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25/10/2024

Rt Hon Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP
Speaker's Office
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Sir Lindsey

Short Title of Kim Leadbeater MP's Private Members Bill

We write to respectfully ask that the short title of Kim Leadbeater's Private Members Bill is reconsidered. The current short title as listed on the Parliamentary website is the "Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill".

According to Erskine May, the short title of a bill must "describe the content of the bill in a straightforwardly factual manner. An argumentative title or slogan is not permitted"¹. We feel that the current short title conflicts with Erskine May and should be changed. Our reasons for this are twofold.

Firstly, the phrase 'end of life' in the short title is misleading and thus in breach of Erskine May. Although the text of the Bill is not yet published, the long title makes it clear that the Bill will make no provision about common 'end of life' issues such as mental capacity, palliative care, funerals, or making a will. On the contrary, the long title makes it clear that the Bill is concerned solely with providing assistance to terminally ill adults to take their own life. In straightforward factual terms, as required by Erskine May, the Bill thus deals with *assisted suicide*, not 'end of life'. We also respectfully refer to the short title precedent of the Suicide Act 1961².

Secondly, we feel that the use of the phrase 'end of life' is arguably 'an argumentative title or slogan' in this particular context. As you will be all too aware, the subject of assisted dying or assisted suicide is highly controversial and emotive, with strong views expressed on both sides. We respectfully submit that the use of a euphemistic phrase like 'end of life' in the short title of a Bill which is factually concerned only with assisted suicide renders that short title both argumentative and sloganistic.

While this is a matter entirely for you, BuDS respectfully submits that a more factual and straightforward short title might be the 'Assisted Suicide (Terminally Ill Adults) Bill'.

¹ <https://erskinemay.parliament.uk/section/4975/short-title-and-citation>

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/9-10/60/data.pdf>

We are, of course, very happy to answer any questions you may have or to meet to discuss this issue. We look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Clark', with a horizontal line underneath.

Andrew Clark
Chair of Trustees
Buckinghamshire Disability Service (BuDS)