

Health and Social Care Committee
Human Transplantation (Wales) Bill
HT(Ind)31 - B. M. Rooney

For the attention of the Chairman and the Clerk,

I understand that you are inviting comments on the proposal to bring in legislation for "Presumed Consent" to the removal of human organs for transplantation. I would like to register my profound objection to the proposal. My body belongs to me, not to the Welsh (or any other) Government and it is my responsibility to decide how it should be used. This is a disgraceful proposal and its advocates should be thoroughly ashamed of themselves. Of course organ donation may be desirable, and it is reasonable to encourage a high donation rate, but for any government to attempt what amounts to coercion, if only by default, is to go down the road followed by some of the most viciously authoritarian regimes of recent years.

Quite apart from the ethical aspect, there must be serious doubt whether legislation would improve the donation rate, which in Wales is already high by international standards - indeed it is possible that many existing voluntary donors would withdraw their consent. You must be aware of the furore after the Alder Hey scandal, and of the findings of the subsequent Redfern report. You will also know that responsible expert and professional authorities have advised against presumed consent. And it is highly likely that the arrangement would seriously undermine confidence in the medical profession. In summary, the introduction of presumed consent legislation would be morally questionable, damaging to professional reputations and probably ineffective, and the proposal should be rejected. I attach for your information a copy of a letter I sent some months ago to my AM

Yours faithfully, B.M.Rooney