

# COMMENT

## The Way We Were



This photo from 1913 depicts Nixon's Drug Store in Georgetown, described as the largest and best appointed drug store in town by the *Georgetown Herald*. Situated downtown close to the Bank of Hamilton and the newspaper office, Georgetown native and pharmacist owner R.H. Nixon sold everything from the expected preparations for medicinal use and fancy toilet goods, to the unexpected wallpaper and Victor Gramophones and records.

*Text courtesy of Heritage Halton Hills/Photo courtesy of Esquering Historical Society*

## From our readers



## A SPRING RITE

Nellie Jonkman of Georgetown sent in these photos after a mourning dove laid two eggs in her hanging basket by the front door. After a few weeks this is what resulted.

## Chong: Why I voted in favour of Bill C-14

Over the last number of months, I have listened to feedback from many residents across Wellington County and Halton Hills regarding Bill C-14, the government's physician-assisted dying (euthanasia) legislation.

I would like to take this opportunity to explain why I voted in favour of Bill C-14.

In 2015, in a decision commonly referred to as the Carter decision, the Supreme Court of Canada struck down Canada's law banning euthanasia on the grounds it violated the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The Supreme Court's decision made it clear that while the ban on euthanasia was contrary to the Charter, Parliament could pass legislation restricting it. The court set a deadline of June 6, 2016, for Parliament to pass a law. After this deadline, if no law is passed, the Carter decision comes into effect.

In a similar fashion, in 1988 the Supreme Court of Canada struck down Canada's abortion law on the grounds it was unconstitutional.

The government of the day introduced legislation to restrict abortion. That legislation was defeated in Parliament and, since then, no other legislation has successfully passed. As a result, the Supreme Court's Morgentaler decision stands as the law to this day.

In response to the Supreme Court's Carter decision, the current Liberal government introduced legislation on euthanasia, Bill C-14. This bill limits euthanasia to consenting adults who are in an advanced stage of irreversible decline of a serious and incurable disease, illness, or disability, and whose natural death is reasonably foreseeable. This bill would also

prohibit euthanasia for minors and the mentally ill.

Bill C-14 is considerably more restrictive than the Carter decision. The choice facing MPs and Senators is this: Pass Bill C-14, which puts in place considerable restrictions on euthanasia, or defeat Bill C-14, and allow the more permissive Carter decision to come into effect. (The notwithstanding clause, a section of the Charter that allows Parliament to override the Supreme Court's decision, has no chance of passage through the House of Commons and Senate.)

There are a wide range of views held on Bill C-14. Some are opposed to the bill, arguing that it is too restrictive, while others have argued it is not permissive enough.

On May 31, I voted for Bill C-14 in the House of Commons because I believe Canada needs a statute law on euthanasia. We need a statute law that protects the most vulnerable in our society. We also need a statute law to ensure consistency across the country.

Bill C-14 passed in the House of Commons on May 31 and was sent to the Senate for consideration. At this time of writing, the June 6 deadline has passed and the Bill is still being debated in the Senate. As a result, the less restrictive Carter decision is now in effect until the Senate passes Bill C-14.

I voted for Bill C-14 because without this law there would be fewer protections for vulnerable people and there would be different rules for different parts of the country. Bill C-14, while not perfect, is better than having no legislation at all.

*Michael Chong is the MP for Wellington-Halton Hills*



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