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DISABILITY RIGHTS ACTIVISTS RESPOND TO FLAWED SURVEY

Disability rights activists are responding to a flawed survey issued by a group that promotes the medical killing of old, ill and disabled people.

“This report should not be seen as an endorsement of assisted suicide, but as demonstrative of the effect of discrimination on people with disabilities,” said Amy Hasbrouck, director of Toujours Vivant-Not Dead Yet.

 “Ipsos only spoke to 94 people with disabilities,” said Hasbrouck. “Their conclusions as to the opinion of the disability community cannot be taken seriously.”

The survey questions are based on false assumptions; that effective safeguards are possible. They also perpetuate the confusion between medical killing and palliative care, as well as terminal illness versus disability as eligibility criteria.

The survey is designed to reinforce the discriminatory belief that some suicidal people should receive suicide prevention while others should be helped to end their lives, said Hasbrouck.

The report ignores that role of palliative care, independent living services and removal of barriers to buildings, transportation and employment to improve the quality of life for disabled people.

“Those who believe that wilful death is a reasonable choice for anyone who must be handled and hooked up undermine our dignity,” said Catherine Frazee, professor emerita at Ryerson University. “All states of living are worthy of protection.”

Hasbrouck agrees.

 “Where those of us with disabilities are constantly told, in word and deed, that most people think we’d be better dead than disabled, it’s hardly surprising that many people come to believe it

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