

# ["this you pay a price with the loss](https://assignbuster.com/this-you-pay-a-price-with-the-loss/)

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" This is a very special day for me. It's the day of my release, the   
release from suffering, the release from the torment of my body." Those were the   
words of the very first Canadian to die through the process of doctor assisted-   
suicide, with the doctor being Jack Kevorkian. His name was Austin Bastable, and   
in the last few years of his life he became a crusader for the right to die with   
dignity.

It has been only in these last few years, with the introduction of   
people such as Dr. Jack Kevorkian and Austin Bastable, that the world has begun   
to see the benefits made possible by the act of assisted-suicide. The prevention   
of suffering and pain made possible through this medicide, regarded as immoral   
for years, affects not only the patient but their immediate and distant   
relatives as well. Kevorkian told a judicial court the same one day in late   
April, early May: " Suicide is not the aim. Eliminating suffering is the aim, but   
you pay a price with the loss of a life." Although Kevorkian's methods have   
succeeded with some difficulty, in the USA, their northern neighbour, our great   
dominion of Canada, disallows the administration of this relieving practice. In   
our grand country assisted suicide is illegal.

Cases of other terminally ill persons have surfaced throughout the news,   
the most prominent being those related to Dr. " Death" Kevorkian. We don't often   
think on what a terminally ill person might be like. They might be suffering   
from Lou Gehrig's Disease. They might be suffering from multiple sclerosis. They   
might be suffering from any number of other types of injuries and diseases. What   
we don't think about are the cases that bring out our most empathetic feelings.

Take the case of one Christine Busalacchi, who was so severely injured   
in an accident that she now lives in what her father calls a " persistent   
vegetative condition." Vegetative is precisely the word to describe her   
condition. She has lost enough weight to cause her to appear as someone else.

She has her right leg bent with her knee always in the air and her left foot is   
frozen in a quite unnatural manner. Her skin remains milk white, the kind of   
colour one would associate with the skin of dead bodies. She chews constantly,   
often gagging on her own saliva. She has a gastrostomy tube protruding from her   
stomach. Nurses have to come every so often to change her diaper. She will never   
respond to any stimulus voluntarily, only through reflex action, and that   
reaction will be only in her brain. A well-known neurologist pointed out how her   
brain now only includes those parts of it that control the reflexive actions,   
such as chewing, rather than those parts that make us human. Christine is not   
the only person in that situation. Many others are forced to live the rest of   
their artificial lives in a prison where freedom is taken captivethe freedom to   
die.

Canada's laws against assisted-suicide have been attacked before. The   
most well known " right-to-die" campaigners in Canada are the late Sue Rodriguez   
and the late Austin Bastable. Sue Rodriguez led the " right-to-die" campaign   
against the government in 1993, where a ban against assisted-suicide was   
narrowly upheld. Sue later died in an assisted suicide in 1994. Bastable become   
known to many Canadians in early May of this year. He became the first Canadian   
to die with the aid of Dr. Kevorkian, as well as the first non-American to do so,   
on May 6th. Bastable was said to have had a videotape recorded for the purpose   
of being shown during a media briefing in Toronto: " My death is a blow for   
freedom, not just for myself but for every rational Canadian who someday may   
wish to have a choice in how they will die."   
Comparing cases such a Christine's, Sue's and Austin's it becomes clear   
that quite a few people support the concept of assisted-suicide. In fact,   
physician-assisted voluntary euthanasia is favoured three-to-one according to   
polls taken in the USA. Of course, the USA is not Canada, but how much different   
can we be. Still, although our countries have a long way to go in providing   
people the right to die, there are some places where our species is beginning to   
see the light.

The Northern Territory of Australia's legislature became the first in   
the world to allow voluntary euthanasia in May of this year. Bob Dent became the   
first person to kill himself under the world's only such law. Yet this act in   
itself had profound results; federal lawmakers drawing legislature to make   
doctor assisted-suicide illegal. The papal system of the Vatican voiced its   
opinion of the event exclaiming that no law or human suffering could justify   
euthanasia.

Arguments such as these have no substance at all, if one looks closely.

Dent, in a letter to his government, made numerous points that show this. He   
argued that " If I were to keep a pet animal in the same condition I am in, I   
would be prosecuted." He also restated the already widely known fact that   
religion and state must be kept separated: " What right has anyone, because of   
their own religious faith (to which I don't subscribe), to demand that I behave   
according to their rules until some omniscient doctor decides that I have had   
enough and goes ahead and increases my morphine until I die?" The answer to that   
question is undeniably, NONE, no right at all.

With time, and the understanding of the public, the right to die   
campaign can be won. People would have the freedom to decide when they have had   
enough suffering and how they wish to die. Yet the time it will take is most   
probably a long one. Many problems and obstacles must be overcome, from the   
oppression of religious organisations to the negative image portrayed by biased   
media. In time these organisations might see the light, and we will all be able   
to go gentle into that good night.

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