# fury as assisted dying bill rushed through Commons with key safeguards overlooked



Fury erupted in the House of Commons over the proposed assisted dying legislation, which many politicians have deemed 'rushed' and 'fundamentally flawed'. The recent debate, lasting just a few hours, left nine MPs who tabled amendments without a voice, amplifying frustrations among lawmakers. The limited discussion was abruptly halted after only two votes, with supporters of the Bill eager to wrap things up rather than fully address the critical concerns raised. This haste adds to a troubling pattern of dismissing meaningful scrutiny in Parliament.

While one amendment aimed at ensuring that no medical or social professionals are forced against their will to assist individuals in ending their lives was successfully passed, another, designed to protect healthcare staff from acting against their employers’ wishes, was rejected. This glaring oversight demonstrates the lack of comprehensive consideration within the legislative process, exposing a growing need for thorough debate and caution.

Naz Shah was among those who criticized the handling of the Bill, declaring it ‘profoundly important’ while asserting that the chaotic proceedings undermine both Parliament's integrity and the lives of constituents. Concerns echoed by former Lib Dem leader Tim Farron about the haste to push the Bill through suggest an underlying discontent that might grow as more expert opinions arise against it. Farron stated, "The debate today showed that there is significant movement against the Bill amongst MPs," underscoring a potential backlash against this ill-considered push for reform.

Labour MPs, including Jonathan Hinder, voiced their opposition, particularly against the removal of the previously mandated High Court approval in each case, which many view as a critical safeguard that has been compromised. Hinder referred to this adjustment as "the most obvious indicator that this Bill has been rushed," revealing the fundamental flaws in a government eager to legislate without proper foresight.

The proposed legislation, which would permit terminally ill adults to seek assistance in dying, previously achieved a majority of 55 votes in an earlier round. However, the shifting alliances within Parliament signal that the next voting stage could be crucial. Just a slight change of opinion could drastically alter the Bill's fate, as seen with Labour MP Peter Lamb, who has recently shifted from abstention to opposition, reflecting broader discontent.

While public support for assisted dying remains notable, mounting scrutiny of the Bill's safeguards is concerning. The Royal College of Psychiatrists has retracted its backing, raising alarms about insufficient protections for vulnerable groups, reinforcing that support is not universal.

Despite calls for enhanced palliative care rather than legislative reform, proponents of assisted dying claim that the current system imposes significant emotional strain on families. Campaigners outside Parliament stress the need for compassionate choices in end-of-life scenarios, with Rebecca Wilcox, daughter of Dame Esther Rantzen, advocating for a “pain-free, caring, compassionate death.” This sentiment highlights the deep personal stakes facing many individuals in this debate, yet it also underscores the complexity of societal values involved.

As the legislative process unfolds, further discussions on amendments are set for June 13. With delays now looming over the Bill’s enactment, it is clear that substantial adjustments are necessary to address fears raised by various stakeholders. The government’s claim of neutrality, allowing members to vote on personal convictions, only complicates the ongoing deliberations, potentially creating a legislative environment ripe for populist rhetoric and further political opportunism.

In Scotland, the progress of its own assisted dying legislation, having recently passed the initial stage, reflects a concerning trend across the UK towards legalizing assisted dying. However, anxiety about its implications—particularly regarding the safeguarding of the vulnerable—continues to grow. The criticisms faced by the Scottish Parliament highlight the contentiousness of this issue throughout the entire UK framework.

As debates press on, the intersection of compassion, ethics, and legislative integrity remains front and centre, underscoring the complexities of crafting laws that balance individual rights with the imperative to safeguard society's most vulnerable members. The necessity for greater oversight is clear, and the landscape of UK politics post-election reveals a dire need for opposition voices to advocate for comprehensive and careful deliberation, rather than a hurried legislative agenda.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14721329/Chaos-dying-Bill-MPs-say-flawed.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/25f38494-3074-47b5-9e38-c6dcdbb07f22> - UK Members of Parliament have approved an amendment to proposed assisted dying legislation, ensuring that medical professionals will not be obligated to participate in such procedures. The original law, passed narrowly last year, allows terminally ill patients in England and Wales to seek help in ending their lives. During a contentious debate, concerns were raised about insufficient safeguards, particularly the removal of the requirement for High Court approval of each case. Critics argued that the revised bill lacks proper scrutiny and is being rushed through Parliament, with only five hours allocated for recent discussions. Labour MP Naz Shah voiced strong opposition, citing serious flaws in the legislative process. Meanwhile, MP Kim Leadbeater, who introduced the bill, emphasized the emotional trauma faced by families under current laws. Proponents argue the measure is necessary for compassionate end-of-life options. While initially expected to take two years to implement, recent changes to safeguards may delay its rollout by another two years. The Royal College of Psychiatrists has withdrawn support due to lingering questions about protections for individuals with mental illnesses. The bill will face further amendments on June 13 before moving to the House of Lords for additional scrutiny.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/uks-proposed-assisted-dying-law-faces-next-parliamentary-test-2025-05-16/> - The UK Parliament is set to debate proposed assisted dying legislation for terminally ill, mentally competent adults in England and Wales, marking a pivotal step toward potentially enacting one of the nation's most significant social reforms in decades. The bill, originally approved in a preliminary vote in November 2024 by 330 to 275, would allow individuals with less than six months to live to choose medically assisted death. It has since undergone major revisions, most notably removing the requirement for court approval and instead establishing a decision-making panel including a legal expert, psychiatrist, and social worker. Despite public opinion favoring the measure, the bill continues to face opposition, with critics citing concerns about protections for vulnerable people and advocating for improved palliative care instead. Reports suggest some lawmakers who initially supported the bill may now reverse their stance. The Labour government remains neutral, allowing members to vote according to conscience. Due to numerous amendments, if Friday's debate does not conclude, further discussion will resume on June 13, with a final vote determining whether the bill continues to the House of Lords for additional scrutiny. Notably, the legislation excludes Scotland and Northern Ireland, although Scotland is advancing a similar proposal.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/c9542ccf-031e-457d-b753-53610b26fab5> - On May 13, 2025, the Scottish Parliament passed the first stage of a controversial bill that would legalize assisted dying for terminally ill adults, moving the measure closer to becoming law. The bill, proposed by Liberal Democrat MSP Liam McArthur, passed after a five-hour debate with a vote of 70 to 56, and one abstention. This marks the third time Holyrood has considered such legislation, amid parallel discussions in Westminster for England and Wales. The proposed law would require confirmation from two doctors that an individual is terminally ill and mentally fit, and it criminalizes coercion in seeking assisted death. Despite safeguards, critics such as Labour MSP Pam Duncan-Glancy and First Minister John Swinney expressed concerns about its implications, including potential pressure on vulnerable individuals and the impact on the doctor-patient relationship. The bill will proceed to a second stage, where the health committee will review and vote on proposed amendments, likely after the summer recess. A final vote is expected before the parliamentary elections in May 2026.
5. <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/scottish-parliament-approves-assisted-dying-bill-key-vote-2025-05-13/> - The Scottish Parliament has approved a key stage of the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill, moving it forward for committee review and potential amendment. If passed, the legislation would allow mentally competent adults who have lived in Scotland for at least a year and are diagnosed with a terminal illness to choose to end their lives with medical assistance, joining countries such as Switzerland, Canada, and New Zealand in legalizing assisted dying under strict conditions. The proposed safeguards include assessments by two independent doctors, a 14-day cooling-off period, and the requirement that the individual self-administer the life-ending substance. Introduced by Liberal Democrat MSP Liam McArthur in 2021, this is the third attempt in Scotland to pass such a bill, following a historic vote in the British Parliament in favor of assisted dying in England and Wales last year. While public opinion polls indicate majority support for the measure, critics such as the campaign group Better Way warn of potential risks to vulnerable populations, including those with disabilities or dementia, and argue that protections against coercion and misapplication are insufficient.
6. <https://www.ft.com/content/8de907e6-3323-431d-991a-b6a588aff299> - The implementation timeline of a new bill allowing terminally ill individuals in England and Wales to seek assisted dying has been delayed by up to two years due to additional safeguards. Labour MP Kim Leadbeater, the author of the bill, indicated that the law may not be operational until 2029 despite potentially becoming law this year. The bill has been amended such that approvals would now involve a multidisciplinary panel and a new voluntary assisted dying commission led by a legal figure, replacing the need for High Court judge approval. This extensive change has extended the implementation period from two to four years. The bill, which passed a narrow House of Commons vote last year, faces criticism over concerns about potential abuses and its implications for palliative care. Despite these hurdles, proponents argue it is crucial to ensure the legislation is comprehensive and effective prior to enactment. Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer emphasized the importance of government collaboration to implement the bill safely and feasibly if it becomes law.
7. <https://apnews.com/article/0bc2de13d41fe6d62753935e91dfb0f8> - British lawmakers have given initial approval to a bill allowing terminally ill adults in England and Wales to end their lives. The assisted dying bill passed a 330-275 vote in the House of Commons, which followed a lengthy, respectful debate focused on ethics, faith, and law. The proposed bill would enable adults expected to have less than six months to live to seek assistance in dying, provided they can self-administer the lethal drugs and obtain approval from two independent doctors and a High Court judge. Proponents argue it would provide dignity and alleviate suffering, while opponents express fears about potential coercion of the vulnerable and advocate for improved palliative care. The bill, which does not apply to Scotland or Northern Ireland, will undergo further scrutiny with a final decision pending. The debate has divided political parties and drawn public attention, with both supporters and detractors voicing strong opinions outside Parliament. Similar laws exist in countries like Australia, Belgium, and some US states.