must stop having children because they are polluting the gene pool and impeding human progress.

Mataré considers Minelli to be a natural ally to his philosophy. He said: “It jibes with the solution to overpopulation, because it is the right of everyone, a human right, to say, ‘Stop, I don’t want to live anymore.’”

Mataré also stated: “Life is not sacred, not at all. When you’re no longer useful you have to go.”

Mataré expressed a concern that Minelli pressured him to end his life. He stated that he had traveled to the Dignitas clinic twice already and each time he changed his mind. He said that the staff found this humorous but Minelli asked to be compensated for the wasted effort.

Richard & Jenny Geary:

Falconer met with Richard and Jenny Geary from the UK who were preparing for Jenny to die by assisted suicide at the Dignitas clinic. Jenny, 61 had a condition similar to Parkinson’s disease.

Richard explained that he had made the arrangements that included a series of payments of more than \$10,000 to Dignitas. The Gearys’ children grudgingly agreed to support them in their decision to go to Dignitas.

Richard explained, “You wouldn’t leave your dog on the kitchen floor when it can’t walk, can’t eat, and can’t go outside to the toilet. Transform one life form to another, and you’ve got Jenny in six months.”

When Falconer asked Jenny why she didn’t ride out the illness and make the best of her remaining time, Richard responded, “The weakest of any herd gets killed by a lion or

a tiger. Some animals will kill the weakest of the young. But somehow, because of our intelligence, we go against that, ... I just feel that, with all our scientific advancements, there has to be a better way of controlling death.” Jenny nodded in agreement. She then said “I’m apprehensive, scared the drink won’t be strong enough.”

Dignitas:

Dignitas claims to have 6,000 members world-wide. Membership is paid on a yearly basis and gives the member the right to die by assisted suicide at Dignitas.

Dignitas is different from the other three assisted suicide groups in Switzerland because they require an office. The other groups assist suicides in the person’s home.

Falconer states that there is no proof concerning the rumors that Minelli has his employees remove watches, jewelry, cell phones, etc. from their “clients,” with Minelli then selling those items to pawn shops.

Minelli confirmed that one rumor was true. Minelli said he stores the urns until he has enough of them to load into his car. He then drives, usually at night, to a quiet spot on Lake Zurich, and tosses the remains into the water. Minelli insists that these burials are harmless but last year he was warned by Zurich’s water authority after they received complaints of human bone fragments washing up on shore.

What’s Next

Minelli continues to use the case of Betty Coumbias, the Canadian woman who had asked to die at the Dignitas clinic with her chronically ill husband. Coumbias was healthy at the time (since then she died in Canada) therefore the Dignitas doctor refused to prescribe a lethal dose for her. Minelli is pressuring Zurich medical authorities to grant permission to prescribe a lethal dose to virtually anyone who asks to die.

Meanwhile politicians in Switzerland are viewing Dignitas as a national embarrassment and are considering ways to eliminate suicide tourism in Switzerland.

Baby Isaiah May

Baby Isaiah was born with his umbilical cord around his neck on October 24, 2009 at the hospital in Rocky Mountain House Alberta. He was then sent to Stollery Children’s Hospital in Edmonton where he has been receiving care.

In January, 2010, the hospital and the physician told the May family that Isaiah would be removed from the ventilator on January 20. The May family hired a lawyer and on January 19 they requested that the court grant them 90 more days of care to give Isaiah a chance to improve.

Madame Justice Michelle Crighton first ruled to give Isaiah at least one more week until an independent examination could be done. The next week Judge Crighton granted care for Baby Isaiah until at least February 19th when she would then decide Isaiah’s fate.

After receiving notice from the hospital and the doctor, friends of the May family established a facebook page entitled: Prayers for Baby Isaiah. It now has almost 37,000 fans.

The Euthanasia Prevention Coalition has supported Baby Isaiah’s cause from the beginning. This is not a euthanasia case, but it is a futile care case similar to that of Samuel Golubchuk.

The Euthanasia Prevention Coalition is concerned by the possible precedent that would be established if the court decides that the ventilator can be withdrawn from Isaiah against the clear and express wishes of the family. Would such a precedent lead to the withdrawal of care from people with Alzheimer disease or dementia in the future?

Nitschke to speak in Toronto and Vancouver

Philip Nitschke, Australia's Dr. Death, has now established an American office for Exit International, in Bellingham, Washington.

One of the reasons that Nitschke has established an office in Bellingham is that the Australian government has successfully closed down his Internet presence and suicide product distribution in Australia. Nitschke is also under investigation for his part in a suspicious death in Australia.

Nitschke plans to run suicide seminars and offer suicide advice.

Many people disregard Dr. Nitschke because of his extreme philosophy concerning euthanasia and assisted suicide, but he is a very persuasive and effective speaker.

He is a threat to everyone.

Dutch Euthanasia Society promoting euthanasia for people who are "tired of life"

Eugène Sutorius, a leader of NVVE, the leading euthanasia lobby group in the Netherlands, is leading a new group of academics who are demanding the legalization of euthanasia for people who are not suffering or terminally ill but simply "tired of life."

The group has launched a petition campaign whereby they hope to gather 40,000 signatures which is enough to have the issue debated in the Dutch parliament based on their citizens initiative legislation.

Euthanasia is legal in the Netherlands when the person is suffering physical or mental pain, is supposed freely consenting and two physicians have agreed.

The NVVE petition asks the Dutch legislature to approve euthanasia for people who are over the age of 70 and

"tired of life."

As reported in DutchNews.nl, former minister and feminist Hedy d'Ancona said the right to choose one's time of death is a natural extension of her life-long battle for emancipation.

Neurologist Dick Swaab argues that death should be straightforward. In the animal kingdom, individuals are simply replaced, not patched up endlessly.

The Euthanasia Prevention Coalition recognizes that the ultimate end for the euthanasia lobby is the right to determine the time and place of a person's death. The same idea about legalizing euthanasia for people who are "tired of living" is also being promoted by Philip Nitschke, the leader of Exit International.

Final Exit Network activist pleads guilty in Arizona

On Wednesday, February 25, 2009, four leaders of Final Exit Network were arrested after investigators connected them to the death of Jana Van Voorhis, a woman who had mysteriously died in her bed in the spring of 2007.

On Monday, January 11, 2010, Wye Hale-Rowe, a member of the Final Exit Network who had been arrested last year, pleaded guilty at the Maricopa County Superior Court in Arizona to the charge of "facilitation to commit manslaughter."

In striking a plea bargain with county

prosecutors, Hale-Rowe agreed to testify against the three remaining defendants in the case.

Stephen Drake, researcher for Not Dead Yet – the disability rights organization – stated,

"The other defendants are facing charges of manslaughter and conspiracy to commit manslaughter. This already had the potential of being a very interesting and revealing trial in regard to the Final Exit Network. Van Voorhis had no significant health issues or physical disabilities. I was also looking forward to

how the (Final Exit Network) "training manual" would be used as evidence in the trial. The training manual allegedly tells "exit guides" they are "special people" who should work to reduce the ambivalence of people who want to commit suicide - and any family members involved."

Final Exit Network's former leader Ted Goodwin was vice-president of the World Federation of Right to Die Societies, of which Compassion & Choices is a member.

Life Protecting Power of Attorney for Personal Care will protect you

I received a call recently from a man who accessed the free service offered by his union to have his Power of Attorney and Will documents drawn up by their lawyers.

To his astonishment, the Power of Attorney document was written in such a manner to give permission for all medical treatment to be withheld or withdrawn if he were to acquire an incurable injury or terminal condition.

The document would clearly give the physicians permission to dehydrate him to death, even if he was not yet dying.

He then went to a business supply store and purchased a "Self-Counsel" kit for Will and Estate Planning.

To his astonishment, that document also was written in such a manner as to give permission for all medical treatment to be withheld or withdrawn if he were to acquire a physical or mental

disability.

It is clear that both the union and "Self-Counsel" Press have been influenced by the euthanasia lobby. Both documents assumed that death was preferable to life.

Protect your life by ordering the *Life-Protecting Power of Attorney for Personal Care* for \$25 by filling out the response card with this mailing.

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