

***Interview with Bernie Finn, President of March for the Babies / re a decision by a Melbourne clinic to no longer offer late-term abortions.***

Katherine: Last week in Victoria an abortion clinic decided to stop offering late-term abortions. Pro-life activists are welcoming the decision and president of *March for the Babies* Bernie Finn joins me now to talk about the story. Welcome to the program.

Bernie Finn: Good-day Katherine, how are you?

Katherine: Good. Now, tell me, how did this decision come about? Why did this clinic decide to stop late-term abortions?

Bernie Finn: I suspect that it has something to do with their insurance, because they have had a run of some tragic and appalling incidents with women, where abortions had gone wrong and I think ... well, can abortions ever be right I suppose ... but they've gone wrong for the women and one, at least one that we know of, has died recently. And I think the insurance company has said no more, and without the insurance companies, of course, no medical practitioner can continue with whatever they're doing no matter how grizzly.

Katherine: How significant is this in the context of abortion providers in Victoria? Are they the only 24-week plus abortion provider?

Bernie Finn: Well sadly, they're not. They're the only private one. But in terms of late-term abortions in Victoria, we have at most public hospitals throughout the state, the ability to kill babies beyond the 20 and 24 weeks.

In fact, just last year the Royal Women's Hospital here in Melbourne announced that, as a result of the passing of the Abortion Law Reform Act here in Victoria in 2008, which allows abortion right up until the moment of birth, their late-term abortion rate has increased by 600%!

So if a woman wants an abortion at any time, for any reason, here in Victoria, she can get one. So the fact that this particular clinic is no longer performing late-term abortions, unfortunately, and very sadly, probably won't have much of an impact on the number of babies being killed.

Katherine: Still though, as this issue has brought to light the harm that can happen with performing late-term abortions, also for women...

Bernie Finn: Oh, absolutely, absolutely. We constantly hear from the pro-abortion lobby that having an abortion is safer than actually having a born child; having a live child, which we now know, and always knew, was a total nonsense and I go back to my speech in the Parliament back in 2008 when I spoke against this Bill at length. And back then I read out the warning sheet from Planned Parenthood to any woman who was about

to have an abortion and she had to sign a form indicating that she understood that one of the dangers of abortion was, in fact, suicide. Such would the impact have on her psyche! So we now know that as we've always known, that abortion's very bad for babies. I don't think there's any doubt about that. But we also now know that abortion is very, very often very bad for women as well. At our March for the Babies last year here in Melbourne our slogan was, "Save the Babies, Help the Mothers, Change the Law". And that's, I suppose, the three-pronged tack that we've taken on here in Victoria and we're pursuing that.

Katherine: What has this story meant in the public's view? Have you been able to gauge the public's reaction to the story that's happened at this particular clinic over several months with some issues coming out and with this woman dying? Has people's opinion of abortion changed, do you think?

Bernie Finn: Well I think that there is a fundamental misunderstanding in the general community of the nature of abortion in Victoria. I don't think that there are a lot of people that have actually realised that abortions are being performed as late as six months and beyond, as happened in the case of this particular abortion clinic, this late-term abortion, but I think the case last year where the twins were aborted - one was a healthy baby, the other one was not a healthy baby, and the healthy baby, they had decided needs to be killed. Why I don't know, but the unhealthy baby needed to be killed, and they killed the wrong one. And they had to the next day kill the unhealthy one as well.

So both twin boys were killed. I think that's had some impact on the psyche of the community in terms of abortion, but I still think there's a lot of people who don't actually realise that here in Victoria you can actually have a baby killed right up until the moment of birth and indeed in certain instances, as we've seen from a number of reports, some babies who have survived what are called 'failed abortions', they're actually killed after they're born. And I think there's a lot of people that don't actually know that that's going on here in Victoria as we speak.

Katherine: That was Bernie Finn from March for the Babies, talking about a clinic in Victoria which no longer offers late-term abortions.