

**Subject:** Surrogacy Inquiry  
**Date:** Friday, 22 January 2016 5:39:36 AM

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To: Committee Secretary  
House of Representatives  
Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

From: Jennifer Lahl  
President  
The Center for Bioethics and Culture Network

Date: January 21, 2016

RE: Inquiry into surrogacy

We are women and men of diverse ethnic, religious, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds from all regions of the world. We come together to voice our shared concern for women and children who are exploited through surrogacy contract pregnancy arrangements.

Together we affirm the deep longing that many have to be parents. Yet, as with most desires, there must be limits. Human rights provide an important marker for identifying what those limits should be. We believe that surrogacy should be stopped because it is an abuse of women's and children's human rights.

Surrogacy often depends on the exploitation of poorer women. In many cases, it is the poor who have to sell and the rich who can afford to buy. These unequal transactions result in consent that is under informed if not uninformed, low payment, coercion, poor health care, and severe risks to the short- and long-term health of women who carry surrogate pregnancies.

The medical process for surrogacy entails risks for the surrogate mother, the young women who sell their eggs, and the children born via the assisted reproductive technologies employed. The risks to women include Ovarian Hyper Stimulation Syndrome (OHSS), ovarian torsion, ovarian cysts, chronic pelvic pain, premature menopause, loss of fertility, reproductive cancers, blood clots, kidney disease, stroke, and, in some cases, death. Women who become pregnant with eggs

from another woman are at higher risk for pre-eclampsia and high blood pressure.

Children born of assisted reproductive technologies, which are usually employed in surrogacy, also face known health risks that include: preterm birth, stillbirth, low birth weight, fetal anomalies, and higher blood pressure. A surrogate pregnancy intentionally severs the natural maternal bonding that takes place in pregnancy—a bond that medical professionals consistently encourage and promote. The biological link between mother and child is undeniably intimate, and when severed has lasting repercussions felt by both. In places where surrogacy is legalized, this potential harm is institutionalized.

We believe that the practice of commercial surrogacy is indistinguishable from the buying and selling of children. Even when non-commercial (that is, unpaid or “altruistic”), any practice that subjects women and children to such risks must be banned.

No one has a right to a child, whether they are heterosexual, homosexual, or single-by-choice.

We stand together asking national governments of the world and leaders of the international community to work together to end this practice and **Stop Surrogacy Now**.

See more at: <http://www.stopsurrogacynow.com/the-statement/>

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