

Elizabeth LeMoyne  
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Dear Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee,

I made a submission to the committee when they were previously considering the bill and would refer members of the committee there for those opinions and insights.

Due to time constraints, I have chosen to quote a man whose opinion I deeply share. Russell M. Nelson is a world renowned heart surgeon and Apostle of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. While I am sharing only part of his words for the sake of brevity, the full article can be found here: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2008/10/abortion-an-assault-on-the-defenseless?lang=eng>

In World War I, more than 8 million military fatalities occurred. In World War II, more than 22 million servicemen and women died. 2 Together, these two wars, covering portions of 14 years, cost the lives of at least 30 million soldiers worldwide. That figure does not include the millions of civilian casualties.

These data, however, are dwarfed by the toll of another war that claims more casualties annually than did World War I and World War II combined. Worldwide reports indicate that more than 40 million abortions are performed per year.

This war called abortion is a war on the defenseless and the voiceless. It is a war on the unborn. This war is being waged globally. Ironically, civilized societies that have generally placed safeguards on human life have now passed laws that sanction this practice.

Concern for the health of the mother is a vital one. But circumstances in which the termination of pregnancy is necessary to save the life of the mother are very rare, particularly where modern medical care is available. Another concern applies to pregnancies resulting from rape or incest. This tragedy is compounded because an innocent woman's freedom of choice was denied. In these circumstances, abortion is sometimes considered advisable to preserve the physical and mental health of the mother. Abortions for these reasons are also rare.

Some argue for abortion because of fear that a child may have a congenital malformation. Surely the harmful effects of certain infectious or toxic agents in the first trimester of pregnancy are real, but caution is needed in considering the termination of a pregnancy. Life has great value for all, including those born with disabilities. Furthermore, the outcome may not be as serious as postulated.

I remember well a couple who endured such an experience. The woman was only 21 years old at the time—a beautiful and devoted wife. In her first trimester, she contracted German measles. Abortion was advised because the developing baby would almost surely be damaged. Some members of her family, out of loving concern, applied additional pressure for an abortion.

[The couple chose to allow] their child to be born—a beautiful little girl, normal in every respect, except for total hearing loss. After their daughter's evaluation at a school for the deaf, the parents were advised that this child had the intellect of a genius. She attended a major university on a scholarship. Now some 40 years later, she enjoys a wonderful life.

To deny life to an individual because of a possible handicap is a very serious matter. Policy consistent with that logic would dictate that those already living with such deficiencies should likewise be terminated. One more step in that tragic train of thought would lead to the conclusion that those who are either infirm or inconvenient should also be eliminated. Such irreverence for life would be totally unthinkable!

Relatively few abortions are performed for the special circumstances to which I have referred. Most abortions are performed on demand to deal with unwanted pregnancies. These abortions are simply a form of birth control.

Elective abortion has been legalized in many countries on the premise that a woman is free to choose what she does with her own body. To an extent this is true for each of us, male or female. We are free to think. We are free to plan. And we are free to do. But once an action has been taken, we are never free from its consequences.

To understand this concept more clearly, we can learn from the astronaut. Anytime during selection or preparation, he or she is free to withdraw from the program. But once the spacecraft has lifted off, the astronaut is bound to the consequences of the previous choice to make the journey. So it is with people who choose to embark on a journey that leads to parenthood. They have freedom of choice—to begin or not to begin that course. When conception does occur, that choice has already been made.

Yes, a woman is free to choose what she will do with her body. Whether her choice leads to an astronaut's mission or to a baby, her choice to begin the journey binds her to the consequences of that choice. She cannot "unchoose."

When the controversies about abortion are debated, "individual right of choice" is invoked as though it were the one supreme virtue. That could only be true if but one person were involved. The rights of any one individual do not allow the rights of another individual to be abused. In or out of marriage, abortion is not solely an individual matter. Terminating the life of a developing baby involves two individuals with separate bodies, brains, and hearts. A woman's choice for her own body does not include the right to deprive her baby of life—and a lifetime of choices that her child would make.

Nearly all legislation pertaining to abortion considers the duration of gestation. The human mind has presumed to determine when "meaningful life" begins. In the course of my studies as a medical doctor, I learned that a new life begins when two special cells unite to become one cell, bringing together 23 chromosomes from the father and 23 from the mother. These chromosomes contain thousands of genes. In a marvelous process involving a combination of genetic coding by which all the basic human characteristics of the unborn person are established, a new DNA complex is formed. A continuum of growth results in a new human being. Approximately 22 days after the two cells have united, a little heart begins to beat. At 26 days the circulation of blood begins. 10 To legislate when a developing life is considered "meaningful" is presumptive and quite arbitrary, in my opinion.

#### Adoption

Why destroy a life that could bring great joy to others? There are better ways of dealing with an unwanted pregnancy. Adoption is a wonderful alternative to abortion. Both the baby and the adoptive parents can be greatly blessed by the adoption of that baby into a home where the child will be lovingly nurtured.

Queensland currently has the country's best and most advanced laws in this regard, not the worst and most backwards. Any change in them to allow more foeticide would be heartrendingly tragic.

Kind regards,



Elizabeth LeMoyne