

REASONS TO OPPOSE DECRIMINALISED ABORTION

A response to the 'Abortion Law Reform (Women's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill 2016'

By Geoffrey Bullock

1. Most Queenslanders oppose the decriminalisation of abortion.

A randomised Galaxy telephone opinion poll of 400 Queensland voters (*What Queenslanders Really Think About Abortion*) was conducted from 6 to 8 May 2016, with 13 questions in total. The poll found:

55% agreed that abortion takes a human life

66% agree that the unborn is a person with rights at 20 weeks gestation

84% agree that abortion harms women's health

72% were opposed to late term abortions past 13 weeks

85% were opposed to late term abortions past 20 weeks

45% opposed, 38% agreed, 17% were unsure about abortions for non-medical reasons

49% opposed and 43% agreed with the decriminalisation of abortion

75% supported parental consent for abortions on minors

94% agreed that someone contemplating abortion should receive independent counselling.

2. The laws against abortion tell society of the seriousness of killing unborn children. Their removal from the criminal law tells them that this form of killing is morally trivial. Victorian Catholic Bishop Christopher Prowse wrote recently: "*Treating abortion like any other medical procedure under the Health Act betrays the majority view that holds that abortion is immoral even if it is not prohibited...*"ⁱ Laws have an educative role in society. Their very presence allows people to say: "don't do that! It's against the law." And they deter people from pressuring a woman to have an abortion against her will.

3. Queensland's present laws protect pro-life doctors and nurses. 73% of Australians support conscientious objection for health workers in regard to abortionⁱⁱ. Many doctors and nurses object to involvement in abortion practices. If there were no criminal sanctions against abortion, pressure could be placed on them to act against their consciences or lose their jobs.

4. Legalised abortion diminishes a woman's self-esteem and sense of responsibility. The evidence of this phenomenon is both measurable and increasingly apparent. Contemporary studies in Australiaⁱⁱⁱ, Finland^{iv}, USA^v, and New Zealand^{vi} confirm the detrimental effects on women from abortion. They feature increased rates of suicide; heightened use of alcohol & drugs; and severe depression. Many studies clearly demonstrate the link between abortion and breast cancer. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, late Professor of the Humanities in the history department at Emory University in Atlanta and one-time gender feminist, wrote: "...in severing the binding tie between women and the children they conceive, legalised abortion dismisses women from the company of responsible persons who are capable of sacrificing a piece of their freedom for the good of others – especially the children who embody our future."^{vii}

5. Decriminalised abortion disintegrates our idea of what it means to be human. The freedom to abort at will places one person at enmity with another. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese wrote: "*Among the many horrors of the Holocaust, the most dangerous lay in the attribution to one person of the power to decide whether another should live or die...At the extreme, then – and dramatically in a world of managed health care – abortion becomes the cutting edge of a war against our humanity*"^{viii}.

6. Decriminalisation of abortion severs relationships. If a woman has the right to dispose of her growing child, her desires may be opposed to the desires of the child and the child's father, as well as those of their extended family. The legal right to abortion denies a father's right to participate in the mother's decision to continue or terminate a pregnancy. It strikes at the very idea that a father has an interest in a mother's pregnancy despite being co-responsible for its life. This creates conflict between men and women and their children. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese again: *A mother's right to bear only the*

children she chooses puts the children on a very short leash: wanted one moment, they can never be sure of still being wanted the next.^{ix}

7. Decriminalised abortion legitimises cloning, infanticide and euthanasia. If pre-born children can be killed by the choice of another because of threat to one's personal desires, then other human beings in different scenarios can be killed on the same basis. Family members or government agencies can decide that the frail, terminally ill and disabled are a financial burden on society, or in the way of personal desires. Early-stage human beings can be used for experiments; infants can be done away with if found to have defects.

8. Decriminalisation of abortion legitimises partial-birth abortion. It is incongruous that children born prematurely are given all the help needed to survive, while those chosen by the mother to die can be killed just before normal birth under abortion on demand. Even the description of partial-birth abortion is horrendous:

The Dilation & Extraction method is barbaric. The birth canal is dilated and the baby is turned (1). Next the abortionist pulls the baby out with a forceps (2). He then delivers the baby's body feet first, leaving the head inside (3). Scissors are then inserted into the base of the skull of the live baby and spread to enlarge the hole (4). The brains are then sucked out with a suction catheter (5).

The difference between the D & X procedure and homicide is about three inches. If the head had also been taken out of the mother, the doctor would have a legal requirement to do all he can to save the child. But by leaving the head in, he can perform his "family planning" technique without fear of consequence.^x

I strongly urge the Committee to reject the Bill.

References

ⁱ <http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0.21985.23514003-5000117.00.html>

ⁱⁱ 'What Australians Really Think about Abortion' April/May 2005 p.1

ⁱⁱⁱ Kaeleen Dingle et al, World Psychiatric Association International Congress Melbourne 2007 – PP39

^{iv} <http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/313/7070/1431>

^v For many studies see www.afterabortion.org

^{vi} D. Fergusson et al 'Abortion in young women and subsequent mental health' JCPP 47(1):16-24, 2006

^{vii} E. Fox-Genovese in 'Cost of Choice: Women Evaluate the Impact of Abortion' ed E. Bachiochi

^{viii} E. Fox-Genovese *ibid*

^{ix} E. Fox-Genovese, <http://www.wf-f.org/04-3-Feminism.html>

^x <http://www.billmuehlenberg.com/2001/02/28/the-dx-abortion-method/>