

# CanadaWatch

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## Bill C-7 puts lives on the line

**"W**e're at the point where our lives are on the line." EFC staff recently heard this from a woman with disabilities. She was expressing her deep concern about the new bill that expands euthanasia. She shared the need to use every means possible to challenge this bill, Bill C-7.

It is your support and partnership that enables us to be present at such gatherings and work actively to speak biblically into crucial issues, such as caring for Canada's most vulnerable people.

We know that people with disabilities already struggle to receive support to live. Too often, they hear the message their lives are not worth living. They often face discrimination in the health care system and struggle to receive needed social and health care support.

Now, Bill C-7 would open the door to euthanasia for people with a serious illness or disability. This could pressure people with disabilities to end their lives.

We know that every person's life has worth and dignity. Each one has been created by God and is loved by God. We want to protect and uphold the sanctity of life of all people, and our neighbours living with disabilities need us to stand with them now more than ever.

Thank you for how you enable us to do this essential work.

Bill C-7 proposes to make watershed changes to the way Canadians understand life and medicine. It would remove the requirement that a person's death is "reasonably foreseeable," so that euthanasia becomes available to people who aren't dying.



For Canadians whose death is foreseeable, it also removes the 10-day reflection period between a person's request for euthanasia or assisted suicide, and the day it is carried out. This could mean a person's life is ended on the same day that they make the request for euthanasia.

As one doctor told us, once the MAID team is engaged, the process is very difficult to stop. Patients feel pressure to continue, partly because of the busy schedules of the medical personnel. This bill removes the protection resulting from a mandated time to reflect. Reflection is crucial for someone who may initially consider a hastened death when they're having a difficult day or when grieving the reality of a terminal diagnosis.

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### How you can be involved:

Send in the enclosed postcard and then call your MP to share these three concerns:

1. Parliament is moving too fast to pass Bill C-7 and must slow down to study its impact more carefully.
2. Euthanasia must not be expanded to people who are not dying. Listen to the serious concerns of the disability community who will be affected.
3. Don't remove critical safeguards like the 10-day reflection period or the ability to consent at the time of death.

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Another key safeguard being removed by this bill is the need to reaffirm consent at the actual time of euthanasia. It allows for a waiver of final consent for people who have been approved for euthanasia, but who have lost their capacity to consent. The ability to consent is an important safeguard to protect against wrongful death.

This bill is being rushed through Parliament. We believe it is essential for the process to slow down. These significant changes must be carefully studied and considered.

MPs from many parties support the expansion of euthanasia and assisted suicide. If they hear concerns from their constituents, they will be more likely to pause and consider these views. **The EFC is encouraging Canadians to take a few minutes to sign and send in the enclosed postcard, and then call or email their MP's office to tell them the postcard is coming and ask them to take action.** Our experience tells us this has a big impact. MP's names and contact information are available at [www.ourcommons.ca/members/en/search](http://www.ourcommons.ca/members/en/search).

Please join us in praying for hearts and minds to be changed, and for the lives of vulnerable Canadians to be protected.

The EFC believes Bill C-7 must be amended so that it does not expand euthanasia to those who are not dying or remove crucial safeguards. With your help, the EFC will be able to communicate this vital message to MPs and Senators and to equip concerned Canadians to engage.

Fill out the enclosed postcard and send it to your MP.



The 2019 Maru/EFC poll was conducted August 12-16, 2019 with a representative sample of 5,011 Canadians over age 18. To learn more see [TheEFC.ca/2019CFT](http://TheEFC.ca/2019CFT)

## What Evangelicals think about assisted dying

**P**eople who regularly attend evangelical churches are among the most ardent believers in the sanctity of human life. Yet, significant minorities in our churches say they support MAID, according to the EFC's most recent survey of Canadians and religious beliefs.

One fifth (20%) of Evangelicals said they support extending MAID to those with mental illness while a just slightly smaller percent (17%) agreed it should be extended to mature minors.

Anticipating the recent review of Canada's MAID legislation and the possibility that the review would prompt the government to widen access to assisted suicide, the EFC polled 5,011 Canadians in August 2019.

More than a third of Canadians (38%) agreed MAID should be extended to those who are not terminally

ill but suffer with chronic mental illness. A similar segment (39%) agreed that mature minors (youth under 18) should be legally eligible for MAID. Those who agreed MAID should be extended to mature minors were asked whether parental consent should be required, and half (51%) said Yes, 28% said No, and 21% said they didn't know.

A small majority of Canadians (54%) said medical professionals should not be forced to participate in MAID even if it was only through providing an "effective referral." Evangelicals, however, were more likely to say so (79%).

Research like this, enabled by our friends, partners and donors, helps concerned citizens, our church leaders and the EFC know how to engage neighbours and legislators on MAID. It also helps us understand the need for teaching on the sanctity of human life in our own churches.

CONTACT YOUR MP TODAY!



## Message from the President, Bruce J. Clemenger

We are stronger together. As our team works on issues like Bill C-7, which would expand access to medical assistance in dying to those whose death is not imminent, I am reminded once again how much it matters that we work together. Both with our partners who are equally committed to protecting

the life of the most vulnerable in Canada and encouraging compassionate care, and also working with you, our friends and partners who pray and give and support and take action when action is required. You count on us, and we count on you. Thank you for this friendship that accomplishes much for many. Let's keep working.



## Research on small churches



We need all the help we can get.

As a pastor's wife and mother of two young children, I am mindful of the challenges Christians face as they seek to live faithfully in Canada.

My name is Lindsay Callaway, and I'm the newest member of the EFC's ministry research team. We are currently researching the challenges and opportunities unique to small churches in hopes of helping Canadian pastors in small churches.

We just wrapped up an extensive literature review, and a prevailing refrain is that the small church is different; it does not operate like a large church. Yet, most literature on church leadership and ministry assumes a large and usually American context, leaving the small Canadian church lacking information and resources appropriate to both its size and culture.

This research project is commissioned by EFC affiliates who have united across denominations and ministry capacities to launch a small church ministry research project because they value relevant and representative Canadian research. Our goal is to investigate the small church in Canada in an effort to resource and equip church pastors and leaders for effective ministry in their context.

I'm reminded of Luke's introductory address to Theophilus in his Gospel, where he sets out his methodology: a careful investigation in order to give an orderly account for the purpose of clarity and confirmation. This is the EFC's research commitment. Our research isn't necessarily about breaking new ground or making cutting-edge discoveries, but carefully studying the world around us to give an accurate account that supports those who want to engage their communities thoughtfully and effectively.

We are humbled that donors and affiliates share a vision for projects like the small church study at the EFC and continue to support research initiatives for the good and gospel witness of Evangelicals in Canada.

– Lindsay Callaway, research assistant.

To learn more visit, [www.TheEFC.ca](http://www.TheEFC.ca)



## Updating you on Canada's most immediate issues

■ **Euthanasia:** The Justice Minister announced more than 13,000 people have ended their lives in Canada through assisted suicide or euthanasia since the law was passed in 2016. The government has introduced new legislation to expand eligibility to those who are not dying and to remove key safeguards (see main story on page 1). These changes will put many Canadians at risk, particularly Canadians living with a disability, and would likely result in even greater numbers of Canadians having their deaths hastened.

This June, a parliamentary committee will begin a review of the current laws on euthanasia and assisted suicide (medical assistance in dying, MAID). The review is expected to consider whether the law should be expanded to allow hastened death for mature minors and people with mental illness as the sole underlying medical condition, or by advance request. The review will also study the state of palliative care in Canada. The EFC is preparing to participate in this review. [www.TheEFC.ca/MAID](http://www.TheEFC.ca/MAID)

■ **Refugees:** *Welcome the Stranger: A Canadian church guide to welcoming refugees* will soon be released, after

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some slight editing delays. This booklet has been developed by the EFC with our faith-based Sponsorship Agreement Holders and refugee settlement ministry partners.

[www.TheEFC.ca/Refugees](http://www.TheEFC.ca/Refugees)

■ **Conversion Therapy:** The EFC and other Christian organizations have worked together to provide advice on how churches can respond as governments at municipal, provincial and federal levels consider proposals to ban conversion therapy. The new resource is at [www.TheEFC.ca/GuidanceOnConversionTherapy](http://www.TheEFC.ca/GuidanceOnConversionTherapy).

■ **Palliative Care:** The EFC has now distributed 10,000 copies of our free *Palliative Care Toolkit: A practical guide to support life during serious illness or at life's end*. This resource is available as a printed copy or as a free download at [www.TheEFC.ca/PalliativeToolkit](http://www.TheEFC.ca/PalliativeToolkit).

■ **Prostitution:** The current prostitution law has a built-in requirement for a five-year review. It could begin any time, as the five-year mark has now passed. The EFC is working to support the current law which targets sex buyers and pimps in order to reduce the demand for paid sexual services. Pro-prostitution groups are pushing the government to decriminalize prostitution. [www.TheEFC.ca/Prostitution](http://www.TheEFC.ca/Prostitution)

## Heart and hands

*Members of the EFC team share an insight about their work and the impact of your generosity.*

*Anita Levesque is coordinator of the Refugee Resettlement Initiative, executive assistant for David Guretzki (the EFC's executive vice-president & resident theologian) and coordinator of the Religious Liberty Commission. She also works with Canadian media requests that come to the EFC.*



I am proud to part of the EFC's team in Ottawa and encouraged by my work with the Refugee Resettlement Initiative. Canadian Church leaders heard the call for the Church to be the hands, heart and welcome to many in harm's way who needed protection, safety and a new home – regardless of race or religion. And so, this refugee initiative was born.

I've seen two groups of unsung heroes in this work with the Faith-based Sponsorship Agreement Holders Working Group, a partnership which meets regularly to help churches with sponsorship.

The first is the churches across Canada who rolled up their sleeves, educated themselves, raised money, prepared homes and helped newcomers land when their feet hit the soil in Canada.

The second is the charity leaders accredited by the government to work in refugee sponsorship. These Sponsorship Agreement Holder representatives have selflessly navigated between government procedures and requirements on the one hand and church groups who may have had no experience in refugee sponsorship on the other. Churches naturally have thousands of questions! It's hard work, and these SAH reps work selflessly with them in answer to God's call to welcome the stranger.

I am humbled to work with these people among my many other EFC duties. Thank you for how you make all this work possible!

### ..... WARM WORDS FROM DONORS .....


We are so thankful for the donors and partners who help make our work possible. We are in this together and we love to hear from you. Here is a recent encouraging message we received.

***"We appreciate all that The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada has done and is doing to further the Kingdom and protect the interest of Christians and our beliefs in Canada."***

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The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (*Alliance évangélique du Canada*) is the national association "uniting Evangelicals to bless Canada in the name of Jesus." Since 1964 the EFC has provided a national forum for Evangelicals, fostered ministry partnerships, conducted research on religious and social trends and provided a constructive voice for biblical principles in life and society.

