

Submission to **The Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic Violence Prevention Committee**

Subject **Abortion Law Reform (Women's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill 2016**

Submission by Colin James Apelt

The primary objective of the *Abortion Law Reform (Women's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill 2016*, as outlined in the explanatory notes, is the removal of Abortion from the Queensland Criminal Code.

I understand that currently in Queensland, abortion is a crime under the Criminal Code but that section 282 provides a defence when the abortion was performed for the 'preservation of the mother's life'; and that section 282 has been interpreted by the courts as applying where the termination is necessary to preserve a woman from serious danger to her life, physical health or mental health, which continuation of the pregnancy would entail.

I submit that there must be no weakening of the current law concerning abortion. I am totally opposed to any change to the law in Queensland that proposes to remove Abortion from the Queensland Criminal Code, thereby removing all legal restrictions with respect to abortion.

An unborn child in the womb has the right to life, the most primary and fundamental of all rights on which all other human rights depend. Obviously, abortion denies that right to life absolutely to an innocent defenceless child in the womb.

The rights of a woman to choose an abortion must be weighed against this right to life of her unborn child.

Further, there is strong evidence that many women are harmed by abortion and that many suffer severe emotional and psychological distress that can be prolonged and, in some case, lifelong. In view of this, restriction of access to abortion can be considered as providing protection to some women who would be harmed by it in this way.

If the *Abortion Law Reform (Women's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill 2016* were to be enacted by the Queensland Parliament there would be no protection for health workers who have a conscientious objection to abortion and who would therefore refuse to take part in any aspect of the procedure.

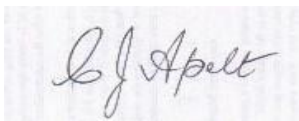
My convictions presented in the preceding points are not in any way affected by opinion polls. Nevertheless, the views of the people who elect the Members of Parliament and whom those Members should represent are relevant to an issue of such importance as that under consideration. From 6 to 8 May 2016 Galaxy Research conducted a randomised telephone opinion poll of 400 Queensland voters concerning their views on abortion.

In summary, this poll produced responses on the issues listed below

- 55% agree that abortion takes a human life

- 66% agree that an unborn foetus at 20 weeks has rights
- 84% agree that abortion harms women's health
- 72% oppose mid-term abortions after 13 weeks
- 85% oppose late term abortions after 20 weeks
- 45% oppose while 38% support abortions for non-medical reasons; 17% are unsure
- 49% oppose while 43% do not oppose decriminalisation of abortion
- 42% consider that the current law is about right
- 11% consider that the current law is not restrictive enough
- 39% consider that the current law is too restrictive

Submission by



Colin James Apelt

[Redacted contact information]

30 June 2016