

I can not comprehend how a modern government can propose to introduce legislation to deny women a basic human right. The right to choose where the one of the most personal, intimate and beautiful experiences of a woman's, and her partner's, life can occur. The right to seek information and make an informed choice about her own body, safety and welfare, and that of her unborn child.

I can not comprehend the motives behind removing the choice of homebirth with an experienced and qualified independent midwife for Australian women. Is it out of concern for women and their babies welfare? I think not. Australian statistics on homebirth and hospital birth do not show homebirth to be any more risky for mother and baby than in a hospital, if anything the statistics favour homebirth. If safety was the motive for removing homebirth as a legitimate birth option for Australian women, why are elective caesarean sections (where there is no medical indication for the procedure) still legal? There are many more dangers involved with major abdominal surgery, for both mother and baby, as opposed to the natural process of vaginal birth. If you remove the option to birth at home with a midwife, some women will still refuse the hospital system. They will freebirth, give birth at home without the presence of a medical assistance. This will be more dangerous. Thus if safety was the primary motive, it is flawed.

So this leads one to ponder why is homebirth singled out as a 'bad' or illegitimate birth choice? Why would the AMA support elective caesarean sections, but not homebirth? The answer appears to be quite simple. Money. There is too much money to be made by scalpel mongering surgeons, by hospitals. The hell with supporting a calm, natural introduction to the world, when there is money to be made. Please don't let this be the reason that Australian women are robbed of the opportunity to choose how they bring their baby into the world. Please don't deny Australian women the right to choose their caregivers throughout their pregnancy and birth. Please allow independent midwives to continue their wonderful work.

Imagine the public outcry if elective caesarean sections were removed as a legitimate choice for Australian women. Imagine if the option of hospital birth was removed due to insurance legislation, and every woman was forced to give birth at home. Every woman should be entitled to choose how they give birth. Every woman should be able to choose to give birth where they feel comfortable, be it in a hospital, a birthing centre, at home, with an obstetrician, or with a midwife. Every woman should have the right to research their options and make an informed decision as to which birth option appeals to her and her situation. Every woman should have the right to be able to make decisions for the welfare of their unborn child. Every woman should have the right to decide what medical procedures are performed on their body. Homebirth is a product that a lot of Australian women demand. Yes, there is only a small proportion of women in Australia who do choose to homebirth, but if only one woman per year wanted to give birth at home then shouldn't she be entitled to that right? Australian women currently pay in the vicinity of \$5000 to have a midwife care for them throughout their pregnancy, and present in their home during birth. This is not a decision made lightly by women and their partners. This is a decision based on what they feel is right for their body and baby. This is a decision based on the desire to choose how they give birth, how much if any monitoring occurs during labour, and the right to privacy and surrounding oneself with trusted caregivers who will not pressure or augment the birthing process (unless requested or there is a medical indication). Please do not take this choice away from Australian mothers, fathers and babies.

Regards,

Aspiring independent midwife, and pregnant mother due to homebirth November

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Lisa Drury