



MEDIA RELEASE

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CATHOLIC CHURCH LEADERS EXPRESS CONCERN OVER ABORTION BILL

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The Catholic Church in South Australia has expressed its concern over the Termination of Pregnancy Bill introduced to the Legislative Council this week.

Archbishop of Adelaide Patrick O'Regan and Bishop of Port Pirie Diocese Greg O'Kelly SJ said the removal of current safeguards would further increase the rate of abortion on demand and put vulnerable women at greater risk of economic and social coercion.

"We believe the focus of politicians should be to improve emotional, financial and systematic supports so women are wholly supported," Archbishop O'Regan said.

"The feedback from counselling services is that many women are struggling with the decision to keep their baby because of external pressures, anxiety about how they will cope and fear of being a parent.

"The impact post-abortion can be ongoing disappointment, anger, abandonment and subsequent mental health issues."

The bishops said the provision for abortions to take place from 22 weeks and six days up until full term, with the approval of two medical practitioners, was deeply concerning.

"When we see babies being delivered at around 23 or 24 weeks with excellent health outcomes and at the same time expect doctors to end the life of an unborn baby from this gestation age, what message does that send to the community about the value of life?" Bishop O'Kelly asked.

"When we say that a late term pregnancy with medical complications can be ended, what message does that give to people with disabilities and their contribution to society?"

The bishops reiterated the belief of Christians in the sanctity of life from conception to death and the importance of speaking up for those whose voices cannot be heard.

"As Pope Francis has said, abortion has become part of the new 'throwaway culture'. This bill, which treats abortion as a medical procedure without moral significance, is further evidence of that dangerous trend," Bishop O'Kelly said.

"Allowing abortions up until the time of birth seems to be of very little difference to infanticide."