

Paul and Novella Weatherley



4 September 2018

Health Committee
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To whom it may concern,

We would like to express our **objection to** and our **concern** in regards to the proposed **Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018**.

We are very concerned for the vulnerable women in our society that find themselves in the very difficult situation of an unplanned pregnancy. Legalising abortion for any reason up to 22 weeks is opening the door for the coercing of women into having the procedure, by partners/family etc. when they might not have made that choice if the legal barrier served as a reason not to have an abortion. There have been many testimonies from women post abortion who have said they felt they had no other choice, or they felt they were pressured into having the procedure. What should be the main focus, is to offer unbiased counselling and support to the woman. This concern is further weighted by the lack of informed consent required by the Bill. Women need to know the possible impacts, and what the procedure actually involves. This new law does not offer any penalties for clinics that do not follow proper informed consent recommendations. Under the current law, thousands of abortions are performed every year in Queensland, indicating that those with legitimate concerns of the health and well being of the mother are already being addressed.

Also in regards to Section 5, abortion for any reason up to 22 weeks, very easily allows for gender selection abortion which in our opinion violates the human rights laws and allows the persecution of an innocent and defenceless human being based on their gender. In addition to this, as has been seen in other countries such as China, such practises have allowed for detrimental impacts on the balance of society.

It is also very concerning that abortion can be performed up to full-term under the proposed bill. As health professionals, and having experienced death first hand in a work environment, we have seen what psychological effects it has on many. Natural death is however easier to accept in an adult as they have lived in many cases a full life and is of course inevitable. We have great concerns for the mental health of all the staff involved both directly and indirectly with any abortion, but particularly when the baby is fully-developed. Imagine the trauma of assisting in, witnessing and cleaning up after an abortion in these cases.

Under what circumstances would it be acceptable to end the life of a 1 day old premature baby? None of course. Why would it then ever be acceptable to do so the day before? How is this not a violation of the human rights of the unborn child and a blatant disrespect for life?

This bill even lacks a statement which explicitly states that in the event of a failed abortion, when the baby exhibits signs of life outside the mother, that the attending medical professionals have a duty-of-care to do what is necessary to save the baby. Even those who disagree with the notion that the foetus IS a human life, would agree it is after birth and therefore is worth saving!

We accept that the current law may need to be amended in some way, but legalising abortion is not the answer. If we truly want to support the health and well being of the women in our society we need to focus on improving and increasing the support services both pre and post-natal as well as looking at and addressing the social reasons as to why women find themselves in this difficult position. Wouldn't education and prevention be better and more positive focuses, rather than creating a culture of death, disrespect and persecution of the most defenceless in our society?

We are really appalled and disheartened by the current proposed Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018 and implore the members of the Health Committee to reconsider their recommendations.

Yours Sincerely,

Paul and Novella Weatherley.