

9/6/06

To the Senate Inquiry,

I am writing to express deep concern over the Australian community's continued hostility to the rights of unborn children.

Since responsibility was removed from the Minister for Health for the approval of the abortion drug, RU486, counseling lines have been set up providing compassionate support for women to continue their pregnancy. These need to be open about their policy of not referring women on to have an abortion, for the sake of transparency and integrity, however they should exist and continue to receive support from the Federal Government.

The popular rhetoric about 'a woman's right to choose' has always deliberately ignored certain facts about pregnancy and choice for women. I am a woman – we are not (excluding sexual crimes against us) hapless victims when it comes to pregnancy. Women have two important choices that are our rights, upheld by law.

The first right of choice is to abstain from sexual intercourse. This choice is, of course, unpopular, but recognizes the fact that *sexual intercourse is designed, from a biological point of view, for conception and reproduction!* This IS a true right of women, and ought not ever be violated, as our criminal code has always made explicit in its punishment of rape and sexual abuse. Participating in 'recreational' sex without falling pregnant ought not be considered a right – but this is the unspoken demand behind the demand that abortion be available.

The second is to use, or insist on the sexual partner using, contraception. Most contraceptive strategies are effective, and freely available. Again, to avoid pregnancy while enjoying sexual activity is possible with contraception, but our law ought to end the fallacy that it is a *right*. At the moment, the laws that permit abortion to be fairly accessible to ordinary women bow to the idea that sex ought to be enjoyed recreationally without the natural consequence of reproduction being encountered! This reasoning is against logic, but its more serious flaw is that it overrides genuine human rights – the right of an unborn infant.

The age of the infant in utero is not the determining factor in its being human. While one infant is being killed through an abortion, another infant of the same age may be being operated in to save its life. This is the wonder and horror of medicine, and shows a deep inconsistency in our attitude towards the unborn infant. It seems that we do not consider a foetus' value to be intrinsic and inviolable, but rather, we consider its value to be relative to our priorities and agendas. If a woman desperately wants to have a successful pregnancy and give birth to a healthy child, then it is worth doing everything possible to save that unborn child. If a woman desperately wants to escape her pregnancy and the responsibility of raising a child, then it is no problem to destroy that unborn child. This hypocrisy is so wrong, and must come to an end – we must put our laws in reverse and begin to uphold the human rights of every unborn child – the most basic right being to live.

“Pro-lifers’ are NOT Anti-Choice – they are Pro-Responsibility. Women who conceive are usually jointly responsible for their conception. Please do not paper over this fact with propaganda about abortion being a right! It is manifestly *not* a right in the sense that any other human right is. Most particularly because to exercise this ‘right’ is to utterly obliterate the rights of the most innocent and vulnerable party, something that the law should never ever do.

Yours sincerely,

Emma West