

Ottawa

411 Confederation
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
Tel.: 613-947-2277
Fax: 613-947-2278

Scott.Reid@parl.gc.ca



House of Commons
Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston

Constituency

1-105 Dufferin Street
Perth ON, K7H 3A5

224 Bridge Street
Carleton Place, ON K7C 3G9
Tel: 613-257-8130
Fax: 613-257-4371

Dear Constituent,

I am writing to ask the voters of Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston to instruct me how to vote on Bill C-7, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (Medical Assistance in Dying)*, when it is placed before the House of Commons for final approval. This vote, known as “Third Reading,” will likely take place in May or June (the exact date is still uncertain).

What is a Constituency Referendum? Why Hold One?

This is the tenth Constituency Referendum that I have held, since I was first elected twenty years ago. It is your opportunity to vote as dictated by your own conscience, and as guided by an informed reading of the facts. When the Third Reading vote takes place, I will abide by the majority decision taken by the voters of Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston.

I do so because the people of this riding—and by extension, the people of Canada as a whole—are no less thoughtful and reasonable than their elected officials (and besides, as often as not, MPs are simply voting as ordered by their party “whips”). Your conscience is no less worthy than mine, and the free vote of a citizen is infinitely morally superior to the whipped vote of an MP who fears that he or she will be punished in some way by the party leadership for voting the “wrong” way.

Why Bill C-7 is Important.

Medically-assisted suicide is already lawful in Canada, as long as the process is carried out in accordance with a series of conditions which were enacted by Parliament in 2016.

Some of these conditions have since been successfully challenged in court; in September, the Quebec Superior Court ruled that some of the restrictions in the existing law are an unconstitutional violation of Section 7 of the *Charter of Rights*, and that the law must be rewritten to expand the range of circumstances under which assisted suicide will be permitted.

Some of the provisions in Bill C-7 are a direct response to the Court’s ruling, while other provisions are not court-mandated. For voters who are interested in this distinction, some of the background materials provided in this package provide further information; a link to the ruling itself is also included.

The primary changes contained in Bill C-7 are as follows:

- The existing requirement that a written request for medical assistance in dying (MAID) must be signed by two independent witnesses is relaxed—a single witness will henceforth be sufficient, and that person can be “a paid professional personal or health care worker.”
- The 10-day minimum waiting period between the date of the signed written request for MAID and the date on which MAID takes place, is removed.
- The “final consent” requirement, under which the person seeking MAID must expressly confirm their consent immediately before receiving MAID, can be waived in certain circumstances, which are enumerated in the Bill.
- An existing restriction, under which a person’s suicide may not be assisted unless their natural death is “reasonably foreseeable”, is lifted. Such assistance is now lawful, conditional upon a series of seven safeguards, which are enumerated in the Bill, being met.

What Happens Next?

When the Third Reading vote takes place, I will abide by the decision of the voters of Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston. I will announce the number of ballots cast, and the percentage for each side, prior to voting. Only ballots received at my office prior to Third Reading can be taken into account, so please mail yours as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Scott Reid, MP
Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston