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Catherine Frazee

Professor Emerita

Toronto Metropolitan University, School of Disability Studies

frazee [at] web [dot] net

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I speak from Mi'kma'ki, the unceded lands of the Mi'kmaq people, whose dignity in the face of betrayal offers a lesson I hold close to my heart.

My focus in these precious minutes for which I have your attention is Track 2 MAiD. I understand that the suspension of Track 2 MAiD is not something that you will consider. But underlying my comments today are four strongly held views:

- First, Truchon was wrongly decided and should have been appealed. If nothing changes as a result of this Committee's process, the law will have to be challenged in Court.
- Second, Track 2 MAiD is NOT “end of life care”, and any rebuttal that its opponents are seeking to interfere with end-of-life choices is specious and beside the point.
- Third, there are three possible ways to interpret why our government did not appeal

Truchon:

- Because of political calculations that had nothing to do with the issue before the court; OR
- Because a grievous and irremediable disability is somehow akin to end-of-life, insofar as it is believed to be the end of meaningful life, or life of value; OR
- Because beyond the end-of-life context, there are sound policy reasons to terminate the lives of certain persons who desire death. These reasons would

extend exclusively to disabled persons who suffer intolerably and request MAiD.

They would not, for some reason, extend to suffering persons who are not disabled, such as women trapped in conditions of violent domestic abuse, or parents bearing the irremediable grief of the preventable death of an only child.

- Fourth, of these 3 explanations, the first would be unconscionable, the second unacceptable, and the third both disingenuous and discriminatory. I therefore take as my starting point that Track 2 is not an expression of equality. It is an exception to equality, but that Track 2 is embedded in law, so here we are. The genie is out of the bottle, and we are left counting our dead. That the government that brought us Track 2 is now seeking ways and means to ensure “the protection of people with disabilities,” is a hard pill to swallow.

While practitioners lawfully administer the minutes-long procedure that turns life into death, we now spend every waking hour, every moment and resource not already spent on our own survival, throwing out lifelines to pull our disabled kinfolk back from the vortex that funnels them into the beckoning arms of Track 2 MAiD. We pour cash into GoFundMe’s for food, shelter, medicine and therapy. We pour our hearts into rescue efforts for friends and strangers, bearing witness to the injustice that afflicts them. And we rigorously record each tragic case where our efforts failed or came too late – I believe you call these “anecdotes.” We are not trained or resourced for any of this, but our people are dying, and we must step up to save them if we can.

You have heard a consistent message from disability rights defenders – to stop the carnage of Track 2, you must:

- Do everything within your power to reinstate the equality-affirming requirement for reasonably foreseeable natural death, and
- Delay indefinitely any further expansion of Track 2 MAiD.

While you are at it, shore up the requirements for Track 1 MAiD, at the very least by explicit affirmation of existing guardrails in the law that have been quietly set aside in actual MAiD practice. These measures will save lives, but they will not restore equality, or undo the incalculable damage from a catastrophic social experiment. That is because much of the harm that was unleashed as you celebrated the passage of Bill C7 was beyond your imagining. The underlying message of Track 2 was clear, and it has entered our cultural bloodstream with the speed of an infectious pathogen. The toxic notion – that life with disability is optional and by extension, dispensable – is now in the ether. We are detecting its presence in everyday discourse, in unsolicited coaching from social service gatekeepers, crisis line workers, and ordinary citizens having their say in letters to the editor. MAiD has swiftly been normalized to relieve the cost and toil of those who are “burdened” with our care. Its euphemistic framings have not fooled anyone, and everyday plain-spoken Canadians are giving voice to the law’s subtext. I have examples.

Track 2 MAiD assaults disabled people everywhere. It harms us through its discriminatory formulation and effects that undermine, rather than expand, our equality.

So much to say. So little time.

So much to grieve. So little hope.