

## The Proposed Abortion Legislation

Dr Catherine Hallagan, spokesperson for the New Zealand Health Professionals Alliance is hugely disappointed at the proposed Abortion Legislation Bill released by Cabinet today.

Dr Hallagan says that Abortion must remain in the Crimes Act because, at some point, killing a child is a crime. It should remain a crime to kill a baby in utero, unless the grounds for abortion are met as defined in the Crimes Act 1961. This is the most fundamental justice issue.

Hallagan says that abortion should also stay in the Crimes Act because it is completely different from other medical and surgical procedures. The purpose of an abortion is to kill a human being who is small and vulnerable. It is not a health treatment in the usual sense.

Minister Little says that Cabinet wants to “modernise our abortion law.” Hallagan says it’s not “old-fashioned” to keep abortion within the Crimes Act. Human biology has not changed. A pregnant woman in 2019 carries her child in utero, just like pregnant women carried in past generations.

Hallagan says that if Parliament decriminalises abortion there will be no criminal protection for the child before birth. A qualified abortionist will be allowed to perform abortions with no criminal sanction. There will be minimal scrutiny of the abortionist’s actions.

Hallagan is dismayed that the new abortion law will allow abortion on request until full term. The ‘well-being’ grounds under which a health professional can approve an abortion are so broad that virtually any request could be acceptable eg if a woman is unhappy with the gender of her baby on a scan, she could lawfully have her son or daughter aborted. What a travesty of antenatal care!

New Zealanders detest the fact that some babies are abused after birth. We know that the violent death of one baby, in their home or in care, is one death too many. Yet this Coalition Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Ardern, plans to introduce a radical abortion law into Parliament, which, if passed, will inevitably result in more deaths.

If Parliament moves away from the presumption that it should protect human life, by putting abortion into another Act, it weakens the legal protection guarding a vulnerable life, especially one whose significance before birth is disputed.

### Ends

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