

# COMPREHENSIVE BRIEFING: LORDS FILIBUSTER OF THE TERMINALLY ILL ADULTS (END OF LIFE) BILL

Joint briefing from My Death, My Decision and Humanists UK, April 2026

## About Humanists UK and My Death, My Decision

My Death, My Decision is a grassroots not-for-profit organisation that campaigns for a balanced and compassionate approach to assisted dying in England and Wales.

At Humanists UK, we want a tolerant world where rational thinking and kindness prevail. We work to support lasting change for a better society, championing ideas for the one life we have.

## SUMMARY

The sheer number of amendments, the glacial pace of debate, and the impractical, unworkable, and callous nature of amendments all show clear signs of a small number of peers in the House of Lords filibustering the Assisted Dying Bill, which was passed by MPs last summer and commands [overwhelming public support](#). Some opponents have been explicit that they are trying to block the Bill [by means other](#) than voting it down.

The filibuster is mainly the symptom of a self-regulating chamber that lacks a speaker empowered to impose time limits, curb repetition, or rule out speeches that do not address the substance of an amendment. Proper scrutiny is an essential part of the legislative process, but what we are seeing here is not scrutiny. A small number of peers who are vehemently opposed to the Bill have blocked its passage.

## OPPONENTS DOMINATE THE DEBATE

The House of Lords Committee Stage of the debate has surpassed the word count of Leo Tolstoy's epic novel *War and Peace*. Over 75 hours of debate, totalling 607,077 words, has led to only [three minor changes](#) to the Bill.

Known opponents to the Bill have spoken a combined 462,749 words, more than twice as long as *Moby-Dick* (213,357 words). By comparison, the House of Lords Committee Stage debate of the Renters' Rights Bill, which is over 200 pages longer than the Assisted Dying Bill, has a word count of 249,057.

Peer	Party	Words said
Lord Harper	Conservative Party	37,233
Baroness Grey-Thompson	Crossbencher	36,591
Baroness Finlay of Llandaff	Crossbencher	35,595
Baroness O'Loan	Crossbencher	28,287
Baroness Coffey	Conservative Party	23,059
Baroness Fox of Buckley	Non-affiliated	21,741
Baroness Berridge	Conservative Party	16,076

A similar picture is painted by totalling up the speaking time using the index of the parliament.tv livestream.<sup>1</sup> Opponents of the Bill have spoken for over 55 hours, nearly three-quarters of the total debate.

Peer	Party	Speaking time (hh:mm:ss):
Baroness Finlay of Llandaff	Crossbench	4:41:44
Baroness Grey-Thompson	Crossbench	3:44:46
Lord Harper	Conservative	3:32:01
Baroness O'Loan	Crossbench	2:55:53
Baroness Coffey	Conservative	2:33:49
Baroness Fox of Buckley	Non-affiliated	2:26:42
Baroness Lawlor	Conservative	1:54:11

Baroness Finlay has spoken for 4 hours and 41 minutes, longer than The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King Extended Edition, which runs for 4 hours and 12 minutes.

As the sponsor of the Bill in the House of Lords, Lord Falconer must respond to each group of amendments, addressing each of the nearly 1,300 amendments in turn. To that end, he has spoken the longest, at 8 hours and 42 minutes and 63,852 words.

## COMPARISON TO OTHER BILLS

The Terminally Ill Adults Bill has had two days of debate at Second Reading, five days of evidence in a Lords Select Committee, and 14 days (totalling over 80 hours) of Committee Stage.

The Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill 2023, which is similar in size at 56 pages, had five days at Committee (roughly 33 hours) and two days at Report Stage (roughly nine hours).

<b>Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill 2024</b>	<b>The Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill 2023</b>
-51 pages	-56 pages
- 14 days of Committee Stage (80+ hours)	-5 days of Committee Stage, (~33 hours) -2 days at Report (~9 hours)
- 1,291 amendments at Committee Stage (25 per page)	-175 amendments at Committee Stage (3 per page)

<sup>1</sup> The caveat to the speaking times is that the index does not pause when a peer interrupts another, known as an intervention. For example, in responding to [Amendment 142](#), Lord Falconer was intervened on by Lord Harper, Baroness Berger, Baroness Fox of Buckley, Baroness Berridge and Baroness Coffey. In reality, this means that opponents of the Bill have likely spoken for longer than indicated here.

## EXAMPLES OF FILIBUSTERING

- [On day three](#), Baroness Lawlor said: ‘up to the age of 25, people often struggle to grasp that death is irreversible. They understand in notional terms the point that death ends a person’s life on earth, but they do not really grasp the sense—both those who accept and those who deny the afterlife know this—that life as we know it ends.’
- [On day four](#), Lord Farmer said: ‘Jeffrey Epstein was officially ruled to have died by suicide in his cell while awaiting trial. There is also the famous case of Goering after the Nuremberg trials. Conspiracies abound, but the principle remains that, if terminally ill adults know they can be assisted with their suicide, this implies a possible moral hazard if the cost of committing a crime is dramatically lowered. Why did I include defendants on bail? The events leading to the tragic death of Caroline Flack have been in the news again this week because of the media pile-on she endured while awaiting trial for domestic abuse.’
- [On day six](#), peers spent nearly an hour debating a group of probing amendments from Lord Frost that would change the wording of ‘assistance to end their own life’ in the Bill to ‘medical help to commit suicide by provision of lethal drugs’. These amendments add nothing to the clarity, workability or safety of the Bill and replace neutral, clinically accurate language with stigmatising terminology.
- [On day seven](#), Baroness Berridge, director of the Conservative Christian Fellowship, suggested there could be a competition by terminally ill 18-year-olds to be the first to have an assisted death.
- [On day eleven](#), Baroness Finlay said: ‘A little boy with advanced malignancies said to me, “I’m going to die when my goldfish dies”. He went on to talk through what he wanted when he was dying and how he would play football in heaven with another boy who had died recently. Not long after, his goldfish was found floating. My strenuous attempts to resuscitate his goldfish failed, and he gently died soon after.’
- [On day twelve](#), Baroness Finlay said: ‘care assistants, who are not qualified nurses, feel that they are providing the patient with their last bath and last meal and that it feels as if they are having to, in effect, prepare somebody for their execution—the end of their life.’

## NUMBER OF AMENDMENTS

The Terminally Ill Adults Bill is currently at Committee Stage in the House of Lords, where all peers can propose amendments and speak in the debate on any amendments.

As of 7 April, there are 1,291 proposed amendments to the Bill. Known opponents of the Bill have proposed 1,149 amendments, while supporters have proposed only 126. (The rest are from peers with neutral or unknown positions).

Seven peers opposed to the Bill have proposed 688 amendments:

Baroness Finlay of Llandaff	194
Baroness Grey-Thompson	131

Baroness Coffey	109
Lord Carlile of Berriew	72
Lord Sandhurst	72
Lord Goodman of Wycombe	63
Lord Moylan	47

For a 51-page Bill, this is an outrageous number of amendments. There are an average of **25 amendments per page** so far. This is the record for the Committee Stage of any Bill in the history of Parliament.

## EGREGIOUS AMENDMENTS

Examples of impractical amendments include:

- 701 (Baroness Grey-Thompson) & 713 (Baroness Hollins) propose clinical trials for the life-ending substance to be used. Impossible for a drug designed to cause death.
- 458 (Baroness Grey-Thompson) proposes that every applicant must supply a negative pregnancy test – including men, people over 75, those infertile, etc.
- 723 (Baroness Grey-Thompson) proposes a post-mortem for every assisted death – unnecessary and distressing for the family.
- 722 (Baroness Grey-Thompson) proposes to record every impairment a person has – this would include minor impairments like scabies, ingrown toenails, eyesight problems, etc.
- 908 (Baroness Coffey) proposes that the Act be renewed every parliament.

Examples of unworkable amendments:

- 236 (Lord Moylan) & 752 (Lord MacKinlay) would prevent the NHS from being involved in any way.
- 367, 368 & 369 (Lord Goodman of Wycombe) propose to increase the number of assessment stages from two independent doctors and a panel to five doctors and a panel, the fifth being a geriatrician. This would be impossible to navigate for a terminally ill person with fewer than six months to live. (15% of applicants in Victoria, Australia, are under the age of 60).

Callous:

- 15 (Baroness Coffey) proposes excluding anyone who has left the UK in the previous twelve months, banning anyone who has been on holiday or received a six-month terminally ill prognosis while abroad.
- 4, 249, 257, 304, 337, 446, & 448 (Baroness Berger) and 5, 250, 258, 305, 338, 447, & 449 (Baroness Lawlor) would increase the age of eligibility from 18 to 25 or 21 respectively, banning a terminally ill 19-year-old.
- 890 (Lord Moylan) proposes guidance 'aimed at preventing any growth of an institutional culture in the medical professions and among hospital managers in favour of assisted death as a means of procuring human organs for transplant'.
- 426A & 426B (Baroness Coffey) proposes that the terminally ill person must be physically present in a court open to the public.

## OVERT EVIDENCE OF FILIBUSTERING

Commenting on the debate in the Lords, Mark D'Arcy, respected political correspondent and [co-host of the Hansard Society's Parliament Matters podcast](#), said:

'I'm afraid I'm gonna have to use the F word. This is a filibuster. If it walks like a duck, quacks like a duck, and tastes good in orange sauce, it's a duck. If they're going this slowly over this piece of legislation, I'm afraid it's a filibuster. There is no other way to describe what's going on here. It may be in order. It may be within the rules of the House, but what's happening here is that a relatively small number of peers are putting down lots and lots of amendments and debating them very, very slowly. And if they continue doing that, this Bill will be lost.'

There are several cases of peers being explicitly clear that they are trying to block the Bill by means other than it being voted down at Third Reading – which may mean it fails even if a majority supports it:

- After the Commons vote, [The Times reported](#) anonymously that opponents pledged to use 'every means possible' to prevent it becoming law. One peer told *The Times* there were 'plenty of black arts that could be used to kill the bill off', including tabling many amendments, and that they 'could not imagine how it could get through'.
- Similarly, after the Commons vote, [GB News reported](#): 'A number of leading members of the House of Lords have already vowed to try to scupper the legislation'. Immediately quoted is Lord Frost saying 'Many of us will now oppose this Bill in the Lords, and entirely legitimately... The fight goes on.'
- Baroness Campbell told the [Disability News Service](#) that her role will be to 'amend, amend, amend, amend, amend, so it becomes so tight that anyone would find it difficult to get it'.
- Lord Moylan [posted on X](#) 'Peers are justified in blocking assisted dying bill' and shared [a Times editorial](#) saying peers that 'Peers who want to continue blocking this bill and prevent it from ever becoming law are justified in doing so' – something clearly a reference to the use of amendments and speeches to block the bill. Lord Moylan is vocal against assisted dying on X, and shared [a post saying](#) 'The final duty the Hereditaries can do for their country is to kill this appalling Assisted Dying Bill'.

## ALREADY MORE SCRUTINY THAN ANY OTHER BILL

Assisted dying has faced unprecedented scrutiny, more than any Private Members' Bill in history, even before it reached the Lords.

The Health and Social Care Committee inquiry into assisted dying received 68,000 responses from the public, over 300 submissions of written evidence, two closed-door roundtable discussions and five oral evidence sessions. They reported in 2024.

Since then, the Commons Bill Committee received evidence from 50 witnesses, 444 pieces of written evidence, and spent over 100 hours scrutinising the Bill in 2025. The House of Lords Select Committee (weighted against assisted dying, with more opponents of legislative change than supporters) heard evidence from 43 witnesses.