

SCOTLAND - A MECCA FOR DEATH TOURISM?



Scotland is currently foaming with a recently proposed controversial bill legalizing assisted suicide. While many welcome this suggestion, the majority of locals fear it will turn Scotland into a death tourism destination.

Ms. Margo McDonald, a Scottish MSP, has proposed the End of Life Assistance Bill. **Her aim is to allow the people who are terminally ill and or permanently 'physically incapacitated' to seek help in ending their lives.** Her suggestion started a heated discussion among the Scottish nation; some agree with Ms. McDonald, saying this is good news for all who wish to end their lives in what they perceive a decent way. However, the opposition is quite direct; Elaine Stevens from the Independent Association of Nurses in Palliative Care speaks about the downside.

The Association is convinced that allowing assisted suicide will result in people from all over the world to 'flock' in Scotland to end their lives. **The Bill proposes that each patient willing to end their life has to be registered with a local medical practice for at least 18 months before 'applying'.** However, Elaine Stevens suggests there are always loop holes and ways to get around the system.

Another strong voice against assisted suicide comes from Maria McGill, the CEO of the Highland Hospice. It is her belief that the concept completely diminishes the 'principles and practice of palliative care' which has a deep-rooted tradition in Scotland. **Critics express fears that assisted suicide may become a 'business like' venture with GPs specializing in this area and receiving a lot of money for it.** A conflict of interest may easily emerge.

Six hundred locals expressed their opinion in **a recent poll which resulted in 86% respondents set firmly against the Bill.** While discussion continues, it has become very clear the Scots have no intention of being labeled a death tourism destination.

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