

Research Director

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

Parliament House

George Street

Brisbane Qld 4000

6 October 2016

The provisions of the second Bill should be passed ONLY in conjunction with the proposed first Bill. By themselves, they are not acceptable. I urge the Committee to recommend that both bills are debated and voted on together as a package on the floor of parliament, to reflect the intent of the two pieces of legislation.

Response to second Bill.

1. only a doctor may perform an abortion: a person who is not a doctor (or a registered nurse administering a drug to perform an abortion under the direction of a doctor) would commit an offence.

If this is what it takes to get the first Bill through, I support it. Please keep in mind, however, that abortion is a simple, safe procedure.

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

Supported. No Police or Government should ever again be able to charge a woman for getting her own abortion (as occurred in Qld in 2009).

3. 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

Supported

4. conscientious objection: no-one is under a duty to perform or assist in performing an abortion; however a doctor has a duty to perform an abortion if it is necessary to save a woman's life or prevent serious physical injury. Also, a registered nurse has a duty to assist in such circumstances.

Supported with the proviso that if a doctor or nurse has a conscientious objection to performing an abortion, they must refer the woman to another doctor or nurse.

5. 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, is prohibited within a protected zone. Publishing images of a person entering, leaving or trying to enter or leave an abortion facility is prohibited.

Supported as long as the protection zone is extended to at least 250 metres. A protection zone of 50 metres will not protect women from the abuse and bullying they currently experience.

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