



The **Catholic Bishops**
of **Alberta** and the
Northwest Territories

Les **évêques catholiques**
de **l'Alberta** et des
Territoires du Nord-Ouest

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October 29, 2020

Dear Faithful in Christ,

We bring to your attention two important legislative matters currently before the House of Commons. Since they each represent a direct and worrisome challenge to human dignity and freedom, it is necessary that we be aware of them and make our views known to the federal government.

The first is proposed legislation, [Bill C-7](#), that seeks to expand access to assisted suicide and euthanasia in Canada. We know that these practices in themselves are inherently immoral. This particular Bill would remove the eligibility requirement that a person's death be "reasonably foreseeable", and thus effectively extend provision of euthanasia and assisted suicide to those who are not dying. This would place vulnerable citizens, such as persons with disabilities and mental illness, at serious risk. In the case of people who are dying, it aims to remove key safeguards set down in 2016, such as a 10-day reflection period and the ability to consent at the time of the provision of assisted suicide and voluntary euthanasia to hasten one's death. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops is among the signatories to an [inter-religious statement expressing opposition to Bill C-7](#). The Bishops have, in addition, issued their own [statement detailing their concerns with this legislation](#).

Our ask of you is to [contact your Member of Parliament](#) to:

- insist that Bill C-7 be paused to allow comprehensive consultation with Canadians on this grave matter that affects the inherent dignity of every person in our society;
- urge that Parliament acknowledge every person's right to life is inherent and inalienable, not to be taken away by others;
- advocate for universal access to excellent palliative care as the humanely appropriate response to suffering at the end of life;
- promote meaningful protection of conscience rights for healthcare workers and institutions who conscientiously object to assisted suicide and euthanasia.

The second piece of legislation, [Bill C-6](#), pertains to what is called “conversion therapy.” The Bill aims to prevent coercive practices contrary to the dignity of the human person, a goal that we support. However, its language and definition are open to interpretations that could lead to unacceptable overreach in application, to the detriment of parental rights and religious beliefs and practices. The Bishops of Canada have issued a [statement on Bill C-6](#).

Our ask of you is to [contact your Member of Parliament](#) and insist that Bill C-6 be revised to protect and uphold:

- the fundamental right of parents to make decisions regarding the welfare of their children, specifically their freedom to instruct them in accord with their religious and ethical beliefs;
- the right and freedom of every Canadian to voluntarily seek support to live in a manner consistent with their faith identity and beliefs, and in accord with their personal convictions;
- the right and freedom of the Church and other religious communities to counsel and support persons who choose to live their lives and sexuality in accord with moral teachings and the dictates of conscience;
- the right and freedom of the Church and other religious communities to share their religious and ethical beliefs regarding human sexuality.

Thank you for your attention and action on these matters of serious concern. May our Lord both inspire and bring to accomplishment our efforts to embrace and protect the suffering and vulnerable, and to honour and uphold our rights and freedoms.

Yours in Christ,

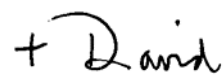
Catholic Bishops of Alberta and NWT



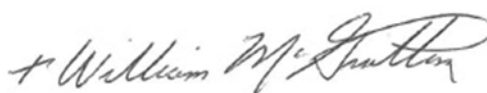
Most Reverend Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton



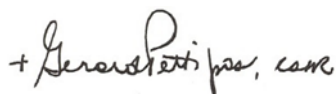
Most Reverend Paul Terrio
Bishop of St. Paul



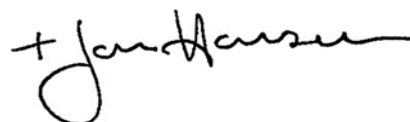
Most Reverend David Motiuk
Bishop of the Ukrainian Eparchy of
Edmonton



Most Reverend William McGrattan
Bishop of Calgary



Most Reverend Gerard Pettipas CSsR
Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan



Most Reverend Jon Hansen, CSsR
Bishop of Mackenzie-Fort Smith