

Euthanasia Critic: Learn a Lesson From Abortion Law

Britain should learn from the legalization of abortion and resist attempts to weaken end-of-life laws, a commentator writing in *The Times* has said.

Peter Franklin, who edits part of the influential Conservative Home website, notes that what happens today “bears little resemblance” to the 1967 Abortion Act.

He cautions, “If we legalize euthanasia, then step by step it becomes normalized.”

Franklin explains that recent controversies over abortion—including evidence of sex-selective abortions—show the difference between the current situation and the law as passed in the 1960s.

“So what guarantee is there that the same won’t happen to the ‘stringent safeguards’ proposed for the legalization of euthanasia?” he says.

The commentator then pointed to Belgium and the Netherlands, where marked increases have been recorded in the number of deaths from euthanasia since it was introduced.

“Crucially, these don’t just include people with terminal illnesses. Definitions of unbearable suffering now extend to mental and emotional distress,” he says.

He continues, “The lesson from the Low Countries is that if we legalize euthanasia, then step by step it becomes normalized.

“Definitions will be stretched, restrictions will be reinterpreted and safeguards will be lowered.

“Unfortunately there really are greedy people who’ll hint to

vulnerable relatives that they're becoming a burden, but the greater danger is this: What was once unthinkable will become just one of many medical options—and probably the cheapest.”

Last week a judge in New Mexico ruled in favor of “the right of a competent, terminally ill patient to choose aid in dying.”

The judge, Nan Nash, said “aid in dying” refers to doctors giving lethal drugs to patients.

This, she ruled, is allowed under the state constitution.

In the Scottish and Westminster parliaments, there are moves to introduce assisted suicide, with Margo MacDonald attempting in Scotland and Lord Falconer trying in England and Wales.

At the end of last year, a retired surgeon who has multiple sclerosis spoke out against Margo MacDonald's plans.

Professor Donald MacDonald said, “The current laws exist to protect the vulnerable and should not be changed.”

He warned that the qualifying conditions for assisted suicide under the bill were “so vaguely defined that they seem fairly elastic.”