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March 8, 2021

The Rt Hon Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

On behalf of the more than 70,000 members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada located throughout Canada and the military, I wish to express dismay at the lack of concern for many sectors of society regarding the current proposed amendments to Bill C-7 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying)*. When Bill C-14 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make related amendments to other Acts (medical assistance in dying)* passed in 2016, it was stated that a review would take place in five years. Instead, the new proposed bill dismisses the review and recommends a broadening of criteria for euthanizing citizens. Members of the League cannot understand the need for the speed at which such a literal life and death issue is being considered by Parliament.

Bill C-14 had three conditions attached: medical assistance in dying had to be performed by a medical practitioner; five eligible criteria had to be followed; and nine procedural safeguards had to be in place. It was assumed that when this bill became law, the vulnerable would be protected, especially when they are at their most vulnerable. Nonetheless, implementation was immediate even though it took two years to complete regulations to accompany the bill.

There are many concerns besides the time factor. Safeguards that include monitoring and reporting of MAiD statistics are lacking, indicating a lack of accountability. Until strong, substantive safeguards are in place, changing the foreseeability requirement is a dangerous way to proceed.

The bill requires that in cases where natural death is not reasonably foreseeable, the patient "be informed of the means available to relieve their suffering, including, where appropriate, counselling services, mental health and disability support services, community services and palliative care. The patient must also be offered consultations with relevant professionals who provide those services". The League takes exception to the subjective interpretation offered by the words "where appropriate". Also, the services outlined in the bill, while admirable, are not available in many communities in the country.

The bill directly stigmatizes those who are sick, who are elderly and/or who are disabled. There may be many reasons why citizens choose MAiD, which is why government needs to examine the possible harms that may be done. Citizens who have contributed to the country up until they have reached this state in their lives must be considered more carefully from this perspective. If society via Parliament had the will to place significant value on services that would assist the lives of the most vulnerable in their greatest anguish, there

perhaps may be little request for euthanasia. Bill C-7 removes necessary safeguards and so for many, makes choosing this course not only available but expedient; they would otherwise be served by the medical and other health professionals.

With the extension given Parliament, please reconsider the amendments to Bill C-7. Instead, focus on making the ill, the disabled and the elderly more accepted and comfortable in their lives, especially through palliative care related to Parliament's *Framework on Palliative Care in Canada*. I look forward to hearing from you, and kindly request a formal response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anne-M Gorman".

Anne-M Gorman
National President

AMG/ks

Cc: Members of Parliament
Senators