

From: [REDACTED]
To: [abortionlawreform](#)
Subject: Submission re proposed abortion law reform
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26 June 2016

Research Director
Health, Communities, Disability Service and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention
Committee

Re: Abortion Law Reform

I understand that the primary objective of this Bill is to decriminalise abortion in Queensland. Will this mean that abortion will become more 'available' as an option to women and families who may decide that they want a pregnancy terminated for any reason, at any gestational period?

I am not 'anti-choice', but I am very uncomfortable with the morality of the 'My Body, My Choice' camp. Perhaps the 'choice' should have been made much earlier than this, ie in the use of prophylactics. That would seem to be the wiser action. As it is, an unborn human must bear the consequence of poor choices that were made.

When does an embryo become acknowledged as more than just a collection of cells? That it is in fact a human being? It seems like splitting hairs to justify the decision for early-term abortions.

I, along with my husband, chose to continue carrying our Trisomy 18 baby back in 2013, contrary to medical advice and severe pressure from family. Trisomy 18 is a chromosomal condition that is usually considered fatal, or not compatible with life. The obstetrician offered abortion as a 'solution' or 'treatment option'. I had felt foetal movements, seen scans of my child and loved this child. While he was in my womb, he was in the safest place possible, he was nourished and he was very much loved. I ended up going into spontaneous labour and our baby was stillborn at 33 weeks. What a grievous and sorrowful time, and yet we have no regrets that we chose life, not death for him. I remember having to fight to have a palliative plan for him in case he was born alive. I remember saying through tears, 'He is still my child and it's my job to protect him.' It felt at the time that it would've been more convenient for everyone concerned if we had had the pregnancy terminated. Interesting that we 'terminate the pregnancy', when in fact it is the baby that is terminated.

Do we have any information about women, their physical, mental and emotional health post-abortion? Perhaps that should be brought to the table, especially in counselling sessions with those considering abortion. If women considering abortion were given appropriate support (options that include carrying baby to term), would that change things?

I wonder why abortion is seen as an option, sometimes as the only option. Is it often just a case of convenience? I understand first-hand that some circumstances are difficult, heart-breaking. But in standing up for our unborn child, we were prepared to weather the consequences. Does the fact that it is considered illegal actually deter people from making this choice? What would decriminalising abortion actually achieve? Is there a way it can be win-win for both mother and unborn-child?

The accepted standard to live by these days seems to be 'I can have a good time, so long as I don't hurt anyone'. Not a standard I particularly agree with. But 'My Body, My Choice' certainly hurts at least one person in the equation.

Yours sincerely,

Audrey Cullen

