
On instruction from the Board of the Australian Christian Values Institute, I wish to submit the following to the Senate Finance and Administration Committee on the Health Insurance Amendment (Medicare Funding for Certain Types of Abortion) Bill 2013.

1. The Australian Christian Values Institute finds the use of Medicare funding for the purpose of gender-selective abortion unacceptable, as do most Australians. We note that Galaxy polling in Tasmania showed that 92 per cent of 300 respondents did not agree with gender-selective abortion. The Adelaide Now survey showed that of 1692 respondents, 82 per cent voted against the question, "Should parents be given the legal right to choose the sex of their baby?" A Melbourne University study involving 2500 respondents showed a disapproval rating of 80 per cent for gender-selective abortion. It follows that the high level of opposition to gender-selective abortion in the community would flow-on to a high level of opposition to Medicare funding for this purpose.
2. The practice of aborting babies on the basis of their sex has long been known in China, India and some other countries where boys are considered more favourable than girls. Studies overseas in first world countries similar to Australia, such as the UK, have shown birth rates for boys and girls vary noticeably according to where their mothers were born. This suggests that the practice of gender-selective abortion can migrate from one country to another, and there is no reason why Australia should be immune from this.
3. Medicare should not be used to fund gender-selection abortions simply for the purposes of family balancing. It is not a public good necessity. Such individual-choice family balancing causes wider imbalances across communities. For example, the United Nations estimates that up to 200 million females are demographically missing.
4. ACVI supports campaigns by UN agencies to end the discriminatory practice of gender-selective abortions, through implementing disincentives for gender-selective abortions. Gender-selective abortion is discrimination against women in one of its most extreme and painful forms.
5. ACVI shares the concern of medical associations in first world countries such as Canada, UK and the USA about the practice of gender-selective abortions. Although Australia lacks abortion statistics transparency, it has all the trigger factors to conclude that there is at least the genesis of a serious social problem. If it is not addressed, designer-babies in modern, affluent communities like Australia will become the norm, with serious demographic problems in the future.

John Miller
Parliamentary Liaison Officer
Australian Christian Values Institute