

Nyree Inoke



6 Dec 2016

The Hon Michael de Brenni
Shops 4-6, Springwood Rd Business Centre
71-73 Springwood Road
SPRINGWOOD QLD 4127

Dear Mr. de Brenni,

Thank you for representing our electorate in the state parliament. I am a member of the Springwood electorate, a medical scientist and a teacher. I ask that you read this complete letter and consider, in full, the arguments/questions that I am putting forward. I am requesting that you take into consideration the following concerns regarding the proposed changes to QLD abortion laws:

1. I am firmly convinced that the argument for or against abortion must be made based on whether the unborn child/foetus is considered a living human being.
2. The right to life must be the first priority in decision making. The right for someone to live is imperative in supporting all other rights, for if we do not live we can not enact any of our other rights (apart from those recorded in a will and even those are contestable).
3. When comparing the rights of 2 human beings (adult, child or otherwise) we must recognise that there are times when certain rights must yield priority to other rights.

4. What determines "life"? Does an event - such as being passed through a birth canal or being extracted from the womb via surgery, a process of the human body, determine whether an unborn child/foetus is alive. For example are 2 infants, both at the same stage of development e.g. 36 weeks gestation, both considered human if one has been "born" whilst the other is still in-utero? If they both have the same brain capacity, eyesight, hearing, beating hearts etc is it right and fair to determine that one is human and the other is not due to experiencing a life event?

At any other time we would be appalled if people used such events to determine our right to life. Could we determine that someone has no right to life because they have not been circumcised, taken an oath, undergone a test of courage etc? When I consider these things I am convinced that the act/experience of birth can not be the determining factor for deciding if an unborn infant is human or not, or posses the right to life.

5. Does reliance on another human being for our survival determine whether an unborn child is living or not? Certainly there is an expectation on the parent/caregiver of an infant who has been born to provide that child with the basic support/needs for survival. If a caregiver neglects a child then it is deemed to be deprivation of that child's rights and unlawful. Regardless of external pressures, work commitments, emotional, financial or relational struggles it is still the duty of the caregiver to provide adequate care to meet the child's needs, and if necessary until suitable alternative care can be found. We are also willing as a society to create systems that provide support to struggling caregivers in order to enable them to care for the child.

So certainly we can not argue that relying on another human to meet ones needs removes a child's right to life, nor do we see pressures in the care givers life as a viable reason to be negligent in providing for an infant. Does the fact that an unborn infant is receiving it's needs in-utero determine that it does not have a right to have those needs met? Particularly if - as in point 4 - we do not use the life event of birth to

determine if the unborn infant is human or not. Providing for the unborn child's needs may be in some cases be undeniably stressful, unwanted or even depressing however if it is determined that the infant is a human being then do we support removing the stress, depression etc by removing the unborn infant or do we provide support, care and a framework for meeting the needs of both the mother, other caregivers and the unborn infant, if necessary until suitable alternative care can be found? (To this end, the framework should include a national approach to a well implemented and screened adoption process).

6. If a life event does not determine our status as a living human being and our reliance on another human does not determine our right to receiving care then what does? At what point can we determine that an unborn infant/foetus is living and has the right to life? As for myself I believe that the right to life begins before many would even know that their is an unborn foetus living inside one of us.

Working in pathology as a scientist I have held many tiny foetuses in my hands and to me they are undeniably tiny humans. The tiny heart begins beating from just 22 days after fertilisation, an early cerebellum has formed by 4.5 weeks, the cerebral cortex and nerve cells, neurons and synapses are forming by 6 weeks. By 7.5 weeks the unborn foetus can kick and "jump" if startled, clearly responding independently to stimuli i.e. they have developed their own response to stimuli. Also tendons, leg muscles, bones, knee joints, hands and feet are all growing. The list goes on, suffice to say that they are a separate living entity to the mother, although they rely on their mother to meet their needs for survival.

Finally I do not deny that there are many times when pregnancy can be inconvenient, life altering, painful - in more than just a physical sense or even when the form of conception brings horrific memories to the mother and when it seems unfair to carry the responsibility for another life. However when these terms are applied to a child that has been born, none of them would be a valid reason to end that child's life. If a foetus/unborn infant is a tiny, living human

being, as I believe they are, then we must afford them the same rights and provide them, mothers, fathers and carers with the support and framework needed to ensure their right to life is upheld. Please do not support Mr Rob Pyne's bill.

Many thanks for your consideration in this matter,
Nyree Inoke