



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on September 21, 2025

U.K. House of Lords Deals Major Blow to Assisted-suicide Bill

A bill that would legalize assisted suicide in England and Wales suffered a major setback in the House of Lords Wednesday.

Introduced by Labor Party MP Kim Leadbeater, the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill would allow patients expected to die within six months to obtain medical assistance in ending their lives prematurely. The bill passed the House of Commons in June by a 314-291 vote.

Since then, it has undergone two readings in the House of Lords, neither of which boded well for its future. According to [Right To Life UK](#):



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An analysis of the speeches across both days one and two of Second Reading, completed by *Right To Life UK's* Policy Team, found that of the 155 peers who took a position on the Bill, 104 (67%) spoke in opposition and 51 (33%) spoke in favor. This represents more than double the number of Peers speaking in opposition to the Bill compared to those who supported it. A further five Peers did not take a position.

"The large majority of peers speaking in opposition to the Bill across the two days of Second Reading suggests the House of Lords is currently significantly more opposed than supportive of the Bill," said Right To Life UK spokeswoman Catherine Robinson. "Given that the House of Lords can reject the Bill, the Bill is increasingly looking like it is in jeopardy and will never become law."

Braking Amends

Further increasing the likelihood of the bill's failure was the passage of an amendment that prevents it from proceeding toward a vote until a select committee reviews and reports on it. Baroness Luciana Berger first proposed the amendment prior to the Second Reading, at which time the bill's supporters denounced it as a "[wrecking amendment](#)." On Wednesday, however, Lord Charlie Falconer, who favors the bill, backed a new amendment from Berger that accomplished the same thing.

"The establishment of a dedicated select committee to further scrutinize the Bill's proposals is a big win for opponents of the assisted suicide Bill," said Robinson. "It's clear that Falconer and his supporters knew they did not have the numbers to vote down the amendment, and so conceded."

Remarking on the number of Peers speaking against the bill, Baroness Arlene Foster, former First Minister of Northern Ireland, said, "Given this widespread opposition, it will be an uphill struggle for those backing the Bill to get it through a dedicated select committee and then all its remaining stages before the end of the Parliamentary session."



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Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson, a former champion wheelchair racer, is one of the most outspoken opponents of the bill, recognizing its threat to herself and other disabled individuals. Noting that “the [House of] Lords is constitutionally entitled to reject” the bill, she declared, “The message from the two days of Second Reading is unequivocal: we must protect the most disadvantaged in society.”

Fear and Loathing in London

Earlier this month, Grey-Thompson [revealed](#) that, on the one hand, she had heard from many disabled people who are “absolutely terrified” of the bill, but, on the other hand, she had received “incredibly abusive” emails from those in favor of it.

“Every disabled person who writes to me — and they do write quite a lot — is absolutely terrified about what this means for them,” she said.

They are right to be afraid of it. As Lord Joseph Shinkwin, another disabled Peer, [explained](#), “I cost the NHS [National Health Service], over the course of my lifetime, probably several million pounds to keep me alive.”

“This Bill,” he added, “would put a price on my head — on the head of so many disabled people.”

This is a serious concern in a nation with a faltering socialized healthcare system, observed Robinson:

With Hospice UK warning that [40% of hospices](#) are planning to make cuts this year, the NHS [described](#) by our Health Secretary, Wes Streeting, as “broken,” and every year, [100,000 people](#) are still dying without the palliative care they need, this assisted suicide legislation is a disaster waiting to happen.

Yet supporters of the bill cast its *opponents* as the cruel, heartless ones.

“I’ve had some incredibly abusive [emails] saying that I’m responsible for people dying in pain, and it will be on me,” claimed Grey-Thompson.

Peers’ Premonitions

Other Peers, in opposing the bill, referenced those they know who might well be helped to an early grave under an assisted-suicide regime.

Wrote Right To Life UK:

Relating her experience as an MP, Baroness Berger warned peers that, sadly, there are people who want family members to die or who feel they are a burden. She [said](#) she had not forgotten the experiences of former constituents who she described as “isolated and abused,” “in fear for their own lives, people who felt like a burden.” This could be extremely dangerous in the context of assisted suicide.

Similarly, “Baroness [Kate] Parminter, who [spoke](#) of her daughter having an eating disorder in the past,” said the bill “places people with eating disorders at risk.”

More than one Peer warned that once assisted suicide is legalized, the conditions under which it is permitted invariably [expand](#), endangering more and more vulnerable people.

At the end of August, a senior government official who backs the bill told [Sky News](#) that its chances of



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passing were “worse than 50/50.” With the further delay caused by the select committee and the Peers’ strong opposition to the bill, it surely stands an even smaller chance now.



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