

PETITION

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ASSEMBLED IN PARLIAMENT

We the undersigned draw to the attention of the House:

- Terminating a pregnancy must be a woman's right alone. Abortion itself must be removed from State and Territory criminal codes and made freely available through the health care system. The denial of abortion on demand will force women into illegal backyard terminations risking their health and their lives.
- Australia is one of only two wealthy industrialised nations without a National Paid Maternity Leave Scheme. Over 160 countries provide national paid maternity leave schemes. Australia must recognise paid maternity leave as an employment entitlement, not as welfare benefit. Women should not have to "choose" between a job or children. This is not a real reproductive choice.
- Free 24-hour childcare is a necessity for working parents. Women are particularly disadvantaged by the lack of available and affordable childcare, which is forcing women out of the workforce. Approximately 160,000 mothers across Australia want to work but are unable to because of inadequate childcare.

Your petitioners therefore request the House to support:

- **Unconditional recognition of every woman's right to make her own reproductive choices: remove abortion from all state *Crime Acts* and *Health Acts* and make abortion available safely, free of charge and on demand through the public health care system; enforce the legal prohibition of sterilization without consent.**
- **Paid maternity leave, fully paid by employer contributions to a publicly managed scheme; the right to return to the same job and no loss of benefits, seniority or job status.**
- **Free, 24-hour childcare: community and employer-controlled; government-funded in the communities and employer-funded in large workplaces.**

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Please Return to: Campaign for Women's Reproductive Rights by March 1st 2005: PO Box 266 West Brunswick VIC 3055 Ph/Fax: (03) 9388 0062. The petition will be presented to the House of Representatives on March 8th 2005, International Women's Day.