

**Subject:**

The Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018

Date:

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Health Committee Inquiry Submission

The practice of abortion in our civilized society has been in existence for centuries and possibly even much longer. It would be naïve not to think that abortion will continue to be used as a means of terminating pregnancies for one reason or another. The Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018 now before the Queensland Parliament, if introduced into law, will bring about unprecedented and at one time unforeseen changes to this area of the law. It is imperative, therefore, that full and proper consideration be given to all aspects of the Bill. The Committee will have before it many and diverse opinions and statistics to pore over and this should be done diligently.

I submit that the two main aspects to be considered are 1. Rights and 2. Health and the two are interrelated. The question of rights is predominantly about the rights of mothers, the unborn and doctors but could also include fathers and society in general, for what we do and how we live as a society affects society in both a positive and negative way. Health has to do with the mother and the unborn. The aspects of the proposed legislation which are receiving most attention are the rights of mothers, the unborn and the medical fraternity and the health of the mother and the unborn. I submit that the rights of the mother and the unborn are paramount, with the rights of the unborn being no less important by having no voice in the debate. I submit that it is the responsibility of government through legislation to assiduously ensure the rights of the unborn are respected and protected. The further a pregnancy advances, the greater the protection should be afforded to the unborn. I submit that from conception the unborn have a right to grow to full term and to birth and that this right should not be interfered with unless exceptional circumstances prevail. I submit that these circumstances should be restricted to serious health problems affecting the unborn and that they be to a degree that termination of the pregnancy is considered by medically qualified persons to be the right option. If legislation is to allow an abortion for any other reason, then the abortion must be performed at the earliest stage of the pregnancy and no later than the third trimester.

I submit that the rights of the mother also extend to the choice to terminate a pregnancy. Similarly, I submit that the right to do so should be permitted only in exceptional circumstances, those being rape or serious mental or physical problems seriously affecting the health of the mother to a degree where medical opinion is that termination is absolutely the only option. A pregnancy should not be terminated capriciously or for the reasons of lifestyle, sex selection or for mere social reasons. If legislation is to allow abortion outside these parameters then it must be at the earliest stage of pregnancy and no later than the third trimester.

The rights to freedom of conscience and conscientious objection are rights that must be upheld in drafting the Termination of Pregnancy Bill. I submit that this is a fundamental right that must be enshrined in the legislation. To compel a person, in this case a medical doctor, to act against his or her conscience and be forced to perform an act or be complicit in the performance of an act, under pain of penalty, which to them would be abhorrent and against all their training and beliefs, I submit, would be despicable.

The Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018 should be about what is best for all parties as to respect and protection of rights and in the process the rights of the unborn be given equal respect and not trampled upon by government or society merely because they are

unrepresented and voiceless. All life, whether adult, child or unborn (the future adults and children) must be loved and nurtured to the best of our ability and each deserves nothing less. Every unborn life must be given every opportunity to take its place in the world and in the State of Queensland. Any termination of that life must be subject to the strictest conditions.

Gordon Crabtree, 