

‘Harmful amendments’ slammed by gender equality and human rights groups

Fair Agenda and the Human Rights Law Centre have slammed proposed amendments to the South Australian *Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2020*, saying they will undermine compassionate and accessible healthcare.

“The proposed law is about supporting peoples’ autonomy, dignity and wellbeing. The proposed amendments would undermine that. They are unnecessary and would make it harder for many women to access compassionate and timely healthcare,” said Renee Carr, Executive Director, Fair Agenda.

“Abortion is healthcare and it’s time for the South Australian Parliament to be on the right side of history and treat it accordingly. The amendments proposed to date are harmful and clearly designed to frustrate people’s reproductive freedom. This reform should be passed without amendment,” said Monique Hurley, Senior Lawyer, Human Rights Law Centre.

The proposed laws already passed the upper house of the South Australian Parliament in December last year and are [supported by 32 medical, legal and community organisations](#).

Quote opposing amendments seeking to remove the requirement for doctors who ‘conscientiously object’ to transfer the care of a patient to someone who doesn’t hold the same objection:

“A patient’s ability to access the care they urgently need shouldn’t be contingent on the personal beliefs of their health practitioner. For some patients, rejection by a health practitioner without transfer of their care to another doctor, or without being provided information about how to find a doctor who doesn’t hold the same objection, will be an insurmountable obstacle to getting the healthcare they need,” said Renee Carr, Executive Director of Fair Agenda.

Quote opposing amendments seeking to put a ban on sex-selective abortion that punishes doctors who provide abortions that might be sought on sex-selective grounds:

“Abortion bans are one of the many tools used by the anti-abortion movement to create barriers to accessing safe abortion healthcare. In practice, any ban would create an expectation that doctors police a patient’s reasons for needing abortion care to try and rule out sex-selection as a motivation. It’s an untenable position for doctors; and increases the likelihood of healthcare discrimination against people who need abortion care,” said Monique Hurley, Senior Lawyer, Human Rights Law Centre.

Quote opposing amendments seeking to limit the grounds on which patients can access abortion care they need after 22 weeks and 6 days in pregnancy:

“The patients and families who need abortion care after this point in pregnancy are facing a range of deeply personal, difficult and distressing circumstances, which can vary significantly. They may be a victim-survivor of incest, rape or family violence and have had their access to care obstructed. The small proportion of patients whose circumstances mean they need care at this point deserve a compassionate response, not further obstacles to accessing the care they urgently need,” said Renee Carr, Executive Director, Fair Agenda.

Quote opposing amendments seeking to introduce a requirement for doctors to provide every patient with information on counselling:

“This reform is about respecting the right of every person to control their bodies and lives. Everyone must be able to make decisions about their own bodies without interference, including whether or not to seek counselling about a medical procedure,” said Monique Hurley, Senior Lawyer, Human Rights Law Centre.

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