

Submission to the Abortion Law Reform (Women's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill 2016 and Inquiry into laws governing termination of pregnancy in Queensland

Submission: 30 June 2016

To the Committee,

As a citizen of Australia, I ask you to please block the proposed Abortion Law Reform Bill (Women's Right to Choose).

Problems with This Bill

There are many reasons why I strongly oppose the proposed bill:

- The undercurrent of this bill is silence and definitions which do not form a basis of reality. The pro-abortion strategy is to give something a name which changes its definition, to make it 'morally acceptable'. However, these definitions are neither truth nor reality. To call a baby a foetus may make it palatable to kill it, however a baby is a baby. A human offspring is human from the point of conception, it's heart beats by 4 weeks, and it is viable outside of the womb during the timeframe in which this bill seeks to approve abortion. Abortion is called a 'medical procedure', yet this gruesome 'procedure' ends human life and is brutal and horrifying – in any other situation it would clearly be termed 'murder'. It is easy to argue about abortion in the midst of the silence that inevitably occurs because the babies are not given a voice to express what they are feeling, nor do we hear their cries of pain and agony when they are being destroyed within the womb. The womb is silent, the voice of the child is silent, and the terms are used to try to minimise human guilt and misrepresent reality. It is very easy to disregard something when it's definition is changed, and it is silenced – we are not seeing the reality of abortion and this needs to be the starting point for all discussion on abortion and its legislation.
- This bill highlights the supposed rights of a woman to choose, however how can we discuss human rights when the rights of the child are not at all taken into consideration. If the woman has the right to choose, so too does the child. The child in question has the right to life. While there are often extenuating circumstances for which more support should be provided, often abortion is used as nothing more than a contraceptive

afterthought by irresponsible couples or individuals. The demand for abortion is in many cases, a justification for selfishness and irresponsibility. The affirmation of these character traits within our society is neither beneficial to individuals, communities or our nation. People should always be required to take responsibility for themselves – this is a character trait, on the other hand, which endlessly benefits individuals, communities and our nation.

- Babies in the womb have been proven to feel pain and in actual fact it is likely that they feel even greater pain due to the stage of development in their nervous system. This is also evidenced by the fact that babies attempt to move away from the abortionist. Would anyone in this committee like to have their body sliced apart limb by limb? It is an entirely barbaric practice and it has no place in the society of any nation... particularly a nation considered to be progressive and civilised.
- There is absolutely no difference to life in the womb and life outside of the womb. It is all life. If a baby can be born prematurely and live, yet another baby at the same gestational age can be butchered, torn apart piece by piece (aka abortion), how can this be considered acceptable? If that same premature baby was born and placed in a humidicrib – and then someone took that baby out of the crib an hour later and stabbed it to death, this would be a criminal offense. Why would the same action an hour earlier, not be considered a criminal offense?
- The devaluing of human life within our community has a flow on effect which is not often considered. It contributes to mindsets related to family violence, and to the self-destructive behaviours exhibited by youth. The valuing of human life within all areas of society begins with how society values the most vulnerable of life – life in the womb.
- The government is bound to consider the costs to the nation of abortion and the legalisation of this bill. No financial amounts can be attributed to the depth of human suffering through post-abortion grief and emotional suffering, which often leads to women who become unproductive in society and in many cases to suicide. These all have a flow on financial effect to the community.

Alternatives to this Bill

There are a number of alternatives which should be considered as an alternative to this bill:

- To block this amendment bill and also to consider restricting the current laws, to reduce the accessibility of abortion.
- To bring a message of value, life, significance and purpose to our culture, through school curriculum and the media. This will also have the effect of young people valuing themselves in greater measure and the incidence of unplanned pregnancy will most likely go down.
- Overhauling school-based sexual education programs and media messages pertaining to sexual education to remove abortion from being described as a viable contraception option. Also to promote abstinence as a viable option, until such time as a woman is in a loving and supportive relationship with the means to sustain a pregnancy and raise a child.
- Provide greater pregnancy support services, which truly support women to be able to continue their pregnancies where they otherwise may not have been able to.
- For women who want to proceed with abortions, to walk through a legally required process before an abortion can occur. This process should include:
 - Watching abortion footage and seeing photographic images of abortions and filmed interviews of women who have suffered with traumatic stress post abortion, to ensure the woman is fully aware of what is to take place and also the associated risks to her mental health.
 - The requirement that a woman must first see her baby on a three dimensional scan, before making a decision.
 - Abortion to be unavailable based on the recommendation of a single doctor.
 - A cool down period of at least 14 days before any abortion can be booked, to give women the opportunity to make an informed and well thought out decision.
- The government needs to move on from the mistakes of the past regarding adoption and reform the adoption process in Australia. There are many loving parents willing to adopt babies, but with an adoption process almost impossible in Australia, it appears to many as 'far easier' to simply abort a child. Adoption needs to become a viable option, with a far easier and more accessible process, and pregnant women with

needs or no support should be supported to the point of having and adopting out their babies. This preserves life, maintains a value for life within our culture, and gives the birth mother an opportunity to connect with her baby over the course of its life, rather than suffering with post-abortion guilt and stress over the knowledge that she chose to end her child's life.

Proposed Committee Action

The government is in the position of needing to make the best possible decisions for the outcome of the nation. It is important to both:

- a) Accurately gauge and reflect public opinion regarding abortion. T
- b) Adequately investigate the industry of abortion within Australia both relating to babies and mothers, and to present a fair and accurate picture as to what it entails, and the effects the industry is having on our nation and its people.

The opportunity to provide submissions regarding this bill is largely fulfilling the first requirement, to accurately gauge and reflect public opinion regarding abortion. However the second form of research – investigating the industry itself and its effect on our nation and its people – is not adequately being fulfilled. I propose that in order to adequately investigate this bill and provide an informed recommendation, the following be done:

- Each committee member be required to watch either a live or a video of a late-term abortion to see exactly what is happening in abortion clinics and what it involves. If this is, as it is suggested, nothing more than a medical procedure, this should present no problem.
- Each committee member be required to consider the photographic evidence of aborted babies before deciding upon a recommendation.
- The committee to be required to interview women who have previously had abortions, children or adults who are abortion survivors, families who decided not to abort babies they had been planning to, and counsellors who have worked with women who have had abortions, before making recommendations.

This is the only way to gain a clear and accurate representation of the reality of abortion and the possible effects of this bill.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the government is responsible to make a fully informed decision which is in the best interests of the citizens of this nation – both born and unborn – and one which is made from a position of clearly investigating the full reality of abortion.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission to the committee and also for your consideration of what I have presented.

Ainsley Shepherd