



MEDIA RELEASE

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Liberalised Abortion Laws Will Undermine Child Abuse Message

Family First NZ says that any attempts to make abortion more available will undermine the "*It's Not OK*" message and will legitimise child abuse of the unborn child.

"It is impossible to say with any integrity that a child that has been born should be protected from child abuse but if it is still in the womb, that it is suddenly legitimate," says Bob McCoskrie, National Director of Family First NZ. "The value of a child should be upheld from conception – hence the desire to warn women about issues such as fetal alcohol syndrome and the harm of smoking while pregnant."

"The proposal being pushed by Labour MP Steve Chadwick also fails to acknowledge both the advances in technology which has shown the development of the unborn child in the womb, and the growing body of research suggesting the harm done to women by having an abortion."

"It is incorrect to label this as 'pro-choice', because nobody chooses to be in the situation of an unwanted pregnancy and having to make such a difficult decision."

A University of Otago study in 2008 found that women who had an abortion faced a 30% increase in the risk of developing common mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. Other studies have found a link between abortion and psychiatric disorders ranging from anxiety to depression to substance abuse disorders. And the Royal College of Psychiatrists in the UK recommended updating abortion information leaflets to include details of the risks of depression. They said that consent could not be informed without the provision of adequate and appropriate information.

"With 98% of abortions in NZ being performed on the basis of the mental health of the mother, it is time that the research on the post-abortion mental health outcomes was made known to women so that they can make an informed decision."

Family First NZ is calling for a law which requires informed consent - including ultrasound - for all potential abortions, and counselling to be provided only by non-providers of abortion services. Parental notification of teenage pregnancy and abortion should happen automatically except in exceptional circumstances approved by the court.

"Child abuse is not ok – ever," says Mr McCoskrie. "Liberalised abortion laws will send the completely wrong message about the way we value children."

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