



Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice

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Communiqué

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CUSJ CALLS ON PARLIAMENT TO CHANGE END OF LIFE LAWS

Supreme Court rules ban on assisted dying unconstitutional

TORONTO – In the wake of today’s historic Supreme Court ruling on medically-assisted dying, Canadian Unitarians are calling on Ottawa to immediately consider changes to the law, legalizing medically-assisted dying for competent and clearly consenting adult patients with “irremediable” suffering.

“Today’s landmark Supreme Court decision marks a turning point for a compassionate end of life in Canada,” said Margaret Rao, President of Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice (CUSJ). “We know Canadian public opinion already supports legalizing medically-assisted dying in many cases, where suffering individuals are competent adults. Now the courts have ruled that the current ban is unconstitutional. It is now up to our elected representatives to make the compassionate changes to the law needed to reflect the new reality in Canadian society.”

Supreme Court justices ruled unanimously Friday that the current ban infringes on the life, liberty and security of person provisions in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The Court suspended the ruling for twelve months to give Parliament time to change the law.

“Canadians are compassionate,” said Rao. “They know our current laws are outdated and result in unnecessary suffering. Today, we are finally at the beginning of the end of much needless suffering. CUSJ will be pressuring our elected representatives coast to coast to uphold justice and compassion, and pass responsible new legislation compliant with the decision, for all Canadians.”

Unitarians have long advocated for the right to a dignified end of life in Canada, intervening in legal cases around the issue including the current *Carter v. Canada* case.

Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice (CUSJ) is a national faith-based organization founded to support Unitarian values through social action. Two of our seven guiding principles are to “affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person” and “justice, equity and compassion in human relations.”

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