

Friday, 30 September 2016

Inquiry Secretary

Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee

Parliament House

Dear Secretary,

I respectfully submit a response to the proposed Health (Abortion Law Reform) Amendment Bill 2016 on behalf of the Gympie Branch, Cherish Life Qld.

In the explanatory notes for the Health (Abortion Law Reform) Amendment Bill 2016, under the heading, **Brief statement of the way the policy objectives will be achieved by the Bill and why this way of achieving the objectives is reasonable and appropriate**, Mr Pyne refers to the Queensland Clinical Guideline for Therapeutic Termination of Pregnancy and notes that “practices in Queensland around medical termination of pregnancy are inconsistent and confusing”. Having referred to the guideline, it seems to me that there is little that is confusing or inconsistent in it. If practices are otherwise, it is because the guideline is not being followed carefully.

Mr Pyne asserts that the passage of his bill will “ensure that processes followed are clear and uniform”; however, the only reference to a procedure for responding to a request for the termination of a pregnancy is for patients who are more than 24 weeks pregnant. There is nothing in the Bill about the abortion of unborn children who are less than or equal to 24 weeks. Does this mean that doctors may abort any unborn infant simply at the request of the mother?

Yet when a pregnant woman presents to a doctor with the request for an abortion, the doctor has two lives to deal with, the woman and the unborn child. The core responsibility for a doctor is to act always for the healing and wholeness of the patient. Abortion is the deliberate killing of an unborn human being. For doctors to have integrity when committing an abortion, there must be very sound medical reasons to justify this act, not simply that the mother has requested the termination.

For this reason, the proposed bill fails by its own stated intent: it provides no standards to ensure that processes for the termination of pregnancies are clear and uniform.

I conclude with the same paragraphs as in my previous submission:

The law with regard to abortion needs to be just and compassionate, demonstrating care and protection both to pregnant women and to their unborn children. If the law is to be amended, it should serve that end. That 15000 women have abortions each year in our state is a tragedy. The proposed amendment is simplistic and will do nothing toward lowering the number of abortions each year; rather, it may well cause an increase. It provides no protection at all for the unborn who are less than 25 weeks.

Any changes to the law should equally give worth and protection to both pregnant women and to unborn human life from conception to birth.

Yours sincerely,

Ross Davies

President, Gympie Branch, Cherish Life Qld.