



CRISPIN BLUNT MP  
Member of Parliament for Reigate

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Robert Buckland QC MP  
Lord Chancellor  
Ministry of Justice  
102 Petty France  
London SW1H 9AJ

*Via email*

31 March 2021

Dear Robert,

We are writing to set out the case for an inquiry into the UK's laws on assisted dying, and urge you to instigate such a review or to call on Parliament to do so.

We are prompted to write by the news that Paul Lamb has lost his legal case that sought to challenge the existing law. His loss means that it is now probable that there will be no further litigation on assisted dying. In other words, the matter is firmly one for Parliament to resolve.

It has now been half a decade since Parliament examined legislation on assisted dying, and fifteen years since it formally scrutinised the issue via Lord Joffe's Select Committee. In these years, the evidence has materially changed, and that new evidence necessitates a fresh review.

Firstly, there has been a profound change in the context in which the law operates. Last year the Assisted Dying Coalition found that the number of UK citizens travelling to Switzerland for an assisted death has increased sixfold over the last 15 years. Yet, *The Economist* has independently reported that our police are increasingly turning a blind eye to such journeys, raising serious questions about the effectiveness of our current law in preventing the potential coercion of vulnerable people.

Secondly, there has been a significant shift in professional medical opinion and within the disability community. As of this year, in one of the largest surveys of medical opinion ever, the British Medical Association reported that half of doctors personally support legal assisted dying, with just 39% opposed, and if the law is to change, a majority favour changing it for both the terminally ill and incurably suffering. Further, Parkinson's UK, the Multiple Sclerosis Society, and the Motor Neurone Disease Association have adopted neutral stances on this important issue.

Beyond this, successive countries, including Canada, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, and parts of the United States and Australia, have changed or are due to change their law since 2015. Moreover, several other nations, including Ireland, are actively considering similar proposals, reflecting that such changes can be achieved in a safe and compassionate way.

We recognise that there are weighty and legitimate concerns about changing the law on assisted dying, and do not want to shy away from these challenges. However, an inquiry or call for evidence





would present the best opportunity to explore these difficult questions in an objective and sensitive way.

The UK is falling behind the rest of the world and our laws on assisted dying are letting down our citizens. We urge you to launch what is now a long overdue inquiry.

We are also making a copy of this letter available to the media, and sending the same to Harriet Harman MP, Jeremy Hunt MP, and Sir Bob Neill MP, in their roles as chairs of relevant select committees.

Yours sincerely,

Crispin Blunt MP

Baroness Bakewell DBE

Co-Chairs, All-Party Parliamentary Humanist Group

Co-signed by:

Aaron Bell MP  
Lord Haworth  
Lord Aberdare  
Lord Dubs  
Lord Turnbull  
Andy Slaughter MP  
Baroness Mallalieu  
Baroness Taylor  
Lord Young of Norwood  
Green  
Beth Winter MP  
Caroline Lucas MP  
Christine Jardine MP  
Chris Law MP  
Clive Betts MP  
Clive Lewis MP  
Lord Soley  
Lord Low of Dalston  
Lord Lipsey

Lord Stevenson of  
Coddensham  
Baroness Warwick of  
Undercliffe  
Duncan Baker MP  
Baroness Murphy  
Lord Judd  
George Howarth MP  
Huw Merriman MP  
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Moulsecomb  
Baroness Tonge  
Lord Purvis of Tweed  
Lord Maxton  
the Earl of Sandwich  
the Duke of Somerset  
Lord Barker of Dorking  
Kevin Hollinrake MP  
Baroness Burt

Margaret Hodge MP  
Lord Rees  
Viscount Ridley  
Lord Desai  
Lord Dobbs  
Baroness Bennett of Manor  
Castle  
Lord Dholakia  
the Earl of Clancarty  
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Rachel Hopkins MP  
Baroness Lister  
Baroness Brinton  
Baroness Greengross  
Baroness Hamwee  
Steve McCabe MP  
Lord Elder  
Tommy Sheppard MP  
Tracey Crouch MP  
Lord Davies of Stamford



CC. The Rt Hon Harriet Harman QC MP, Chair, Joint Committee on Human Rights  
The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, Chair, Health and Social Care Select Committee  
Sir Bob Neill MP, Chair, Justice Committee