




Speech By  
**Ray Stevens**

**MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH**

---

Record of Proceedings, 16 October 2018

**TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY BILL**

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (6.56 pm): It is a fact that there are between 10,000 and 14,000 legal abortions performed every year. No-one has been charged. People have not been criminalised. As the member for Mermaid Beach, I believe that there is great support for the decriminalisation of abortion by most members. The fact of the matter is that Labor has packaged this bill up as a decriminalisation of abortion when 10,000 to 14,000 abortions per annum have not been treated as criminal activity. In other words, what we have seen here is a clever manipulation of the media in relation to what this bill is really all about in terms of changing some of the very important parts. I refer to the gestational limit of 22 weeks. On my maths—I am pretty ordinary at it—that is about 5½ months. That is a very late time, even for someone as illiterate in these matters as I am, to be condoning terminations of pregnancy for social reasons.

I will be opposing this bill based on my conscience. Even my good wife said to me in conversation, 'You have to vote for decriminalisation.' When I explained to her the minutiae of the bill she said, 'That's not right. That's not fair. That should not happen.' I had representatives of women's refuge groups come to see me—I spoke with them in a full, frank, open and supportive manner—in support of decriminalisation, and they said, 'I hope this does not go down the tube on political grounds.' It is my belief that it will not go down on political grounds. The Labor Party has 48 members in this House and can expect support from two of the minor party or Independent members. That gives them three votes to play with, and up to three Labor members will probably vote against the bill. That is just my Nostradamus prediction.

This has been a minor issue in my electorate of Mermaid Beach. I have had a few calls. Most of those have been to the effect, 'Ray, you are going to vote no.' I have had a couple of calls—only a couple—asking me to support the bill to pass through the House.

I would support the member for Mudgeeraba, who gave a wonderful speech here today, in terms of decriminalisation. As I said to the women's refuge group, a bipartisan approach—as we have done on many other issues that have come to this House—would have reached an outcome that suited the House and it would not have come down to an 'us and them' mentality which the government currently has put forward to the House—that is, either for or against. That is not the way forward for a good outcome for the women of Queensland, in my view. I am very disappointed that this has been packaged the way it has been and I certainly will be voting against it. I would like to see this issue come back to the House in a better form in terms of decriminalisation that is properly organised and put together by a bipartisan group to ensure that it receives appropriate attention, rather than this little tricky piece of Labor legislation that we see before the House tonight.

I understand that these matters will be going on for further debate, but from the point of view of the Mermaid Beach electorate and from my personal conscience view, I will definitely be voting against this bill for those reasons.