



Subject:
Date:

Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018
Tuesday, 4 September 2018 7:35:25 AM

I wish to comment on the proposed Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018.

I am a registered health practitioner.

Some time ago, while in an isolated region of Queensland, I was called to see a mother who had given birth to a baby in a car, located forty kilometres from the nearest town.

She had been on her way to see me for her first antenatal visit, and had given birth at 28 weeks gestation, based on assessment by a neonatologist later that day, after she was evacuated by air to a larger centre.

The female infant only required minimal supportive treatment and thrived. I last saw her at the age of three when she was a healthy bright child, with no evidence of any adverse effects of her extreme prematurity.

The proposed legislation would make the killing of unborn Queensland children legal up to any stage of gestation, for any reason or for no reason at all. Furthermore, it would make it an offence for me not to facilitate this violence against both the pregnant women and her unborn child, even if older than the child that I treated, and quite capable of survival with good quality of life after premature birth.

Under current Queensland law it is a criminal offence to kill an unborn child. Under the proposed law, it will be an offence not to kill an unborn child if the mother so desires.

If the proposed law is enacted it will still be a criminal offence to kill a child who has just been born, however it will be legal to do so only moments before they are born. Not only is this morally abhorrent, but makes no biological sense.

Under current Queensland law it is an offence to do any kind of violence to a child, including sexual or physical abuse or neglect. Under proposed law I will be forced to refer a mother to a practitioner for the specific purpose of doing violence and harm to an unborn child.

Under current law and I suspect under the proposed law, stillbirths after twenty weeks gestation or over 400 grams weight require registration with the Registrar of Births Deaths and Marriages. As far as I am aware a termination over the age of twenty weeks will still require registration and notification to the perinatal mortality register. The act is silent on this. Perinatal mortality is seen internationally as an important measure of quality of health care for a population.

Section 15 and 16 prohibit protests near termination services, and yet do not prohibit protests near other health facilities. Why the inconsistency? Does the Queensland Government intend to further limit peaceful public dissent in other ways? I agree that respect must be shown for all individuals in our society, but surely the law should target abusive behaviour, not expression of opinion.

In my opinion the proposed law is inconsistent with generally held community standards relating to violence against human beings.

It is also poorly written (What constitutes a "referral") and possibly contravenes the Australian Constitution by implying civil conscription of medical and dental practitioners in requiring such a referral.

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