



Minors should be eligible for assisted suicide, Trudeau government committee says

Description

On Wednesday, the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) presented its latest [report](#) to the Canadian Parliament. Included in its list of recommendations was an expansion of the program to include minors.

The committee argued that while minors should have access to [MAID](#), eligibility should be restricted to those who have the proper decision-making capacity, and a condition that brings with it the expectation of imminent death.

When compiling its report, the committee held dozens of meetings with nearly 150 witnesses, including experts and those living with conditions that could make them eligible for MAID. It also reviewed over 350 briefs and other written correspondences.

The committee explained that there were very few minors available for consultation on the subject, and thus called for more research to be done among that demographic.

“Given the lack of youth perspectives on the topic,” the committee wrote, “MAID for mature minors should be limited to track one at this stage.” Track one refers to those whose natural death is “reasonably foreseeable.”

In its report, the committee noted that it agreed with witnesses who argued that minors should only be eligible for MAID if their parent or guardian is involved in the process, though it clarified that it “agrees with those witnesses who supported a requirement for parental consultation, but not consent, in the context of MAID for mature minors.”

The committee stated in order to give minors the final say in whether they choose to go through with MAID, provisions would have to be put in place to ensure that they have the requisite decision-making capabilities. It also argued that the ability to thoughtfully weigh the options and decide one way or another was enough, thus “eligibility for MAID should not be denied on the basis of age alone.”

Further inquiry, the committee wrote, must be done before any amendments could be made to existing

policies regarding MAID for minors. It gave Parliament five years to carry out such research.

by Jarryd Jaeger

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