

---

With reference to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee Inquiry into Senator John Madigan's "Health Insurance Amendment (Medicare Funding for Certain Types of Abortion) Bill 2013, I wish to express my deep concern at the level to which our society has descended in that some people even consider, tolerate and accept sex-selection abortions, let alone support their being funded by Medicare.

However, for the central purpose of this Inquiry, at the outset I make the pertinent observation that, though no records are kept in Australia of Medicare-funded sex-selection abortions, there is some evidence from doctors these are happening. Such evidence in itself is more than sufficient reason to ban Medicare funding for sex-selection abortions. Furthermore, there is no obligation on mothers pursuing an abortion to reveal that "sex-selection" is the reason for the abortion, whereas this could be their real purpose.

Alarm bells should ring after a couple in Australia sought a referral to abort their 19-week-old baby daughter when they saw the ultrasound, "reasoning" they already had a girl. Yet they proceeded with their next pregnancy (presumably a boy) upon viewing the ultrasound. This is clearly open discrimination against girls - a practice prevalent in India and China where baby girls are majority victims in gender-selection abortions. The above-described Australian case has been referred to the Medical Board of Australia.

It is significant that, in a February 2013 Galaxy Poll of 300 Tasmanians conducted for EMILY'S VOICE, 92% declared they disapproved of sex-selection abortions. Even more striking is that 97% of young people aged 16-24 years were opposed (whereas 61% of those responding supported abortion).

In research done by the Adelaide Sexton Marketing Group for Southern Cross Bioethics Institute, of respondents who were even "strongly pro-abortion" 82% believe sex-selection abortions should not be legal. 85% of that SAME GROUP see sex-selection abortions as morally unacceptable. It is significant how these statistics are from the most adamant abortion supporters. Of course, the less adamant supporters of abortion back them up: 91% of those "somewhat pro-abortion" oppose legalising sex-selection abortions while 95% of this group believe sex-selection abortions are morally unacceptable. These high figures vastly expand the comparatively high percentages of responses from those who are "strongly anti-abortion" or "somewhat anti-abortion". When this wide array of Australians (both for and against abortion) rejects legalising sex-selection abortions, it is logical to conclude they would be opposed to Medicare funding of them.

It is not possible here to describe the numerous other documented cases and statistics that can be added to the above to confirm the universal majority trend against sex-selection abortions. Suffice it to say this trend is a patently clear message for Australia that Medicare Funding for sex-selection abortions should be banned.

Peter Phillips,