

Globe and Mail, Dec. 19 2019, Letters to the Editor

In Justice Minister David Lametti's mandate letter, part of his to-do list includes amending the law on medical assistance in dying to remove the "reasonably foreseeable death" requirement across Canada.

Last September, Quebec Superior Court Justice Christine Baudouin ruled that although this requirement is not arbitrary, it is overbroad and its effects are out of proportion to its goal. Justice Baudouin notes that it constitutes a state-imposed duty to live – "une véritable obligation de vivre, imposée par l'État." Acceptance of such a duty is still widespread, as seen in defenders of the requirement who believe severe restrictions are necessary to protect people who might request death in a "moment of weakness."

Even though we did not ask to enter life, it seems that once we are in it, we are supposed to be stalwart even beyond what is reasonable. It's as if a restaurant serves us a terrible meal and refuses to let us leave until we have eaten 99 per cent.

Requesting death can be done in a moment of something other than weakness. It can be done in a moment of realism, maturity and self-affirmation. Let us applaud and respect such moments of strength.

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