

# Canada top court further delays new assisted dying rules

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Canada's high court gave parliament another four months Friday to rewrite the law in order to allow doctors to help gravely ill patients die upon request.

The government had asked for time to amend the nation's Criminal Code after the [court](#) in February 2014 quashed a section prohibiting assisted suicide, effectively authorizing it for consenting adults with serious [health problems](#).

The court had already suspended its ruling for one year to allow legislators an opportunity to enact new rules surrounding the divisive issue.

But a new Liberal government won an October [general election](#) and asked for a further six-month delay.

Granting the further extension is an "extraordinary step," the court said in its decision, "since its effect is to maintain an unconstitutional law."

However, the court also agreed to a few exemptions that would allow some patients to proceed now with assisted suicide, notably in Quebec province, which rolled out Canada's first assisted dying framework last month.

On Thursday, local media reported that two people in Quebec had already asked for help dying.

One of them was approved and died in hospital. Health officials are still considering the second request.

Elsewhere in Canada, until June when the injunction is set to expire, a patient may seek permission from a judge to proceed.

The Supreme Court's February 2015 decision had reversed its own 1993 ruling in the case of Sue Rodriguez, a pioneer in the fight for the right to die in Canada.

At that time, the court had expressed concern about protecting vulnerable persons, but in its newer ruling last year pointed to changed Canadian social values.

Polling shows a strong majority of Canadians—85 percent—support the right to die.

Some form of physician-assisted dying is legal in Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Switzerland and in a handful of US states.

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