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HOUSE OF COMMONS
CANADA

Maurice Vellacott, MP
Saskatoon-Wanuskewin

Vellacott re-introduces Private Member's Bill to protect conscience rights of health care workers

For Immediate Release

April 16, 2008

OTTAWA – Conservative MP Maurice Vellacott (Saskatoon-Wanuskewin) today re-introduced his Private Member's Bill that would protect the conscience rights of Canada's health care workers. This is the third Parliament in which Vellacott has introduced a bill to protect health care workers' conscience rights.

"I hope that the Canadian Parliament will eventually pass this kind of a common sense measure that would protect the freedom of choice for all health care workers," said Vellacott.

Introducing the bill in Parliament this afternoon, Vellacott said:

Mr. Speaker, the bill would prohibit coercion in medical procedures that offend a person's religion or belief that human life is inviolable. The bill seeks to ensure that health care providers will never be forced to participate against their will in procedures such as abortions or acts of euthanasia.

Canada has a long history of recognizing the rights of freedom of religion and of conscience in our country. Yet health care workers and those seeking to be educated for the health care system have often been denied those rights in medical facilities and educational institutions. Some have even been wrongfully dismissed.

The bill would make those conscience rights explicit in law and would safeguard health care workers' fundamental human rights.

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