



**The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council**



**Christian Family Life, Community Life
Legislation & Resolutions
Communiqué
October 20, 2020**

TO: All Members of the Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council
The Catholic Women's League of Canada

CC: National Chairperson of Organization (for information)
National Chairperson of Christian Family Life
National Chairperson of Community Life
National Chairperson of Legislation
National Chairperson of Resolutions

FROM: Celine Berlinguette Provincial Chairperson of Christian Family Life
Theresa Hickey Provincial Chairperson of Community Life
Sharon Malec Provincial Chairperson of Legislation
Betsy Fletcher Provincial Chairperson of Resolutions

**Our Catholic Call to Action
SANCTITY OF LIFE: From Birth to Natural Death**

Bill C-7: An Act to amend the Criminal Code

On October 9, 2020, Bill C-7, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code* (medical assistance in dying) was reintroduced after the previous Bill died when Parliament was prorogued in August 2020. This Bill would allow assisted death for Canadians who are not dying, by removing the requirement that a person's death must be "reasonably foreseeable" in order to be eligible for assisted suicide/euthanasia. This Bill establishes two streams of eligibility: for those whose natural death is foreseeable and for those whose natural death is not foreseeable. The changes proposed to Bill C-7 will make it easier to access medical assistance in dying (MAiD) and may encourage more people to seek this avenue for ending their lives.

In 2019 there were 5,444 deaths in Canada by medical assistance in dying and it is noteworthy that 263 applicants withdrew their requests. Without safeguards in place, the process from request to actual death is expedited without reasonable reflection time which would offer individuals the opportunity to have a change of mind.

Individuals suffering from mental illness, chronic illnesses and disabled persons are particularly vulnerable to the temptations of MAiD. Our health

care system is failing to provide for those nearing their end of life. Increasingly the discussion seems more concerned about costs than the ethical and moral implications of decisions being made.

As you read this communiqué, you may be asking what you can do.

As 9,000 women strong in ABMK we can undertake a writing campaign to our MPs apprising them of our concerns and instructing them to defeat the proposed amendments. A cascade of letters from you and your councils would remind Parliament of the pitfalls of these amendments and the need for sober reflection on what is being proposed. We were given cause for alarm when freedom of religion was called into question with the need for legislation to protect the conscience rights of healthcare professionals who view euthanasia as murder in addition to needing legislation to protect palliative care facilities from providing euthanasia services. Please find posted to our website two letters that have been sent to the Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops and to the Federal Justice Minister representing the position of Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council, as well as other useful links. These letters outline our position on this important Bill and its ramifications. In addition, please find posted a list of Members of Parliament in ABMK.

Please feel free to model your letters on the ones provided. Five suggestions are provided for the palliative care postcards if you would prefer. The postcards are available through your diocesan president or the provincial Communications Chair Janet MacPhee - abmkprovcommunications@gmail.com.

We hope that they will serve as a guide for you to write your own letters and to please **send them out by November 11th** as the Bill will receive reading in early December.

As members of the Catholic Women's League of Canada we share the belief that life is sacred and that it is a gift we receive from God. God decides when our lives end... it is not left to us.

We are reminded about the power of prayer and ask that you, your councils and your parishes include *sanctity of life* in your daily prayers. Look for prayer suggestions posted on our website (www.cwl.ab.ca) in the coming days.

Our **Mission Statement** reads: *The Catholic Women's League of Canada calls its members to grow in faith and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service.*

Never underestimate the strength and power of our sisterhood in our Alberta Mackenzie communities and our pledge to Social Justice.