

Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence
Prevention Committee

Parliament House
George Street,
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Members of the Committee,

I wish to register my opposition to the proposed '*Abortion Law Reform (Women's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill 2016*'.

The proposed Bill, in its current form, allows for abortion right up to the day of birth, for any reason. In light of recent and well-attested research, which confirms unborn babies can feel pain as early as 20-week's gestation, it is unconscionable that such a bill could even be considered in our society. In fact, I have heard it said that the measure of a society is found in how it treats its weakest members. Whether you agree with the sentiment or not, surely the barbarism and inhumanity inherent in late-term abortion should at least compel us to pause and seriously consider the type of society we would like to build and be a part of.

I, for one, would hope that it is not a society in which we view children in the womb of their mother—the weakest and most vulnerable members of our society—as expendable commodities; especially in light of our technological capacity to now see into the womb of the mother and observe the wondrous development of human life that occurs therein.

The proposed Bill is also concerning in that it removes any kind of protection or safeguards around abortion. Such a proposal has the potential to produce a dangerous medical health system that is sorely lacking in regulation. In fact, the proposed Bill removes the right of doctors and health care workers to conscientious objection. In a democratic society like Queensland we should respect the right of our citizens to act according to their beliefs and not force them to commit an act that would violate their conscience. Indeed, it is somewhat ironic that our politicians will be afforded the privilege to act in accordance with their conscience, while our doctors and health care workers will not.

It is also worth noting that despite the rhetoric in mainstream media, support for abortion is not as widespread as often supposed. In fact, the results of a comprehensive opinion poll conducted by leading independent market research firm Galaxy on 6–8 May 2016, indicated that the majority of Queenslanders (53%) either want the law to stay as it is, or are in favour of making it stricter—with only 39% of voters wanting it be less restrictive. When the question was asked, *Up to what stage of pregnancy would you allow*

abortion, 22% of Queensland voters said “not at all” and a further 50% said only up to 3 months—meaning that 72% of Queenslanders are opposed to abortion after 3 months. 85% are opposed to abortion after 20 weeks, with only 6% in favour. This means—and I think this is crucially important—the extreme position of the proposed bill is supported by only 6% of Queenslanders. These figures indicate a significant level of unease and opposition to the extreme and retrograde measures of the proposed Bill.

Moreover, it is vitally important to consider the impact of abortion on women. There is a growing body of international research, as well as an enormous amount of anecdotal evidence, that suggests abortion has long-term negative effects on women. These include the risks of physical harm associated with abortion, including premature delivery, infection, uterine perforation and miscarriage, pre-term birth, placenta praevia, and low birth weight in future pregnancies. There is also substantial evidence of psychological harm associated with abortion. This means, the proposed Bill, if adopted, will not only end the lives of countless young Queenslanders, but will also cause untold harm to the lives of Queensland women.

In light of all that is above, I urge you strongly to oppose the ‘*Abortion Law Reform (Women's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill 2016*’.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Schoenmaker

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