



Dear Members of the Health Committee reviewing the Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018,

I submit a few thoughts about the proposed Bill and thank you for considering them.

Section 6 does not limit the stage of pregnancy when abortion may be executed, and so does not exclude full-term abortions. It does not exclude the macabre prospect of such gruesome methods as [REDACTED] abortion in which the baby is [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Although there is controversy about whether pain is felt before 20 weeks or not until 27 or 30 weeks of gestation, the more developed foetus is clearly more likely to feel the pain of the abortion procedure.

Section 6 allows the medical practitioners to make a decision after considering certain matters, but it does not indicate the principles which should guide or determine their decisions.

Section 6 (3) does not define “emergency”, and so one wonders whether, for example, a woman who attributes suicidal thoughts to her 36 week pregnancy might legitimately be referred for a hasty abortion, without adequate (or any) counselling or psychiatric assistance.

Section 8 Subsection (3), if ever enacted, would constitute a fundamental denial of a medical practitioner’s right to act according to conscience. It is incomprehensible that within a society which purports to value human rights, there could be consideration of such a hideously heinous attempt to deny the freedom to save life, while imposing instead a requirement to cooperate in extinguishing the lives of the most vulnerable and powerless. The principles of democracy and human rights alone must sound an intolerably shrill warning siren against any such force being applied to medicos or to any citizen of a free country.

Section 10 does not take account of any other factor than the mother’s wish at the time that she might choose to attempt an abortion; such as her psychological state, the [REDACTED] of the child, the wishes of the father, the child’s age, the child’s rights, the pain the child might endure, the injury to the child who may potentially live despite attempts at its destruction.

Section 12 raises the question as to why the Peaceful Assembly Act of 1992 is over-riden in relation to the operation of abortuaries. Let the safety and well-being of people visiting abortuaries be upheld and protected according to the same laws as those who visit any other business premises. Let a person who wishes to express an opinion about an injustice issue be allowed the rights expected in a free country, whatever the issue of concern.

It seems odd in the extreme that a person is permitted to kill her progeny until birth (Section 10), but according to Section 15, a twelve-month prison term might apply to somebody whose conduct 149 metres from an abortuary (whether seen or unseen) might be construed as intended to save the life of an utterly helpless unborn child from the [REDACTED], [REDACTED] of the abortion industry. One might perhaps expect such laws from a despotic totalitarian regime, but not from the land where “we are young and free”.

Thank you again for taking the time to read my thoughts.

Sincerely,

(Dr) Phil Martin