

Termination of Pregnancy (Live Births) Amendment Bill 2024

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To the Secretary; Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee

I am writing this email as I am deeply disturbed by the plight of our youngest Queensland humans who are left to die following a failed abortion. As you would know, abortion has been legal in Queensland from conception to full-term since the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 came into effect. Queensland laws are notably different to similar laws in South Australia and New South Wales, as the Queensland Termination of Pregnancy Act offers no recommendations for a child who is born alive as a result of an abortion procedure.

On the 20th March 2024, Robbie Katter MP, Member for Traeger, introduced the Termination of Pregnancy (Live Births) Amendment Bill 2024 into the Queensland Parliament and referred it to the Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee for examination. The committee is required to report on its examination of the Bill by 20 September 2024.

The Bill seeks to codify recent changes in the Queensland Health Clinical Guidelines which now recognise the need for comprehensive care for babies born alive following termination procedures. Under 5.4.3 **Born with signs of life**, it states, “Live birth following a termination of pregnancy is an uncommon outcome. If a baby is born with signs of life, provide care appropriate to the individual clinical circumstances and in accordance with best practice guidelines.”

These updated guidelines recognise the importance of providing appropriate medical care and attention to all newborns in line with New South Wales and South Australian legislation and in accordance with international human rights standards.

The Bill seeks to clarify the legal and ethical obligations surrounding the medical care of babies born alive during termination procedures. The Bill carries significant weight from a human rights perspective. Indeed references taken from The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The Convention on the Rights of the Child and The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights all recognise the rights of the child.

- **Article 6 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights** asserts the inherent right to life and states that “everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person.”
- Similarly, **Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child** recognises the right of every child to the highest attainable standard of health and calls for the provision of necessary medical care and attention to newborns.
- **International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, in Article 12**, emphasises the right of everyone to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. This includes the provision of medical care and necessary social services to ensure the well-being of individuals, including newborns born as a result of termination procedures.

It is unfathomable and incomprehensible to me that a newborn baby is permitted to experience a cruel, torturous and sometimes agonisingly long death, alone and without comfort. If this treatment was delivered to an adult or to other newborn babies, there would be absolute outrage.

Robbie Katter seeks to right this great injustice and states, “The bill protects right to life; the protection from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; the protection of families and children; and right to health services.” (<https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/opinion/deshoughton/qld-mp-robbie-katter-calls-for-human-rights-of-babies-born-alive-after-abortions/news-story/051fdd6d9fe9e3a87229944aa1fe7a9f>)

I cannot contemplate that any reasonable human could allow this cruelty to occur. To leave a newborn baby alone to die a most torturous death is beyond my understanding. I implore you to rectify this barbaric treatment of these babies, who have just as much right as any human to receive appropriate medical care.

Yours sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.