



Shanaaz Gokool
Chief Operating Officer
Dying With Dignity Canada

September 20th, 2015

Dear Ms. Gokool,

Thank you for inquiring about the Green Party of Canada's policy on physician assisted dying. I wish to express that our policy is to swiftly and fully implement the Court's decision.

The Green Party was the first federal party to support changes to the Criminal Code to allow physician-assisted death for grievous and irremediable medical conditions.

We believe that all Canadians have the right to live their final years in dignity. In order to ensure this, the government must provide supportive services and opportunities to make that possible. This includes educating the public about end-of-life issues, including the limits to artificial life support systems, surgical operations and chemical therapies to extend life. It is not the government's place to force people to live past their dignity and their will.

In addition, the Federal Government must increase funding for palliative care hospices in our communities, and enact "living-will" legislation that guarantees people the right to limit or refuse medical intervention and treatment.

The unanimous Supreme Court decision on February 6, 2015 respecting an adult's ability to decide their own end-of-life care when they suffer from grievous and irremediable medical conditions must be swiftly implemented.

The Green Party is ready to immediately advocate for this legislation in a new Parliament, having already taken this compassionate position. Both Elizabeth May, Leader of the Green Party, and Deputy Leader Bruce Hyer were joint-seconders to two landmark Private Member's Bills from Conservative MP Steven Fletcher aimed at providing relief, compassion and dignity to Canadians who choose to end their own lives. We will, however, remain vigilant to ensure the decision to die with dignity is made by the patient in question and nobody else. We can no longer leave family members in the moral and legal quandary of assisting their loved ones to a peaceful death with dignity.

Parliament should convene as soon as possible following October 19th to address this issue. The Supreme Court gave Parliament a full year - our inaction up to now is no excuse for missing the Court's deadline and leaving doctors and patients in limbo. Legislators owe the Canadian people clear laws on physician assisted death and Green MPs will push to make compliance with the existing deadline a priority.

In the event that other parties are not prepared to move quickly to meet the Supreme Court's February 6, 2016 deadline, we will not support a request to the Supreme Court for an extension of the deadline. Rather than require grievously ill individuals to suffer further, Green MPs will allow the existing ban to lapse with the result that assisted dying is regulated solely by the provinces and physician's colleges until federal amendments to the criminal code are passed. Canadians should not suffer simply because their leaders lack the courage to legislate in a controversial area.

Green MPs will support changes to the Criminal Code to allow for physicians to assist death within the framework laid out by the Supreme Court of Canada.

Please do not hesitate to contact me again should you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth May". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Elizabeth May
Leader of the Green Party of Canada