



Ontario Provincial Council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada Legislation Standing Committee

Care for our Common Home

Directive #8

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June 11, 2019

To: Diocesan Legislation Standing Committee Chairpersons
From: Karen McDonald, Provincial Legislation Standing Committee Chairperson
cc: Provincial Officers, Diocesan Presidents, Legislation Sub-Committee
Chairpersons and National Legislation Standing Committee Chairperson

National Chairperson of Legislation Betty Colaneri sends the following information concerning **Bill C-418** (please note the urgent timeline involved) **and Bill C-75**.

Bill C-418 *Protection of Freedom of Conscience Act* is a private member's bill by MP David Anderson that received introduction and first reading in the House of Commons on October 30, 2018. The bill seeks to protect medical practitioners from being compelled to directly or indirectly take part in medical assistance in dying.

Bill C-418 can be found at:

<https://www.parl.ca/LegisInfo/BillDetails.aspx?Language=E&billId=10118341>

At the March for Life, Mr. Anderson stated, "Bill C-418, the point of the bill is to actually establish the penalty for coercion or intimidation and the threat to someone's employment status. It establishes a consequence for conducting yourself that way."

Should Bill C-418 pass, it would "make it a punishable offence to compel, through 'violence or threats of violence, coercion or any other form of intimidation', a health care professional to take part in assisted suicide." (Catholic Register - May 22, 2019)

Alex Schadenberg of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition initiated an e-petition to the federal government in support of Bill C-418.

The petition can be found at:

<https://petitions.ourcommons.ca/en/Petition/Details?Petition=e-2199>

The petition remains open until June 16, 2019!

It is important that we share our views with the federal government by **signing** the petition and **encourage members** to do the same (if they haven't already done so).

Bill C-75 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and other Acts and to make consequential amendments to other Acts* is

sponsored by the Minister of Justice. The bill can be found at:

<https://www.parl.ca/LegisInfo/BillDetails.aspx?Language=E&billId=9745407>

Bill C-75 "decreases sentencing on serious crimes for indictable offences, which can be subject to court with a jury and sentencing, to a summary offence". Should this pass, people who commit a serious crime could avoid sentencing with as little as a small fine (4mycanada.ca, April 25, 2019). Supporters believe Bill C-75 will help reduce the significant backlog of cases before the courts. A solution would be to appoint more judges and officials to fill the 50 seats currently vacant nationwide.

Letters can be sent via e-mail to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, The Hon. David Lametti at david.lametti@parl.gc.ca, Prime Minister of Canada, The Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau at justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca and Leader of the Opposition, The Hon. Andrew Scheer at andrew.scheer@parl.gc.ca.

Members are encouraged to:

- Sign the e-petition
- Contact their local member of parliament to **show support** for Bill C-418
- Meet with their political representatives and urge them to legislate respect for conscience rights, faith, moral conscience and religious freedom
- Write letters **opposing** Bill C-75
- Pray for the wisdom of committee members

I encourage members to read the full text of *Communiqué #4* from Betty Colaneri on the national website (www.cwl.ca/category/communiques).

Even as we await the arrival of summer (finally!) ... keep an eye on the legislation ... and make a note to mention these bills at your CWL fall meetings.

There is always hope! Take comfort in the words of a 'top 5' favorite hymn of mine:

*Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.*

*Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed.*

(Christ, Be Our Light - Bernadette Farrell)

Lots of love,

Karen