

To Whom This May Concern, including all members of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee,

I am writing to express my concern and to urge the committee to not support the *Abortion Law Reform (Woman's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill 2016*. I am deeply concerned that if this Bill is passed, it will increase the ease of access and availability of termination of pregnancies on demand, thus leading to more women facing the long-term risks and potential consequences of such procedures.

I am concerned that although the subtitle of the Bill is "Woman's Right to Choose", this in many cases is not a realistic occurrence, rather, in many cases, the woman is coerced into making the decision to abort the baby, either due to lack of adequate and appropriate information from health workers, family members, partners or other people of influence.

One area I am concerned and would like to highlight for consideration, due to often hearing it stated as a reason for support for abortion, is that of pregnancies as a result of rape, abuse or other sexual assault. I acknowledge that any of these acts is an extreme violation of the woman and they are a victim of crime. There is however studies which show that many women who have been victims of sexual crime, do not want an abortion and for those who did abort it only increased their trauma. Some statistics supporting this:

- 70% had their babies, and none regretted their decision.
 - 78% of those who aborted had regrets and said that abortion was the wrong decision.
- Victims and Victors (Springfield, Acorn Books, 2000) 19-20*

Studies also indicate that abortion makes a traumatic decision even worse (as evidenced and stated in the link below). There was a petition made to the Congress in the USA and State Legislators, from an Ad Hoc Committee of Women Pregnant by Sexual Assault. The petition is included at the end of the link, these women state in the petition:

'In many cases we felt pressured to abort by our family members, social workers, and doctors who insisted that abortion was the "best" solution. For many the abortion caused physical and emotional trauma equal to or exceeding the trauma or the sexual assault that our abortions were supposed to "cure."

<http://www.theunchoice.com/pdf/FactSheets/HardCases.pdf>

I would ask that the committee consider such facts and also consider cutting red tape to more positive alternatives to abortion, such as adoption.

Regards,

Peter Hockley