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Bill C-233: The Sex Selective Abortion Act

CURRENTLY:

- ◆ The Canadian Medical Association, medical professionals, and research has indicated that sex selective abortions are a problem in Canada.
- ◆ Sex selective abortion occurs in Canada because we have no law against it.

WHAT IS THE SSA ACT?

- ◆ This bill amends the Criminal Code to prohibit a medical practitioner from knowingly performing a sex selective abortion. The bill includes a directive for guidelines to be established on how information on the prohibition on sex selective abortion is provided by a medical practitioner to pregnant persons.
- ◆ The bill couldn't be clearer. Sex selective abortion happens in Canada and this bill seeks to address this inequality by penalizing it.

HAVE YOUR SAY!

I encourage you to contact the Hon. David Lametti, Minister of Justice, to make him aware of Bill C-233 and to voice your support. Mail the attached letter, postage-free, back to my office. My staff will forward your response to the Minister.

WHY INTRODUCE THE SSA ACT?

- ◆ The practice of terminating a pregnancy solely on the grounds of the sex of the child values one sex over the other and is therefore a form of sex-based discrimination.
- ◆ Sex selective abortion is not permissible in a society that advocates for equality of the sexes. Adopting appropriate legislation to end discrimination against any person based on sex is part of Canada's commitment to advancing human rights. The bill addresses inequality between the sexes in its earliest forms.
- ◆ While polls suggest that a majority of Canadians support access to abortion, 84% of Canadians oppose sex selective abortion.
- ◆ In Canada, sex selection is already illegal in the case of embryos under the *Assisted Human Reproduction Act (2004)*, section 5(1)(e). In order to expand this protection to all pre-born children, a criminal prohibition should be added to the Criminal Code.
- ◆ Canada is not alone in identifying this problem and must join many other countries that have policies and laws on sex selection.
- ◆ Sex selection abortion is a Canadian problem. We must act now to enact measures that condemn this practice and make it clear that Canada values women and equality. If there is even one female pre-born child who is terminated because of her sex, we need to act.



Dear Minister Lametti;

I would like to draw your attention to Private Members Bill C-233, the *Sex Selective Abortion Act*, because I believe it deserves your consideration and support.

Bill C-233 would amend the Criminal Code to make it an offence for a medical practitioner to knowingly perform an abortion when the reason is the sex of the pre-born child. It also includes directives for guidelines to be established on how the prohibition on sex selective abortion is communicated by medical practitioners to pregnant persons.

Canada is committed to the defence of human rights at home and around the world. However, abortion performed on the basis of sex values one sex over the other and is a form of sex-based discrimination. Sex selective abortion is inconsistent with our commitment to the protection of equality rights, and occurs in Canada because we have no law against it. Ending discrimination on the basis of sex is a crucial part of Canada's efforts to promote and protect human rights, as reflected in its laws and international commitments. Therefore, I urge you to support bill C-233.

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