

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Abortion Bill](#)  
**Subject:** Abortion Law Reform Amendment Bill 2016 (2) Submission  
**Date:** Monday, 3 October 2016 11:21:21 PM

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

Dear Committee

**Re: Abortion Law Reform (Women's Right to Choose) Amendment Bill 2016 (2)**

Further to my earlier submission (June 2016), I wish to advise that like many other concerned citizens, I oppose the Bills introduced by Mr Pyne and remain firmly against unrestricted access to abortion services.

My concerns with aspects of Bill 2 are outlined below:

- **an abortion on a woman who is more than 24 weeks pregnant** may be performed only if two doctors reasonably believe the continuation of the woman's pregnancy would involve greater risk of injury to the physical or mental health of the woman than if the pregnancy were terminated.

**Response:** There is no medical reason to perform abortion after 24 weeks of pregnancy, as there is never a situation in which a viable unborn baby needs to be killed to save the mother's life. For example, if the mother has a serious condition such as pre-eclampsia (the symptoms of which include high blood pressure and fluid retention) and the pregnancy needs to be ended, the best way to do this typically is by caesarean section which would result in the health issue being resolved quickly, the mother recovering and her baby being given every chance to survive with the best neo-natal care. There is no need to put the mother's health further at risk by the necessary delay involved in performing a late-term abortion through feticide, which involves killing the baby in the womb by an injection of potassium chloride into the heart, and then inducing labour whereby the mother delivers a dead baby several days later.

If a mother wants to end a late-term pregnancy, there is no reason why the baby has to be killed in the process. There are plenty of infertile couples who would love to adopt an unwanted baby. There are long adoption waiting lists in Australia, and last year there were only 54 adoptions of Australian-born children to non-relatives. This is due in large measure to the fact that approximately 80,000 unborn children are killed by abortion in this country every year.

**There should be an absolute ban on all late-term abortions. This is supported by 85% of Queenslanders.** In fact, 72% of Queenslanders also are opposed to mid-term abortions past 13 weeks of pregnancy (Galaxy poll, May 2016).

- **patient protection or 'safe zones':** a protected zone of at least 50 metres must be declared around an abortion facility; certain behaviour, e.g. harassment and intimidation, or "a protest by any means", is prohibited within a protected zone. Publishing images of a person entering, leaving or trying to enter or leave an abortion facility is prohibited.

**Response:** No one would support women being harassed or intimidated. However, this latest Pyne Bill would make it an offense to peacefully protest, or perhaps even to pray, within 50 metres of an abortion facility. This abrogation of freedom of speech, expression, movement and religion is an affront to our democratic rights. It is interesting the Bill describes proposed no-protest zones around abortion clinics as "protected areas". Of course, there is no protection

inside abortion clinics for either mother or baby, as with every abortion, the toll is one dead, one wounded.

- **a woman does not commit an offence** by performing, consenting to or assisting in an abortion on herself.

**Response:** Few people want a woman who has had an abortion to go through a second trauma of being charged with an offence and endure a trial, even if she is not convicted. However, the reality is that **in the 117 years of this law's existence, no woman who has had an abortion has ever been jailed or even convicted**. She is typically not charged because her testimony is needed to convict the abortionist in any prosecutions which are brought (invariably arising from a complaint by the patient).

Section 225 of the Criminal Code should be retained as it acts as a deterrent to a woman taking the dangerous course of obtaining abortion drugs and self-administering them to herself without any medical supervision.

#### **Other perceived deficiencies in the Bill**

*The law on abortion should have safeguards for women and particularly be addressing a woman's right to know. Ninety-four percent of Queenslanders believe that before having an abortion, a woman should receive free independent counselling and information on the development of her unborn baby, the nature of the procedure, the physical and psychological risks of the operation and the alternatives of keeping the baby or adoption, so that she can make a fully informed decision.*

This Bill is seriously deficient in that it does not address any of these issues.

This Bill should include a requirement for mandatory independent counselling before abortion, including the provision of an informed consent booklet similar to the one provided to women seeking an abortion in the ACT between 1999 and 2002, which included information on the nature of the procedure, the physical and psychological risks of abortion, the development of the unborn child, alternatives to abortion and support agencies. There was a mandatory cooling-off period of 72 hours or 3 days.

These requirements co-existed in the ACT Health Act alongside the law in the Crimes Act under which an abortion was legal only if a doctor was satisfied that the woman's life or physical or mental health was in serious danger from carrying on the pregnancy.

As for parental consent, 75% of Queenslanders believe this should normally be required for girls under the age of 16 to have an abortion. Of course, 16 is the age of consent in so far as sexual relations are concerned. It is outrageous that under current case law, Queensland parents have no rights at all in deciding whether their under-age daughters can or should have an abortion. It is totally unacceptable that this has been taken out of the hands of parents. In normal circumstances, they should be involved in the decision-making process on such a major life decision. The statute law needs to be changed to give parents their rights back, so they can protect their daughters from the harm of abortion.

Thanking you in anticipation of your favourable consideration of my submission on behalf of those most vulnerable human beings who cannot speak for themselves.

Sincerely

Margaret Farley

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3 October 2016