



STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT COUNCIL

In Support of Bill C-218:

“An Act to amend the Criminal Code (Medical Assistance in Dying)”

On 20 June 2025, Private Member’s Bill C-218 was introduced in the House of Commons. It proposes to repeal the planned 2027 expansion of the eligibility criteria for “Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD),” which would allow mental illness alone to qualify for euthanasia and assisted suicide.

On numerous occasions, the CCCB has stated its opposition to “MAiD” and explained its reasons, while encouraging and promoting humane and compassionate alternatives that address chronic pain, suffering, and terminal illness. These alternatives include comprehensive and accessible palliative care,¹ as well as better support for persons living with mental illness.²

However, as long as Canadian legislation regrettably continues to permit euthanasia, the CCCB will also advocate for measures that prevent even wider and more vulnerable segments of the population from gaining access to it. If passed, Bill C-218 would be a constructive step in this regard, limiting euthanasia and protecting persons with mental illness. Such progress would be consistent with the recommendation of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to rescind Track 2 MAiD by repealing Bill C-7 and to permanently exclude MAiD for persons whose sole underlying medical condition is a mental illness.³

The CCCB supports Bill C-218, which seeks to stop “MAiD” for mental illness alone, and encourages the Catholic faithful, in communion with their local Bishop, and all people of goodwill, to express their support for the same. We further call on the government to allow free conscience voting on this matter, given its profound moral and social implications.

Human life is a gift that must be protected and valued at every stage and in every circumstance. As Canada’s Bishops have consistently affirmed, euthanasia and assisted suicide – whether for the sick, the dying, persons with disabilities, or those with mental illness – are always morally unacceptable.⁴ These actions disregard the inviolable dignity of every person, fracture family and relational bonds, and weaken our shared social responsibility to protect human life and provide care for the vulnerable and marginalized.

Empirical research, together with the expert judgment of many mental health professionals and

¹ Joint *Ad Hoc* Committee on Palliative Care, [Horizons of Hope: A Toolkit for Catholic Parishes on Palliative Care](#), Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2021.

² Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, [Open Letter to the Government of Canada on Permitting Persons Living with Mental Illness to Access Euthanasia/Assisted Suicide](#), 9 May 2023, accessed 8 December 2025.

³ United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, “[Concluding observations on the combined second and third periodic reports of Canada](#),” CRPD/C/CAN/CO/2-3. 15 April 2025.

⁴ Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, “[Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide](#)”, accessed 8 December 2025.



suicide prevention organizations, affirms that *it is not possible to determine whether a mental illness is irremediable*.⁵ Peer-reviewed studies show that most patients with mental illness have positive long-term outcomes and experience “significant improvement over time,” offering them a horizon for hope and healing.⁶

As Christians, our response to persons living with mental illness should be modelled after the powerful witness of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), who, rather than abandoning his neighbour in need, responded personally with charity, compassion, care, and self-sacrifice, acting as a bearer of God’s love and as a sign of hope.

4 February 2026

Note: The Permanent Council is the second-highest governing body of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCBC), after the Plenary Assembly of Bishops. It currently comprises 14 Bishops from across Canada, including both *ex officio* members and those elected by the Plenary Assembly.

⁵ Ontario Psychiatric Association, “[Brief to the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying \(MAID\): Preliminary Results of OPA National Survey on Psychiatrists’ and Psychiatry Residents’ Perspectives on MAID for Mental Disorders as a Sole Underlying Medical Condition \(MD-SUMC\)](#),” 29 January 2024; Society of Canadian Psychiatry, “[Brief on MAID and Mental Illness Expansion](#),” 13 October 2023; Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention, “[Statement About MAiD for Mental Illness](#),” 14 December 2022.

⁶ M. Nicolini, et al., “[Irremediability in psychiatric euthanasia: examining the objective standard](#),” *Psychological Medicine*, 2023 Sep;53(12):5729-5747.