

Dear members of the Senate Committee ,

I would like to write to support the proposed amendment to the Health Insurance Act regarding the removal of medicare funding for sex-selection abortions.

Performing sex-selection abortions can have a profound impact on the well-being of our society.

There is a substantial body of evidence that demonstrates that sex-selective abortion is occurring overseas. In India for example, the decennial Indian census reported that the male/female birth ratio was 109.4/100 in 2011 (2). In China the sex ratio at birth has been reported as high as 120/100 in some provinces (2). According to a United Nation report there is evidence that Sex-selective abortions are occurring in at least Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, South Korea, India, Serbia, Belarus, Bosnia, Cyprus, Hong Kong & Singapore (1,2).

Many would argue that there is no evidence that sex-selection abortion is occurring in western developed countries. An interesting experiment carried out by an American activist group called "Live Action" involved actors presenting to Planned parenthood clinics and asking for a sex-selective abortion. The findings were controversial but demonstrated that in fact sex-selective abortions were occurring and that staff of planned parenthood not only knew that they were occurring but facilitated and encouraged their occurrence (4).

As Senator John Madigan pointed out, if sex-selection is occurring overseas, it is highly likely that it will be occurring locally in Australia. Whilst local Australian born mothers are unlikely to identify with the cultural reasons why sons are preferred to daughters, Sex selection abortions is likely to be occurring because Australia is highly multicultural in make up and receives a constant stream of immigrants with a substantial proportion coming from Asia and India (3). In fact it is difficult to conceive of a situation in which sex-selective abortions are not occurring in Australia as it is unlikely that those who grew up in other cultures where one gender is preferred would drop their values as soon as they reached Australian soil.

Furthermore whilst the practice of abortion itself is an ethically difficult topic, sex-selection abortions carries additional ethical problems as it is almost always discriminatory to women as is evident by the sex ratio at birth statistics. In a modern society that places such a great emphasis on gender equality, it is astounding to consider that this degree of discrimination would ever be supported by our nations laws.

I wish you all the best in your considerations of this amendment. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further enquiries.

Yours Sincerely,

Nichita Gavrilesco

1. The Economist : The World Wide war on Baby Girls <http://www.economist.com/node/15636231>
2. UN Data: Sex Ratio at birth <http://data.un.org/Data.aspx?d=PopDiv&f=variableID%3A52>
3. Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship: Key Facts about immigration <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/02key.htm>

#### 4. Live Action: Sex-Selection in

America [http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=U2H3ZDnBtuw#!](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=U2H3ZDnBtuw#!)