

House of Representatives

Supplementary Order Paper

Wednesday, 21 August 2019

End of Life Choice Bill

Proposed amendment to SOP No 259

Chris Penk, in Committee, to move the following amendment:

Clause 8

In *clause 8*, replace *subclause (1)* (page 8) with:

- (1) A person who wishes to exercise the option of receiving assisted dying may, but is not obliged to, inform the attending medical practitioner of their wish.

Explanatory note

This Supplementary Order Paper amends Supplementary Order Paper No 259 amending the End of Life Choice Bill to amend *clause 8* of . It would remove an element of compulsion currently in the legislation—as indicated by the word “must”—in relation to a person who wishes to die by euthanasia or assisted suicide.

It is utterly intolerable that a person be compelled by law to inform another person of any wish that they have to die under this Act, particularly given that a person may change their mind after having that particular wish.

One can only assume that the member in charge of the Bill intended to state that “receiving assisted dying” is not available unless a person expresses such a wish. As drafted, however, the legislation requires disclosure (on the face of it, immediately upon the person having that wish). This is disappointingly poor drafting, given the vulnerability of the persons involved and the potentially significant consequences of such ambiguity.