

I am shocked and outraged at the Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018 which was introduced into the Queensland Parliament on August 22, 2018. In the minds of many Queenslanders, myself included, abortion in Queensland is already too freely accessible, with 14000 abortions occurring each year. Why is there such a push to decriminalize abortion, when no women to date have been convicted for having one?

The retention of abortion in the criminal code does have a useful educative function. It shows society at large that the taking of an innocent life is a serious matter, and should not be trivialized by the employment of euphemisms such as 'fertility control' or 'reproductive health.'

The framers of this Bill do not appear to have had women's interests in mind. According to a You Gov Galaxy poll conducted in August 2018, 88% of Queenslanders agree that free independent counseling should be available to women contemplating having an abortion. This should include information on the development of the unborn child, the nature of the procedure and the risks --- both physical and psychological --- associated with it, as well as the support available should she wish to proceed with her pregnancy. This Bill fails to provide adequate safeguards for women in this situation.

Cherish Life Queensland has on file testimonies of women such as [REDACTED] who suffered years of psychological damage after undergoing an abortion. According to Debbie Garrett, Executive Director of Real choices Australia, *"There is clear and unequivocal evidence that up to 20% of women suffer measurable, serious, and prolonged mental health adverse effects after abortion, including depression, anxiety and suicide."*

This Bill is even more brutal than the ones brought forward by Independent MP Rob Pyne in 2016, which evoked thousands of submissions from Queenslanders, most of whom strongly opposed any changes to existing legislation. The withdrawal of the Pyne bills in February 2017 clearly indicates the level of opposition from the Queensland public and the strong likelihood that they would have been defeated had they come to the floor of Parliament.

Why is this issue being raised again? The Government seems hell-bent on imposing this barbaric piece of legislation on the Queensland public. There are many childless couples who would be only too willing to provide a secure, loving home environment for little ones whose biological parents can't or won't care for them. It is appalling that these little ones are not given a chance at life.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Howe

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