

An Open Letter to MSPs Ahead of the Stage 3 Vote on the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill

Dear Member of the Scottish Parliament,

We write together as Christian leaders in Scotland because we believe Liam McArthur's Assisted Dying bill touches one of the most important moral questions of our time — how we care for one another at the end of life.

While we understand the deeply felt desire to relieve suffering, permitting doctors to assist in ending life undermines human dignity. However carefully framed, such legislation risks normalising the idea that some lives are no longer worth living. It would expose the most vulnerable — the elderly, the disabled, and those who feel themselves to be a burden — to subtle pressures and coercion that no safeguard can fully prevent.

True compassion does not mean helping someone to die, but committing ourselves to care for them in life. Scotland should invest in first-class palliative and end-of-life care, ensuring that no one faces pain, fear, or loneliness without support.

Courts and legislatures in Canada and Australia have grappled with the consequences of assisted dying laws: eligibility has expanded, safeguards have been challenged, and concerns about coercion and misuse have arisen. We should learn from those experiences rather than repeat their mistakes.

We urge you, therefore, to stand for the equal worth and dignity of every human life, and to vote against this legislation at Stage 3. A truly compassionate society accompanies those who suffer; it does not abandon them to an early death.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Rev. Rosemary Frew, Moderator, Church of Scotland

Bishop John Keenan, President of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland

Rev Alasdair Macleod, Moderator, Free Church of Scotland

Rev Martin Keane, Moderator, United Free Church of Scotland

Major David Burns, Executive Secretary to Leadership (Scotland), Salvation Army

Andy Hunter, Director for Scotland, Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches

Alistair Matheson, Scottish Regional Superintendent for the Apostolic Church UK

