

29th June 2016

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing to ask you to reject the bill that was introduced in Queensland government, to legalise abortion up until full term in our state. This bill does not reflect what the majority of Queenslanders thinks about abortion.

████████████████████ has some great information.

Such as:

- When the question was asked, Up to what stage of pregnancy would you allow abortion, 22% of Queensland voters said "not at all" and a further 50% said only up to 3 months – meaning that 72% of Queenslanders are opposed to abortion after 3 months
- **85% are opposed to abortion after 20 weeks, with only 6% in favour. It is important to note that Rob Pyne's extreme position is supported by only 6% of Queenslanders.**
- The research also showed that 45% of Queenslanders are opposed to abortion in cases where a healthy mother is carrying a healthy unborn baby, with 38% in favour.
 - We know that the vast majority, an estimated 97%, of abortions are performed for financial or social reasons, not for medical reasons. **So even in the first three months, support for abortion is highly conditional.**

In 2015 there were 27 babies born after 20 weeks gestation in Queensland due to failed abortions and then left to die (and 200 in the last 10 yrs just in Queensland¹). They were not offered medical treatment because they were meant to be aborted. How is this right? And this is without the laws being further loosen to allow abortion up to full term.

A baby born at 21 weeks of gestation is able to survive (approx. 20% chance I believe) outside the womb given medical care, and that goes up to 70%+ at only 24 weeks. Yet these babies weren't offered any medical care.

Having lived in Victoria up until 3 ½ yrs ago, I saw my state legalise abortion up until full term, approx. 9 yrs ago and **"Since the law was changed in Victoria, late-term abortions being performed in the Royal Women's Hospital in Melbourne have risen by 500%** - from one a fortnight to three a week. This has put great stress on hospital staff." Abortionrethink.org

Having personally known many woman, and friends, who had abortions due to fear of the future and often due to fear of relationships breaking down, I've seen the effects of abortion first hand. It is scary facing a life changing situation, esp. one that is unplanned. But to make decisions out of fear is dangerous, giving woman support in these situations, healthy options such as adoption or raising the child is healthy.

There needs to be stronger support systems in place for people facing unplanned pregnancies (and even those who planned but later changed their minds), and better education for teenagers. The fact is sex can cause pregnancy. Yet kids are taught "use protection, but if that fails you can still get an abortion" this was the case even going back to the 90's when I was a teenager.

When I was 17, I fell pregnant, and I remember so clearly the pressure from society, "you're ruining your life", "abortion would be make it go away", although I never wanted to have an abortion, the idea was there constantly for the first 12 weeks, and although the idea of facing parenthood at the age of 18 as a single mum scared me – I am so glad I had my little girl. At the same time, friends I knew were being pressured into having an abortion, thinking they were just helping the young girl,

but one of them choose to stand her ground and had her baby in her teens also. She became a wonderful mother.

Being a parent at a young age wasn't easy (is it ever easy?), in fact there were really hard times, but I m so grateful that I choose to keep my daughter [REDACTED]. Because of her, I worked hard to get my act together and I stopped the self-destructive behaviour to be the best mum I could for her.

My daughter is now almost 17, and has had a hard time the last few years, but I love her so much and am so glad that I made the decision to have her.

(on a side note, what does this tell our kids that are conceived in unplanned situations, that they shouldn't be here, that their life isn't valuable? But my daughter and each of these children conceived in unplanned situations does matter, there life is worth living.)

Another thing, keeping abortion as an option up until 9 months makes it so much harder for woman to accept the decision they've made and prepare for the future. It was hard enough making the decision and if this law gets passed that pressure will continue (both due to fear of the future and others who don't want her to have the baby) on pregnant woman for the whole nine months.

Back to my experience in Victoria, other people I know had abortions because of pressure from boyfriends, parents, doctors even (and people say "it's her choice".. really?). And there were some who even because of convenience (one was 18 weeks pregnant at the time). I have other friends who like myself were born to parents at young ages, one's mother was 14, my dad was 15, and another was 16 when she had her first. These people are amazing people, successful in life, and yet society would have told their parents today to abort them.

Nowadays we can see exactly what abortion is and what it does to a baby, a few decades ago they didn't have the knowledge or the technology we have today. To allow abortion during pregnancy at any stage but especially after 12 weeks is to ignore the advances in technology and hold to a view that is outdated. We have also seen the effects: short and long term on woman who've had abortions such as:

Physical effects of Abortion on woman

- Abortion related infections can cause sterility. Researchers have reported that 3 to 5 percent of aborted women are left inadvertently sterile as a result of the operation's latent morbidity. The risk of sterility is even greater for women who are infected with a venereal disease at the time of the abortion.
- Women who acquire post-abortal infections are 5-8 times more likely to experience ectopic pregnancies.
- Cervical damage is another leading cause of long term complications following abortion.
 - Whether microscopic or macroscopic in nature, the cervical damage which results during abortion frequently results in a permanent weakening of the cervix. This weakening may result in an "incompetent cervix" which, unable to carry the weight of a later "wanted" pregnancy, opens prematurely, resulting in miscarriage or premature birth. According to one study, symptoms related to cervical incompetence were found among 75% of women who undergo forced dilation for abortion.
- Cervical damage from previously induced abortions increases the risk of miscarriage, premature birth, and complications of labour during later pregnancies by 300 - 500 percent.
- In addition, premature births, complications of labour, and abnormal development of the placenta, all of which can result from latent abortion morbidity, are leading causes of handicaps among newborns.

- Looking at premature deliveries alone, it is estimated that latent abortion morbidity results in 3000 cases of acquired cerebral palsy among newborns each year.

[REDACTED]

Physiological effects

The above website lists many psychological problems with woman who've had abortions:

- “Women who have undergone post-abortion counselling report over 100 major reactions to abortion. Among the most frequently reported are: **depression, loss of self-esteem, self-destructive behaviour, sleep disorders, memory loss, sexual dysfunction, chronic problems with relationships, dramatic personality changes, anxiety attacks, guilt and remorse, difficulty grieving, increased tendency toward violence, chronic crying, difficulty concentrating, flashbacks, loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities and people, and difficulty bonding with later children**”

Just a few more facts about how abortion hurts woman:

- 31% of women having abortions report suffering physical health complications
- 10% of women having abortions suffer immediate, potentially life-threatening complications
- Women have a 65% higher risk of clinical depression following abortion vs. childbirth
- 65% of women suffer symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) after abortion
- Women's death rates from various causes after abortion are 3.5 times higher than after giving birth
- Many women describe their experience as 'a nightmare', which can hardly equated with 'choice'. 60% of women surveyed after abortion responded that: '*Part of me died*'
- Suicide rates among women who have abortions are six times higher than those who give birth
- Abortion increases a woman's risk of future miscarriages by 60%

[REDACTED]

Thanks for taking the time to read my submission, and I ask once again that you reject this bill. As now a mother of 4 beautiful kids, married to a wonderful man, and having had a great career doing what I loved. I can say that an unplanned pregnancy is not the end of the world, it's the start, it's a chance to get your life on tract, you may start your family earlier, but they are worth it 100%!