

9/10/2016

To the Health Committee,

Health (Abortion Law Reform) Amendment Bill 2016

As a Registered Midwife and Nurse I am writing to you to express my deep concern about the Second Abortion Bill introduced by MP Rob Pyne.

The proposed amended Private Bill still attempts to legalise abortion in Queensland and suggests loosely-defined eligibility tests that are open to potential abuse. Furthermore, the bill nominates a gestational limit of 24 weeks, which is beyond known fetal viability.

1. Abortion decriminalisation sends the wrong message

Abortion is fundamentally a Human Rights Issue. Civilized societies restrict an individual's freedom to choose whenever that choice would harm the innocent party. If abortion is removed from the Criminal Code the message given to society is that this form of harm (killing) is morally trivial.

The U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (the most ratified of all the United Nations Human Rights treaties) affirms and describes the fundamental human rights of all children (all human beings below the age of 18). There is no stated "starting" point of a child, only the ceiling of 18 years of age. If there is uncertainty regarding when human life begins, the Law must err on the side of caution and preserve life.

The existing Queensland law does not prevent women seeking abortion to obtain one, nor has a woman ever been jailed or convicted in the 117 years the law has been in place. Whilst the current law is far from perfect, it acts appropriately by protecting life and aims to prevent harm to women.

2. Objective guidelines are required within any proposed Bill

The Pyne Bill does not provide strict objective guidelines for doctors, opening the potential for misuse by rouge operators. Indeed, it is fanciful to assume that this loop-hole would not be abused.

Recommended mandatory safeguards could include:

- professional counseling provided by a therapist of neutral stance
- a cooling-off period
- legal informed consent
- the two doctors (mentioned in the Bill) must not be known to one another nor colleagues within in the abortion industry

Abortion must not be viewed as an act of empowerment for women. Rather, it should be availed only if absolutely *and presently* necessary.

The proposed amended Private Bill sends the wrong message about decriminalisation, has loosely-defined eligibility tests that are open to potential abuse and ignores current known gestational fetal viability.

I sincerely ask that you to oppose this Bill.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Kramer'.

Mrs Sandra Kramer

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