

The Senate get conscience vote on Medicare funding for abortions

On September 17, 2008 the Senate will vote on a motion to remove medicare funding for second trimester medical termination of pregnancy in cases where

- a) the fetus has died and/or
- b) there has been a diagnosis of gross fetal abnormality and/or
- c) the pregnant woman has a life threatening illness.

This motion has been proposed by anti-choice Tasmanian Senator Guy Barnett. His aim is to remove Medicare item number 16525 that is specifically there to assist the small number of women who have a very much wanted pregnancy but, tragically, a nonviable one.

This is a cruel move against women with a wanted pregnancy, coping with the shock and distress of being told that either their pregnancy is very unlikely to proceed or, if it does, their baby is unlikely to survive. Women with a life threatening illness may be forced to continue the pregnancy even if it places their lives in further danger or treatment will cause damage to the fetus.

It is not up to politicians to determine what they think is the best medical treatment for women. That is the role of doctors in consultation with their patients. This Medicare item number exists to enable doctors to provide the specialist care that pregnant women in this situation may need.

As this is a disallowance motion it comes into effect if it passes through the Senate. It does not need to go to the House of Representatives. Could you and your organisations please contact Senators to oppose this motion.

For the full list of Senators contacts go to
<http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/senators/index.htm>