

Submission to the Parliamentary Committee RE *Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018*

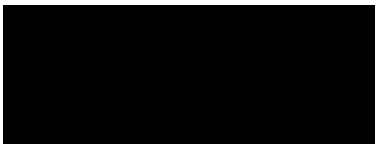
I would like to draw the attention of the committee to Part 2 of the *Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018*. This section allows abortion of an unborn baby prior to 22 weeks of age for any reason, then from 22 weeks up to birth following consultation with two medical practitioners who consider in “all the circumstances” the abortion should be performed.

Legislation as non-prescriptive as this leaves the door wide open for sex selective abortion to take place, a practise which is of great concern worldwide as per the United Nations Population fund (UNFPA, 2018). Unfortunately Australia is not unfamiliar with this practise as evidence suggests sex selective abortion is a reality in Victoria (SBS, 2015). Ironically, while free and non-restrictive access to abortion services is frequently framed in terms of women’s rights and gender equality, data suggests female babies are much more likely to be aborted in preference for male offspring (UNPF, 2018). Attempts to rectify this issue through prohibition of gender selective abortions are futile, as a myriad of other reasons can simply be claimed to justify the abortion. Thus, non-restrictive abortion represents a “Pandora’s box” which is best left unopened. Further, 83% of Queenslanders oppose gender selective abortion (Galaxypoll, 2018).

The proposed legislation shows scant regard for any value of human life before birth, despite all scientific evidence showing the child is an individual with unique DNA following conception, has a heartbeat at 5 weeks of age, can respond to stimuli from 8 weeks of age and can survive outside the womb from 22 weeks (Babycenter, 2018). Referring to the preamble of the 1959 UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child, “the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth.”

I implore the committee to choose life - our future Queenslanders need support and legal protection before and after birth. The August 2018 Galaxy poll indicates ~60% of Queenslanders are against the proposed legislation. Let’s support and encourage young mothers, especially those who are vulnerable. I would rather see the resources of the state used to provide post-natal support and services to new mothers to help raise the next generation.

Phillip and Leacia Sharp



Footnotes:

1. *Could gender-selective abortions be happening in Australia?*, SBS News Australia, 2015, [redacted]
2. United Nations Population Fund, 2018 [redacted]
3. Galaxypoll, 2018< [redacted]
4. *Fetal Development Week by Week*, Babycenter, 2018, [redacted]