

Culture of Death: Belgium Eyes Child Euthanasia

Since euthanasia was legalized in Belgium in 2002, Belgians have been euthanized for blindness, depression, anorexia nervosa, and a botched sex-change operation.

Now, Belgians want to allow euthanasia for children.

Under legislation currently being debated in the Belgian Parliament, terminally ill or suffering children under 18 could be euthanized if they request it, their parents consent to it, and an expert deems the child capable of understanding their decision.

The bill is widely supported and is expected to become law.

'Kids Never Choose Death'

Supporters of Belgium's proposed euthanasia law say it is necessary and compassionate, but critics say it is only the next phase in what they call "a culture of death."

Euthanasia is now considered medical therapy in Belgium.

Not only do two-thirds of Belgians favor the new euthanasia bill, but in a controversial poll, three quarters said it would be OK for parents to euthanize their sick children without the child's consent.

"The child does not have the maturity to get married or to buy alcohol or to buy cigarettes if he is 14. Now we are saying that because he is suffering, he might have the possibility to ask for euthanasia," Carine Boucher, with the European Center for Bio-ethics in Brussels, said.

Michel De Keukelaere, a law student and the founder of the March for Life in Brussels said, "Children never choose to die. I don't believe a child under 18 who is sick and who is

ill wants to die.”

“Who will give the suggestion to the child that one of the solutions is euthanasia?” Boucher asked. “A child doesn’t know what euthanasia is. A child doesn’t know what death is.”

Socialist Revenge?

If children almost never want to die, why is such a law even necessary?

De Keukelaere views it as “really a symbolic law. It’s sort of the revenge of these socialist and liberal parties who want to show that Christianity in Belgium is finished.”

What the law will almost assuredly do is make the practice of killing suffering children more common. Some Belgian doctors are already killing newborns with spina bifida at the parents’ request.

“The answer is caring. The answer is not killing,” Boucher said.

She said what doctors should be doing is alleviating the suffering of the terminally ill with world-class palliative care.

But the media and the left in Belgium are sending the message that doctors who resist euthanasia are uncaring.

“If you refuse euthanasia, you are a ‘bad doctor.’ It’s not tolerance, it’s really discrimination,” Boucher said. “It’s the world upside-down.”

“Under all this terminology like, ‘It’s safe, it’s completely controlled by doctors,’ we give doctors the right to kill. Doctors should cure, they should not kill,” De Keukelaere said.

A vote on the measure is expected within weeks.