

The Catholic Women's League of Canada TALKING POINTS WITH YOUR MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

This document provides information, discussion points and questions on a key issue affecting Catholic values. You are encouraged to use this document when opportunities for discussion occur with your member of parliament (MP).

FEDERAL 2025 PRE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS 429 AND 430 – CHARITABLE STATUS OF PRO-LIFE AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS.

BACKGROUND

Canada's *Income Tax Act* provides charities devoted solely to the relief of poverty, education and advancement of religion the right to issue tax receipts to donors.

In December 2024, the federal Standing Committee on Finance submitted two recommendations of grave concern for Catholics who value the protection of life and the dignity of persons:

Recommendation 429: No longer provide charitable status to pro-life/anti-abortion organizations.

Recommendation 430: Amend the *Income Tax Act* to provide a definition of a charity which would remove the privileged status of "advancement of religion" as a charitable purpose.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Because no meaningful public consultation was held with the charitable sectors affected by Recommendations 429 and 430 and because of the significant impact this change would have on Canadian social support services, it is important these recommendations are not considered in future pre-budget recommendations and are not considered for legislation.

SPEAKING POINTS

- Recommendation 429 is broad and targets only one charitable subgroup, the "anti-abortion groups." It appears to penalize organizations based on moral stance rather than legal. A lack of funding would affect legitimate pregnancy health and social support services.
- Recommendation 430 would reduce contributions to Canadians by as much as \$16.5 billion from faith-based communities that support food banks, soup kitchens, refugee programs, hospitals, schools, long-term care homes, palliative care programs and many other social justice initiatives.
- Recommendation 430 would affect 40% of Canada's registered charities; two out of five would lose charitable status.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR MP

1. Would you vote to remove the charitable funding from anti-abortion groups despite the effect this could have on pregnancy health and social support services?
2. Would you support the removal of charitable status from faith-based groups?
3. If faith-based organizations lose charitable status, what programs and services would you request the government establish or expand to assist marginalized and vulnerable persons living in poverty or lacking adequate social support? Where would funding for these additional government initiatives come from?

ADVANCED REQUESTS FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING (MAiD)

BACKGROUND

Canada legalized medical assistance in dying (MAiD) in 2016. A recent special joint committee studying the expansion of MAiD was tabled in the House of Commons in February 2023. It recommended that people facing future loss of capacity, such as dementia, be allowed to make an “advanced request” to receive MAiD.

Recommendation 21 states:

“That the [federal government] amend the *Criminal Code* to allow for advance requests following a diagnosis of a serious and incurable medical condition, disease or disorder leading to incapacity” (from the Special Report).

RECOMMENDATION

Removing MAiD from the *Criminal Code* is the ultimate objective. However, the current focus for MPs must be the repealing of Recommendation 21, which would allow “advanced directives.”

SPEAKING POINTS

There are several ethical, legal and practical challenges with Recommendation 21:

- Persons who have made an advanced request for MAiD might no longer be able to confirm their wishes at the time of death. If their wishes change, they may not be able to express them.
- Advanced requests rely on written documents describing a person’s future condition and suffering. Doctors and family members might interpret the request differently from what the patient would have wanted.
- There is concern that advanced requests could lead to coercion or undue pressure, especially for older adults or those with disabilities, to request MAiD to avoid burdening families or the healthcare system.
- There are ethical concerns among some healthcare professionals that carrying out MAiD based on an old request without current confirmation could be seen as involuntary. There is a risk that death could be seen as a “benefit” contrary to what a patient might have desired.
- Predicting suffering in situations such as dementia risks treating cognitively impaired individuals as objects of past instructions rather than persons who merit a fresh assessment of their present well-being. Some may reach the point they previously feared but still enjoy life.
- Canada should increase funding for palliative and hospice care and suicide prevention.
- Offering MAiD rather than providing support services devalues those living with chronic conditions.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR MP

1. Are you opposed to recommendations for advanced requests for MAiD for Canadians, such as those with an incurable medical disease or diagnosed with dementia?
2. Do you agree that all Canadians should be provided with suicide prevention and life-affirming care, regardless of age, disability or mental health?
3. Are you opposed to expanding MAiD to Canadians living with mental illness?
4. Are you supportive of increasing funding specifically for palliative and hospice care as well as suicide prevention?