



CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE
of VICTORIA & WAGGA WAGGA
INC.



Social Questions Committee

The Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee,
P.O. Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Submission on the "Health Insurance Amendment (*Medicare Funding for Certain types of Abortions*) Bill 2013.

The Catholic Women's League was instituted in 1916 by a group of professional women who saw the need to bring about social changes for women, children and families. Amongst these women were Medical Drs, Lawyers, Educationalists, Nurses and Trade Union members. Our organisation continues today to follow in the footsteps of these women.

As a women's organisation we fully support Senator Madigan's Bill. We believe that it is totally unacceptable to use Medicare funding for sex selection abortions at any stage during a pregnancy be it a boy or a girl child.

In stating 'at any stage during pregnancy' we believe that even under the current law, Medicare funding for abortions can be manipulated using the terminology "D&C". Therefore we believe that any Dr who performs a sex-selection abortion should be held accountable by whatever means is available to the AMA.

We oppose the use of IVF to provide sex selected children to those who wish to use this avenue to obtain a child of a specific sex.

With regards to ethnic groups in Australia having preference for a male child, we believe that now that they are living in Australia conditions are quite different from that of their home land and so there is absolutely no circumstance which could or should support sex selection preference for the boy child over a girl child.

When parents call for gender selection abortions to balance families one has to question what they actually mean by 'family-balancing'. Consider this effect on siblings of the same sex when mothers/fathers or both becomes obsessed with the need for a girl child or a boy child to balance the family. Rather than a sex selection abortion when the desired child suddenly becomes unwanted because of its sex, it must be acknowledged that abortion won't fix the problem. Surely professional counselling would help in this situation.

At the Commission on the Status of Women meeting held at the United Nations in New York this year it dealt with the issue of 'violence against women'. It, along with other UN agencies wants to end the discriminatory practice of gender-selection through implementing disincentives for gender-selection abortions. Australia should support such measures by introducing legislation which would prevent Medicare payments for such abortions.

The United Nations estimates that as many as 200 million girls are missing in the world today. This means that there are no longer 200 million fewer change-makers, leaders, parliamentarians, mothers, doctors,

teachers, wives, sisters, aunts and grandmothers. The commodification and objectification of women as the 'disposable' gender has led to sex trafficking, child abduction and an increase in violence against females.

Reports indicate that approximately 160 million women have gone missing in Asia alone.

We know that in both China and India the female child is aborted due to a preference for the male child. This has led to a huge gap in the natural order of female to male numbers in both countries to the detriment of both men and women.

Medical associations in first world countries have great concern about the practice of gender-selection abortion, viz. Canada, USA and the UK. All information on this issue is freely available on the internet.

Yours faithfully,
Madge Fahy
Social Questions Committee