

DR ROBERT POLLNITZ

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Senate Finance and Public Administration Committees
Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600
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**Re - Health Insurance Amendment (Medicare Funding for Certain Types of Abortion)
Bill 2013**

I write to express my support for this Bill tabled by Senator John Madigan.

I have cared for newborn babies in major teaching maternity hospitals for over thirty years, and I listen to many women who have had or are considering an abortion. My experience is that Australians in general have conflicted views on abortion – some reasons are considered acceptable and some are not. Over ninety per cent of those who speak to me are opposed to abortions on the basis of gender (sex selection), similar to the numbers opposed to late-term abortions on social grounds.

The notion that some ethnic groups who have a cultural preference for male children should be funded to abort their female children is gender discrimination and is simply not acceptable in Australia. When I am asked to perform female genital mutilation even in its mildest form on newborn babies I firmly refuse, explaining to ethnic parents that this action is both illegal and totally contrary to Australian values. I hold the same strong view against sex selection abortion, including for the trivial purpose of “family balancing”.

I support genuine attempts by United Nations agencies to end the practice of gender selective abortion in our Asian neighbours, noting reports that over 160 million female babies have been lost through abortion and infanticide. I read that the One-Child policy in China continues to result in forced abortion and infanticide and sterilisations, all crimes against humanity. It is reported that each year Australia gives over \$20 million in overseas aid to fund abortions, with Bob Carr promising an extra \$70 million to UNFPA over the next 4 years, which in these tight times feels like another waste of my tax money.

My understanding of the Medicare system is that services are required to be genuinely medically necessary rather than merely being items of personal preference. I see this as another reason for our Parliamentarians to support gender equality and to vote in favour of this Bill.

Yours sincerely,

DR ROBERT POLLNITZ