

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee](#)
Subject: Proposed QLD abortion bill
Date: Wednesday, 5 September 2018 10:15:27 AM
Importance: High

Good morning,

I write to you regarding the Proposed QLD abortion bill put forward by Labor. I beg as an active member of our society that you reject all aspects of this bill. It is extreme in its entirety and should be thrown out. If it were to pass, it would be a step back for our society and I will outline below some very basic reasons why I believe this to be the case, based on some different elements of the bill.

Lawful terminations - not more than 22 weeks pregnant

Clause 5 of the Bill allows that a medical practitioner may perform a termination on a woman who is not more than 22 weeks pregnant. Clause 10 of the Bill provides that a woman who consents to, assists in, or performs a termination on herself does not commit an offence. Clause 22 of the Bill repeals Sections 224 to 226 of the Criminal Code which make it an offence to terminate a pregnancy.

This is a service currently too readily used and legalising what is currently unlawful only stands to trivialise the matter further and increase the occurrence which is not what we should be aiming for as a society.

Lawful terminations - more than 22 weeks pregnant and with the agreement of two medical practitioners

Clause 6(1) of the Bill allows that a medical practitioner may perform a termination on a woman who is more than 22 weeks pregnant if the medical practitioner considers that the termination should be performed, and has consulted with another medical practitioner who also agrees that the termination should be performed. Clause 6(2) of the Bill outlines the matters which a medical practitioner must consider when considering whether a termination should be performed - these being all relevant medical circumstances, the woman's current and future physical, psychological and social circumstances, and the professional standards and guidelines that apply to the medical practitioner in relation to the performance of the termination.

This is murder plain and simple. The fact that we can perform life-saving surgery and have viable babies living at 22 weeks, should immediately strike out the option of post 22 week terminations. As a minimum, both practitioners should have to physically meet with the pregnant woman and extensive counselling should be given by an independent provider prior to this even possibly taking place. But in reality, it should never be a consideration outside of genuine emergency surgery to save the mother's life.

Conscientious objection

Clause 8 of the Bill allows for a health practitioner to conscientiously object to the performance of a termination. The health practitioner is required to disclose their conscientious objection and refer or transfer the woman to another health practitioner or health service provider. The clause does not limit any duty owed by a registered health practitioner to provide a service in an emergency.

These kind of freedoms form the very foundation and fabric of our society. The second you allow for ignoring conscientious objection to any service in any industry, you are running a

dictatorship and setting a dangerous precedent for the future of our nation. I work with medical practitioners and to think that they would have no rights whatsoever in this matter and would be held hostage to the moral standings of anyone but themselves is atrocious. This would not only affect practitioners themselves, but the staff who work for them both clinical and non-clinical. Why is it that these people are considered irrelevant when they can often be directly involved in and affected by the process?

Safe access zones

Clauses 11 to 14 of the Bill allow for the establishment of safe access zones at termination service premises. The safe zone applies to an area within 150 metres of the entrance of the termination service premises, unless a distance is prescribed by regulation. It also establishes penalties for prohibited conduct or restricted recording (including the publication and distribution of a restricted recording) within a safe access zone.

This may be a crucial location and time for close supporters of someone planning to have an abortion under stress or coercion to be able to offer them time to slow down and rethink. It is also another disgraceful effort to encroach on our freedoms. Freedom of speech cannot be limited by location. If the people going to have this procedure done are truly comfortable with their decision, they should be able to hear protestations regarding their actions. If it makes it too uncomfortable or difficult for them, then they most definitely need to be reconsidering their choice. Why are we fighting so hard to protect the rights of people who show no respect or value for human life, but we're willing to destroy the rights of those who stand by the value of human life? We are suggesting a dangerous about-face in basic societal values.

Offences for unqualified persons

Clause 25 of the Bill outlines offences for an unqualified person who performs, or assists in performing, a termination on a woman. Both offences have a maximum penalty of 7 years imprisonment.

I'm not sure that 7 years maximum penalty is sufficient - it may depend on the circumstance of an individual case and the possible violence involved. It should possible involve a penalty for both the physical abuse of the pregnant woman and the murder of the unborn foetus for which 7 years certainly doesn't seem enough.

Finally, some general points I would like to make.

I have been directly involved with 5 women who have been through this process and I can attest to the fact that not one of them went through with the process in a carefree manner, spouting off about 'their body, their rights'. Every single woman is suffering long-term effects of their decision, some overcome with guilt and regret. This is an enormous issue for women and human rights and to pass such an extreme bill would be a true blight on our country. It's utterly ridiculous to me that we are even considering the bill as it stands. The people must be listened to on this issue, just as they were on the recent gay marriage issue. The statistics are overwhelmingly against this bill in the general conversation - that MUST be recognised!!! Much more research, public opinion and expert professional contribution must be considered and applied to any changes that possibly happen in this area in the future. If we go ahead with this joke of a bill, we will lose amazing medical professionals who will not be able to stay in their positions due to being forced into performing services that go against their moral, ethical,

personal or religious standings. I personally know multiple health professionals involved in the Obstetrics/Gynaecological field whose work will be immediately influenced by this bill if it succeeds and their livelihoods will be dramatically affected. It is simply no one's place to force anyone else in society to take part in a process that they completely disagree with. How dare we?! It is laughable that we are willing to create a situation like that in our country and I hope the committee will see reason on this issue and recommend against the current proposal being pushed.

Kind Regards,

Simone Stuart

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