



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



THE SENATE

PROOF

BILLS

**Restoring Territory Rights (Assisted
Suicide Legislation) Bill 2015**

Second Reading

SPEECH

Wednesday, 15 August 2018

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

SPEECH

Date Wednesday, 15 August 2018	Source Senate
Page 13	Proof Yes
Questioner	Responder
Speaker Colbeck, Sen Richard	Question No.

Senator COLBECK (Tasmania) (11:00): I rise to make my contribution to the Restoring Territory Rights (Assisted Suicide Legislation) Bill 2015. I acknowledge the contributions made by others in this debate, regardless of their perspective. I understand fully that there are very strongly held views on this matter. I congratulate Senator Dodson on the contribution that he's just made, particularly from the perspective of the First Nations people. It was a quite profound presentation. I think it typifies the issues, particularly for the more disadvantaged in the Australian community. The bill is portrayed simply as returning rights to the territories to enable them to legislate for euthanasia. It's portrayed as being quite simple in that context and therefore, effectively, an issue of territories' rights. But one thing I have learnt in my time in this place is that, when you believe in something, you need to utilise your entire toolkit to ensure, to your best ability, that your beliefs are reflected. The reality is that, in this circumstance, the Commonwealth does retain some oversight with respect to territory law. Therefore, part of the toolkit of this place rests in that context.

I'm not a supporter of assisted dying. I understand that, as I said earlier, there are strongly held views with respect to people who view that as their right, but I can't sanction or support what I see as, effectively, state-sanctioned killing. I don't support the death penalty, so I can't support what's termed assisted suicide or euthanasia legislation. I understand perfectly the difficulties that exist for some people towards their end of life. I think we all understand that, and that's reflected very much in the way that this debate has been conducted. In that sense, I congratulate my colleagues for the sobriety of the debate and also the arguments that they've made in support of their relative perspectives. But, because I don't support assisted dying, assisted suicide, euthanasia, I can't support any legislative measure that might promote that. So I put on the record my opposition to the legislation and say that I will not be supporting this bill.