

30/08/2018

**Submission to the Health Committee re Jackie Trad's Abortion Bill 2018**

I am deeply concerned about the proposals in the current abortion bill presented to Parliament last week. The following are my concerns:

Abortion will be available on demand for social reasons to 22 weeks. This devalues the value, worth, dignity and sacredness of the unborn baby which even the Qld Criminal Justice System deems to be an 'unborn child' when a conviction of a life sentence was recently made against a man for killing his unborn child of 10 weeks gestation by stomping on his partner's abdomen.

How can consent by a woman to kill her child make it any less a criminal act of murder, let alone giving legal permission to a medical doctor to perform the act of termination. Does this not also conflict with the Code of Conduct sworn by medical practitioners to "first do no harm"?

I am concerned that abortion is available to full term upon the assessment of 1 doctor and with the agreement of a second doctor, for reasons of physical, psychological and social reasons. A child's viability to survive outside the womb increases progressively from 22 weeks. Why abort late term when the child could be delivered (by 'C' section if necessary), provided with good medical care then put up for adoption. The baby is a human being with rights and must be afforded the right to life, a basic human right. A comprehensive independent online market research survey conducted by YouGov Galaxy on a representative sample of 1,000 Queensland voters found that 76% opposed late-term abortions past 23 weeks with 52% opposing abortion for any reason up until 22 weeks.

The Bill will permit sex selection abortion. So the sex of a baby will determine his/her right to life? An innocent, voiceless, defenceless baby, conceived in a gender not of its own choosing, will be killed at the whim of the parents?

No provision has been made to protect or counsel women who will be coerced into having an abortion by a partner, family member or friend. If she sincerely wants to continue with the pregnancy, surely provision in the Bill can be made for a safe, non judgemental counselling /support services (e.g. Priceless House Woolongabba) as well as a cooling off period wherein she can consider all her options and make her decision based on what she believes is best for herself and her baby.

Groups that sincerely want to provide information about abortions and support options will be required to stand 150 metres from the entrance to abortion clinics. This action will greatly minimise the support for women who may be confused, uncertain and desperately seeking guidance and/or support about a very sensitive decision at a hugely emotional time.

The bill does not allow objections to performing abortions in hospitals, including those with religious affiliation who model their ethos and practice on the tenets of the Christian faith. Is this not a denial of religious freedom and practice.

Doctors who conscientiously object to performing abortions will be required to refer the client to a doctor who is willing to perform the procedure. In doing so, this will make the referring doctor complicit in a procedure he/she morally and ethically opposes.

Jackie Trad and the ALP government claim they want to decriminalise abortion and make abortions more available for health reasons. With an absence of counselling, support, information and alternative options, no safeguards or protections against coercion, and no cooling off period, it is my opinion that an abortion for health reasons is in actuality a myth. Many women suffer health issues post abortion, go through a period of guilt and grieving after an abortion, can fall into depression and suffer psychological and other mental health issues. I am speaking from experience, having suffered a involuntary spontaneous abortion, grieved for period of 2 months and desperately needed to talk to persons who had experienced the same emotional pain.

Decriminalising abortion is also an incorrect term. No person has ever been brought before the criminal justice system for having an abortion. The Qld Criminal Justice System recently deemed the killing of an unborn child by a partner as murder. How can the killing of an unborn child by a consenting mother and doctor be deemed acceptable and not murder, when the end result is exactly the same, the death of an innocent, defenceless, voiceless child who did not choose to be conceived but denied any right to life, a basic universal human right.

Respectfully submitted by

Joan McDonald

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