

Does charitable status depend on PM's favour?

TIMES COLONIST

FEBRUARY 1, 2015

Re: "Dying with Dignity loses charitable status," Jan. 21.

Dying with Dignity's website describes itself thus: Nationwide registered charity. Informs about end-of-life options and offers tools for advance care planning. Supports individuals at the end of their lives, including those who want to hasten their dying, and advocates to change the law prohibiting medically assisted dying so that Canadians who suffer grievously at end of life will have legal options to end their suffering.

Unfortunately, the Canada Revenue Agency has just revoked the group's charitable status.

A 2007 Ipsos Reid survey of 1,005 Canadians found that 76 per cent of respondents supported the right to die for patients with an incurable disease, a figure that has remained unchanged. Meanwhile, the CRA website lists more than 50 organizations that take a social conservative view on issues related to reproductive rights and end-of-life care. Their charitable status has not been revoked.

Could retaining charitable status depend on whether Prime Minister Stephen Harper favours a charitable organization? Anyone noticing the Fraser Institute's status being revoked?

As Canadians, we have the right to expect the CRA to play fair in areas that reflect our deeply held personal and ethical beliefs. But wait — we'll all have a chance to play politics soon, that is, if Harper doesn't decide to prorogue or just cancel the election.

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