

To the Honourable President and the members of the Senate assembled:

I call on you to support the “Health Insurance Amendment (Medicare Funding for Certain Types of Abortion) Bill 2013”, which would stop the Medicare funding of pregnancy terminations sought purely on the basis of the child's gender.

Sex-selective abortions may be used for 'family balancing' purposes or within particular cultural groups in Australia, where female children are seen as less preferable to male children. There are significant concerns regarding these practices in the medical communities of countries like the UK, Canada and the USA.

By allowing such practices to be funded by Medicare, the Government is essentially endorsing the practice of sex-selection - an action which is in direct contradiction to the work UN agencies do to stop gender selection practices. Women obviously seek a termination of pregnancy for a multitude of reasons, and in the referral process, a woman may just as easily substitute a more acceptable reason than sex-selection for seeking an abortion. Some may argue that this would render such an Amendment as you are currently considering futile. However, I wish to suggest that the laws of our country play a part in articulating the identity of our nation, including our values and priorities. Passing this Amendment would send a clear message to the world (and our own citizens) that as a nation, we do not condone gender based discrimination.

I'm sure you will consider this matter extremely carefully.

Thank you for your service of our nation,

Yours sincerely,
Mrs. Sarah Backholer