

Bowing Out Before the Curtain Falls

Vicki Gunn

Executive Director, CHP Canada

Geoff Capp

Alberta President, CHP Canada

I was very surprised to hear that Steven Fletcher, P.C., M.P., has come out in favour of doctor-assisted suicide.

He's been there: at the moment of despair of feeling his life is over and ought to be terminated. But he has managed to move beyond that point, and should be an advocate for and example to people with disabilities or terminal illness.

He has contributed so much to Canada, as have our Paralympic participants and many others who have overcome incredible odds to show what they're capable of accomplishing.

Mr. Fletcher believes that this issue warrants a thorough debate in the House of Commons, since the Supreme Court agreed in January to look at the ban on assisted suicide. Who can argue the need for our government to discuss political "hot potatoes?" It's where it should be discussed. Unelected judges, under the authority of Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin, should not make arbitrary decisions for all Canadians by simply striking down laws with which they disagree. Their efforts should rather be to uphold the laws that Parliament enacts.

The Christian Heritage Party has consistently encouraged Parliament to discuss the "hot potato" issue of abortion. It has never been thoroughly debated. Every time it is brought forward, politicians from all the parties now in the House attempt to "sweep it under the carpet." In 2012, we were vocal in our support of the "We Want the Debate" movement, and we will continue to press for an honest examination of the protection of human life and the personhood of the unborn.

But, how often should Parliament discuss the issue of assisted suicide? In 2010, the decision was made by Parliament to uphold the Canadian law against suicide. Will Parliament discuss it every three years until people get desensitized to the issue? It appears that those supporting assisted suicide are trying to speed things up by pushing for the discussion annually until a weary Parliament agrees so it can go on to other matters that should be before them.

This pressure, of the Supreme Court forcing the issue through striking down laws, begs the question as to who runs this country - elected representatives of the people or appointed Supreme Court Judges. Speaking at a law school in New Zealand in December 2005, Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin urged judges around the world to be much more aggressive in promoting their concept of rights "...no matter what the Constitution or the law may say."

With such disregard for the law in our Supreme Court, how can we expect Canadians to readily be governed by our laws? Is this another "progressive decision" an aggressive Supreme Court is using to override Parliament to force an issue onto the table?

Canada's handicapped community has much to offer us. A dark period, which is often entered during crisis, is not the time to throw in the towel.

After his accident in 1996, Mr. Fletcher was given a position in the federal cabinet by the Prime Minister. He opened the House of Commons to people with disabilities, being able to sit in the House. Necessity modified the rules and allowed a "Stranger to the House" to be there to act for him in such matters as seeking the Speaker's attention. Mr. Fletcher has successfully modified the rules to accommodate people with disabilities.

Mr. Fletcher should be one of the strongest advocates of choosing life to people considering death as an escape. Seeing his example, people who believe in God will not doubt God's power to open a door and make a way.

At the same time, preserving the laws for the protection of all innocent human life must be a consideration. This is part of our heritage...Recognizing the value of all people.

We at CHP Canada lift our hats to every Canadian who has overcome incredible odds to achieve great things. We encourage all persons facing life's challenges to do so with courage and set an example for the generations that follow us of truly living up to their potential. Let's encourage one another to live life to the fullest. The only time we fail is when we give up trying.

Call To Action

1. Join CHP Canada¹ to show your support for protection of all innocent life at all stages. We are Canada's only pro-life, pro-family, federal political party.
2. We encourage our members and all who are concerned about the slippery slope towards euthanasia and assisted suicide to visit Euthanasia Coalition Prevention Executive Director, Alex Schadenberg's blog and sign the Declaration of Hope². Your support will show all Canadian MPs and Senators that there are many Canadians who want to protect innocent human life at all stages.
3. E-mail the Prime Minister pm@pm.gc.ca, stephen.harper@parl.gc.ca, Minister of Justice peter.mackay@parl.gc.ca and your personal MP and ask them to oppose these Bills.

Footnotes

¹ www.chp.ca/get-involved

² declarationofhope.ca