

Research Director  
Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
Brisbane Qld 4000

29 June 2016

Dear Sir /Madam

In terms of my submission to this Committee on the proposal to legislate abortion with no apparent limits as proposed in the Bill by Mr Pyne, I would ask the Committee to consider the following issues in their deliberations and consider the facts and not just rigid ideological positions pitting the child's rights against the mothers.

With the benefit of science, we know vastly more about foetal viability and that babies in utero are not "things" but living beings on the journey to personhood. The stages of foetal development are well known with some gestational landmarks listed as follows:

- 16 weeks - genital organs clearly differentiated, grasps with hands, swims, kicks, turns, somersaults, (still not felt by the mother.)
- 18 weeks - vocal cords work – can cry.
- 20 weeks - has hair on head, weighs one pound, 12 inches long.
- 23 weeks - 15% chance of viability outside of womb if birth premature.\*
- 24 weeks - 56% of babies survive premature birth.\*
- 25 weeks - 79% of babies survive premature birth.\*

(\*Source: M. Allen et. al., "The Limits of Viability." *New England Journal of Medicine*. 11/25/93: Vol. 329, No. 22, p. 1597.)

I believe the science which demonstrates the viability of babies at even the earlier stages of pregnancy informs the debate and issues facing this Committee. An approach that does not consider the interests of the unborn child as a viable being would be to ignore scientific facts. Any decision to legalise abortion and particularly without any limits effectively means the state is extinguishing any rights of the unborn with no due regard to that life. If babies are born prematurely then every effort is rightly made to save them but if this proposed legislation is approved then the state will sanction the killing of others within the womb. It is not logical or indeed an ethical base for decision making. The state has a duty to consider the rights of all human beings especially those who are unable to speak for themselves.

In considering these issues, I also would ask the Committee to consider whether there are other ways of supporting women with a difficult or unplanned pregnancy. Are there means of providing support so

abortion does not have to be the ultimate outcome. Can funding be increased to assist women and provide a number of options before them while providing them with support and assistance. The abortion of an unborn child always ends with the extinguishing of a life and there may well be other options that have not been considered. Our society should provide greater support to women who face these decisions.

I would also ask the Committee to consider the post-abortion impact on women and whether other alternatives would reduce the significant emotional and health impacts that can occur as a result of abortion.

I wish the Committee well in their very grave deliberations as it is an issue that directly impacts on the lives of Queenslanders and many future unborn children.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Yours faithfully

Fraser Power