

The Connecticut Legislature is holding hearings on a bill (7015) legalizing assisted suicide, about which, a few random thoughts:

Should the bill pass, Connecticut would be on the same road as Switzerland, the Netherlands, Belgium and recently Canada. Much could be learned from them, from the man euthanized in Holland because he couldn't stand his tinnitus, to the cousins killed together in Switzerland because they couldn't bear being without each other (in what would have been called a murder-suicide pact in the quaint past), to the Belgian patient euthanized (Belgium has abandoned the semantic fictional distinction between assisted suicide and euthanasia) because she had been sexually abused by her psychiatrist. I wonder what happened to the psychiatrist; probably not much. Most of all see the inexorable ratchet of the culture of death, as year by year in these countries the class of people to be eliminated enlarges. Switzerland and the Netherlands started out the same way as Bill 7015, assisted suicide for the terminally ill only. Connecticut's bill is for those with less than six months to live, as if anyone can predict with such accuracy how long anyone will live. An army doctor predicted I had only a few days to live; that was forty five years ago.

There's been discussion about what to call the person who does the assisting part of assisted suicide. A new class of medical professionals has been proposed. He or she would have to be licensed of course; you can't have someone without a license hang a picture on your wall in Florida, so surely you should have to be licensed to kill people in Connecticut. Some suggest the term "death doula", kind of a midwife in reverse, too New Age for me. I would suggest "grim reaper" or "liquidator" or "hit man" but I don't think they would catch on. One would have to search Nazi or mafia literature to find an accurate term but for sheer blatant euphemism, "End-of-Life-Caregiver" is the best I've seen.

What if only physicians can do the "assisting"? And what if physicians refuse to do it, on moral grounds, their Hippocratic Oath or their belief in the God-given sanctity of human life? Look to Canada to see what could soon come here. Quebec *requires* physicians to take part in euthanasia, either directly or by referring a patient to another physician, like declining to commit a murder for someone but referring him to a professional hitman of your acquaintance. Saskatchewan and Ontario are soon to follow. By stark contrast several people were *executed* after post war German trials for what doctors in Quebec are now *required* to do! Speaking of euphemisms, Nazis called euthanasia "the good death". Eugenics, euphemisms, totalitarianism go hand in hand.

In 2012 our lawmakers abolished capital punishment. One of the arguments advanced was that the drugs required were hard to come by and furthermore that they were inhumane, causing the ultimate torture. Tales were told of the first drug, which was supposed to anesthetize the condemned, not working, so that the second, mortal drug caused prolonged excruciating pain. Fast forward three years and these same legislators say that for assisted suicide one need only fill one's prescription at the local pharmacy, then after a fine meal and toasts all around, take 2 pills of one, 1 of the other with a full glass of water and voila, you're dead as a doornail - - - and with dignity, as much as can be mustered while lying sprawled dead on the floor. Such wonderfully rapid advancements in pharmaceuticals!

I wonder if that last meal is covered by the Affordable Care Act, as the criminal's last meal used to be paid for by the state. Should be.

A recent case in Belgium might apply in Connecticut. A particularly vicious rapist/murderer was serving life imprisonment. He requested to be euthanized on the grounds of the unbearable psychological suffering of having to live in prison. This was OK'd by the authorities, as it clearly qualified under Belgian laws. However, a physician cannot be found to do it because it seems too much like capital punishment, which is too evil to contemplate. Had he been an ordinary bloke whose *job* caused unbearable psychological suffering, well that's different.

The prisoner, by the way, has been moved to more comfortable surroundings where his psychological needs can be better addressed until they find a physician willing to dispatch him.

Another thought: should there be an age of consent for the right to be killed? Say the age one becomes eligible for the Medicare that will pay for it? Or if the intention isn't merely to cull the aged, maybe the age at which one can buy a beer? Look to the experience of those already enlightened. The Belgian Supreme Court has ruled that Belgian euthanasia laws unconstitutionally discriminate against children. Henceforth Belgian children have the same right to have themselves killed as everyone else. Egalité so warms the progressive heart.

Imagine a 10 year old coming home from school after suffering some such humiliation as 10 year olds consider humiliating. Fists clenched and face shriveled, she stomps her foot and shouts, "**I want to die!**" Upon which, *poof*, instantly there appears the End-of-Life-Caregiver-Fairy, like a noon witch from an old Czech fable. O tempora, o mores.

Here's an added thought. As ISIS is degraded, they might have some surplus executioners. With a grant from the federal anti-extremism jobs program we could hire them as End-of-Life-Caregivers, with the understanding that crucifixion and beheading are rather *déclassé* of course. And no guns allowed; no, no, not in Connecticut.

Heinrich Himmler would be so proud. The rest of us should be sick to our stomachs.

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