



MORE TIME FOR ACTION

Just a few days before MPs were to debate and vote on controversial amendments to abortion law, Leader of the House of Commons Harriet Harman announced the debate would be postponed until October. The postponement was described as “a complete shock to almost everyone in Westminster.”

She said it was to allow more time for debate. Some believed it was to allow pro-abortion MPs more time to gather support. A number of MPs claimed it was to avoid having to take decisions on controversial issues before a forthcoming parliamentary by-election in Glasgow East.

In the event, Labour lost the seat anyway. The seat was one of Labour’s safest seats in the UK, but a massive 22 per cent swing from Labour resulted in a 365-vote win for the Scottish National Party – **and abortion is believed to have been a significant factor.**

The Labour candidate, Margaret Curran, supported the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill, of which the abortion amendments were a part. The SNP’s pro-life candidate, John Mason, was opposed to abortion on demand and so-called social abortions and “extremely uncomfortable” with human embryo experimentation.

It has been suggested that the UK is entering a new era in politics where abortion will be a significant election issue.

The abortion amendments remain to be decided when MPs return from summer recess in October. Will Labour majority MPs still be determined to legalise easier abortion? Or will they now be more inclined to listen to voters’ concerns?

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THE ISSUES

One amendment would allow nurses and midwives to perform abortions. Another would allow abortions to be done not only in hospitals and abortion clinics, but in doctors' surgeries, health centres, etc.

A third would allow medical abortions, for instance with the abortion pill, to be carried out anywhere. (One woman given an abortion pill at a clinic gave birth to a dead baby at a filling station on the way home and is still traumatised.)

A fourth would abolish the need for a legal ground for abortion up to 24 weeks, and require the signature of one doctor, instead of two, for all abortions. Another would require the signature of one doctor before 13 weeks, two for 13 to 24 weeks and three for over 24 weeks. (Over 90 per cent of abortions are carried out before 13 weeks.) Another would retain the need for two doctors' signatures up to 24 weeks, and require three over 24 weeks.

Yet another would stipulate that "serious handicaps" forming grounds for abortion would not include club foot, cleft lip or cleft palate. One amendment would again seek to reduce the upper limit for social abortions from 24 to 20 weeks.

Another would abolish the right of a doctor, nurse or chemist to object on grounds of conscience to providing contraception or the morning-after pill. They would be forced to prescribe or dispense them, conscientious objection notwithstanding.

A further amendment would make it a criminal offence for a crisis pregnancy service to advertise that it provides services to do with abortion when it does not recommend having abortions. Pregnancy centres would be open to prosecution where the average woman's mind might be changed with regard to having an abortion, where a woman's mind is changed and she decides to keep the baby as a result, or where such a service does not

make its pro-life stand abundantly clear. Yet another would extend legalised abortion to Northern Ireland, despite the fact that churches, political parties and the majority of the public there do not want legalised abortion.

Not all the suggested changes will necessarily be debated and voted on.

WHAT TO DO

It is vital that the delay in Parliament is not wasted. Preferably visit your MP at his or her local surgery (you should find details at your local library). Failing that, write to your MP at House of Commons, Westminster, London SW1A 0AA (preferably a handwritten letter). Besides expressing your concerns, point out that more people are now aware of the humanity of the unborn child and that the majority of people want to see fewer abortions. Remind your MP of the Glasgow East result and the dangers of ignoring voters' opinions.

One pro-life organisation has suggested there will be 50,000 more abortions each year if the moves to liberalise abortion are accepted.

PRAY EARNESTLY FOR THE FORTHCOMING PARLIAMENTARY BATTLE.

■ **The Government's Teenage Pregnancy Advisory Group** wants "positive sexual health messages, including the advertising of condoms" communicated effectively on TV before the 9pm watershed.

It also wants parents of children as young as four to be sent information packs on how to talk to their children about sex, relationships and contraception.

Chairwoman Gill Frances said the only way to drive down teenage pregnancy rates was with contraception and more talk with children about sex by teachers and children. Sex education had to be put at the heart of the

formal curriculum.

A spokesman for the Family Education Trust said the Government's teenage pregnancy strategy had failed. "*The real need is not to normalize condom use, but to normalize keeping sex within a faithful and lifelong marriage.*"

■ **Doctors at the British Medical Association's** annual meeting voted for sex education in primary schools, with 54.6% in favour. Emily Finnigan said starting with sex education in primary school was considered controversial, but necessary. Said Dr Shreelata Datta: "*Are we really calling for children as young as four to have sex education as part of their curriculum, alongside the alphabet?*"

■ **A new testing kit** and a pill for chlamydia will be able to be bought over the chemist's counter shortly for £45. Dr Trevor Stammers, of the Family Education Trust, claimed it was a sticking plaster solution to a sex infection epidemic. "*Letting people bypass the doctor is a short-sighted approach that may make the problem worse,*" he said.

■ **Should abortion be allowed in case of rape?** Dr David Reardon, of the US Elliot Institute, has carried out extensive research on the results of abortion. He says that the largest ever survey of women who became pregnant through sexual assault showed that of those who carried the baby to term, none wished they had aborted instead. Nearly all the women in the survey who had abortions said abortion only compounded their trauma and was not a good solution.

■ **Keri McCartney** was six months pregnant when a routine scan showed her baby had a tumour the size of a grapefruit which would result in the baby's death. Surgeons in Texas removed the baby from the womb, cut away the tumour and replaced the baby. The baby, Macie Hope, was later born through normal labour and is doing fine. Doctors said although there was less than a 10 per cent chance of success, the operation went perfectly.

The things they say...

"Abortion kills twice: it kills the body of the baby and the conscience of the mother."

Mother Teresa

"Someone said, 'If wombs had windows there would be no abortions.' We now have such windows – sophisticated pre-natal screening techniques. We can glimpse the wonder of a child's divine creation from human cell, zygote, blastocyst, embryo and fetus, to perfectly-formed unborn child made in God's image. From the earliest stages the fetus appears fully human and not simply a 'blob of tissue'. We need to look through the windows and recover our consciences before it is too late."

Greg Haslam

"The intentional destruction of a human life is a profound insult to the being and character of God Himself."

Professor John Wyatt

"What a strange society we live in where a peregrine falcon's egg has more legal protection than a human fetus."

Brian Morris, in the Daily Mail

"The world is a dangerous place to live; not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it."

Albert Einstein

"We have enough abortions in this country without making it easier to obtain one. Are we really suggesting that we should allow a 14-year-old girl to pop a pill at home without informing her parents and then flush the remains of her baby down the toilet?"

Nadine Dorries MP

'SEXUAL SERVICES' IN SCHOOLS

Almost 1,000 secondary schools in England are now providing "sexual health services" for pupils. A survey among two-thirds of the secondary schools found 29 per cent distributed condoms and tested for pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases.

One in six of these gave out the morning-after pill, and one in 20 offered prescriptions for the pill, contraceptive injections or contraceptive implants, all without parents being told. A large proportion of secondary school children are under the legal age of consent.

A spokeswoman for a sex education campaign group said sexual health services at schools were key to reducing teenage pregnancy rates.

"This is a recipe for disaster," said Dr Trevor Stammers, of Family and Youth Concern. "We are going to see abortion rates rocket if we have these contraception clinics in schools. We need to have parents engaged more with their children, not less."

■ **Girls aged 17 and 18** will be offered a vaccine from this month against human papilloma virus, the sexually transmitted disease that causes most cervical cancers.

The Department of Health had already decided to offer the vaccine to girls of 12 and 13 each year from this September at a cost of £100 million a year. From September next year there will be a catch-up programme to vaccinate girls up to 18.

This country will use Cervarix, unlike the US and some European countries, which use Gardasil. There has been concern that a number of girls have died after being given Gardasil.

Public health minister Dawn Primarolo claimed the vaccination programme would save up to 400 lives each year. Critics said it would encourage girls to be promiscuous.

■ **Figures for sexually transmitted diseases** in Britain in 2007, which were six per cent up on the previous year, were the highest since current records began. Genital herpes was up 20 per cent, with chlamydia and genital warts up seven per cent.

Although it forms only one-eighth of the population, the 16 to 24 age group accounted for 65 per cent of new cases of chlamydia, 55 per cent of cases of genital warts and 50 per cent of new cases of gonorrhoea.

Professor Peter Borriello, of the Health Protection Agency, said casual sex is now "part of the territory, part of life" for young people.

■ **The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority** has granted a licence to scientists at the University of Warwick to create human/pig hybrid embryos for research purposes. Skin cells from humans will be placed in pig eggs with chromosomes removed, creating embryos by the same process which created Dolly the sheep in order to provide stem cells. Scientists in Newcastle and London are already producing hybrid embryos for research.

■ **Pro-life Christians in the US** are to hold 24-hours-a-day prayer vigils outside abortion clinics for 40 days continuously from September 24 to November 2. Officials from 40 Days for Life say 35,000 people took part in previous similar vigils, resulting in 514 babies saved from abortion and two abortion clinics closed down.

The Northern Ireland Department of Health has announced a consultation on termination of pregnancy in Northern Ireland. Responses will be accepted up to September 22. Details from www.dhsspsni.gov.uk.

■ **A proposal by pro-abortion campaigner Dr Evan Harris** that doctors should be forced to inform patients if they had a conscientious objection to abortion was defeated at the British Medical Association's annual conference. The proposal was seen as an attempt to see that doctors unhappy about abortion were not able to counsel women considering abortion and force them to refer them to doctors with different views.

■ **Free contraceptives** have been handed out to schoolchildren in Scotland in an effort to reduce unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. "*Handing out free contraceptives to schoolchildren simply encourages teenage sexual activity,*" said Nick Seaton, of the Campaign for Real Education. "*It is extremely worrying that condoms are being given out to pupils without the permission of their parents.*"

■ **The morning-after pill** is to be given out free of charge at Scotland's chemists. Shona Robison, Scottish Minister for Public Health, said ministers were not persuaded of the need for it to be provided on school premises, but they did want to ensure it was available. GP Dr Trevor Stammers said it would have no effect in improving public health. The Catholic church said it gave the impression that careless sexual activity was OK because there was always a fix.

■ **The contraceptive pill**, normally available only on prescription, is now available online, along with Viagra, STD tests and treatments, from a UK website which claims to be registered with the Healthcare Commission. Doctors are concerned it could be obtained by young girls and without health checks.

The abortion pill can now be bought online. One site is offering mifepristone and misoprostol for £55 a time. A spokesman for the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists warned of the dangers of using illegal abortion services.

■ **Ann Downer**, a nurse at the Calthorpe abortion centre in Birmingham, gave an abortion drug to the wrong woman, a Nursing and Midwifery Council disciplinary hearing was told. Mrs Downer confused her with another woman with the same first name and failed to check her full personal details before administering misoprostol. She was given a caution, but allowed to continue practising.

■ **There are 1.2 million abortions** in Europe each year – one every 27 seconds, according to a report to the European Parliament by the Institute for Family Policy. Abortion, together with cancer, is the leading cause of death in Europe. The institute says increasing abortion rates and lower birth rates are causing a demographic crisis.

■ **In Spain**, 94.5% of babies with a prenatal diagnosis of Down's syndrome are aborted, according to Spain's National Association for the Defence of the Right to Conscientious Objection.

■ **After a 20-week scan**, Leeann Phelan, of Chingford, London, was told her baby had Dandy-Walker syndrome, a brain malformation. Doctors said if he was born alive, he would be strapped to a chair for the rest of his life and she should have an abortion. She refused. Her son Jayden was born prematurely at 23 weeks – a week earlier than some MPs say a baby can be expected to survive. He did not have a brain problem and now appears to be a normal baby. His parents are planning to raise money for the hospital unit that cared for him.

The next *image* training course in pregnancy counselling to be held in Manchester will be on Saturdays January 31, February 28, March 28, April 25 and May 16, 2009.

Details and an application form can be had from the *image* office.

TOO COSTLY TO SAVE LIFE?

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence – the Government’s medicines watchdog recently criticised for refusing to sanction some cancer drugs because they were too costly – has said for the first time that patients cannot rely on the NHS to save their lives if the cost of doing so is too great.

The organisation said the “rule of rescue” – the natural impulse to help individuals in trouble, as when expensive resources are used to save a sailor lost at sea – should not apply to the NHS.

This appears to contradict the decision of Nice’s citizen’s council two years ago, which said that a “rule of rescue” was an essential mark of a humane society, and people in desperate and exceptional circumstances should sometimes receive greater help than could be justified by a purely utilitarian approach. There were cases, it said, where if the NHS did not intervene, human society would be diminished.

Nice now says in a report on its website that spending too much on one patient may deny others. Nice’s principles, it says, already allow for the difference between one person’s need and the need of others.

The decision was criticised by the British Medical Association. Tony Calland, chairman of its ethics committee, said doctors had a duty to do their best for patients. *“We would be opposed to ignoring a rule of rescue when it introduces a degree of flexibility around extreme cases. So what if you waste a few pounds if you are doing your best for humanity?”*

■ **In Oregon**, the only US state where assisted suicide is legal, 46 people were reported as having committed suicide in 2007 using lethal drugs prescribed by doctors. None of them were referred to a psychologist or psychiatrist

before the prescription was made out. *“I’m sure that physicians who assist in the death of their patients think they’re providing a needed service, but so did the Nazi doctors under Hitler. They are turning medicine into murder,”* said Ben Mitchell, director of a bioethics centre.

■ **The Dutch Medical Association** is helping to promote a do-it-yourself suicide guide for doctors and their patients. The book is aimed at people who are not terminally ill. A spokesman said although doctors are not supposed to assist suicides, they still had a duty to help people remain comfortable, and this book should help.

■ **Glasgow GP Dr Iain Kerr** (61), said to have supplied a woman with sleeping tablets for the purpose of ending her life and to have supplied a drug inappropriately to several other patients, told police he was in favour of assisted suicide, a General Medical Council hearing was told. Dr Kerr, accused of inappropriate conduct, was suspended from practising for six months.

■ **Talk of the “problem”** of the increasing number of elderly and the “burden” on the health service has an implication which should worry us profoundly, said Roseanna Cunningham in the Sunday Times. True that the mostly costly period of a person’s life was the year or two before death, but that was just as much a part of health care as a person’s earlier years.

The Netherlands, she said, was not a good model for assisted suicide. Euthanasia guidelines were consistently ignored, doctors felt free to suggest euthanasia and 25 per cent admitted they had terminated patients’ lives without an overt request.

■ **A leukaemia charity**, the Anthony Nolan Trust, will soon open a storage bank for donations of umbilical cord blood, a rich source of stem cells which can be used both for research and treatment without the destruction of

embryos. More than 70 treatments have been developed using stem cells from ethical sources. Stem cells from embryos have not yet resulted in any successful treatment.

■ **Lack of trained nurses** is putting the lives of premature babies at risk, according to MPs. About 60,000 babies a year – 10 per cent of all births – are born prematurely. The Commons public accounts committee says only 24 per cent of NHS regions have enough qualified staff to achieve the recommended one-to-one nurse-to-baby ratio. Some 2,285 extra nurses would be needed in England to meet the British Association of Perinatal Medicine’s standard.

■ **Christian GP Dr Tammie Downes**, who was reported to the General Medical Council because she said eight babies were alive today who would otherwise have been aborted after she had taken time to talk with their mothers and asked them to consider the options, has spoken about her actions. The GMC decided to take no action.

“I’ve never tried to persuade a woman not to have an abortion,” she said. *“I have simply encouraged her to take a little bit of time to make sure she has thought it through properly. What kind of society do we live in that allows only those in favour of abortion to counsel women? We are doing women a huge disservice by not allowing them the opportunity to think through their decision fully.”*

■ **The Government** is reviewing sex education in primary and secondary schools. The Family Planning Association, Brook and the Sex Education Forum have pre-empted publication of their report to the Government and announced that they recommend compulsory sex education from the age of four upwards.

Brook chief executive Simon Blake said *“all the evidence”* showed that if sex and relationships education were started early, children started having sex later.

Norman Wells, of Family and Youth Concern, said FPA and Brook were calling on the Government *“to impose something on every child in every school that has no proven benefit whatsoever.”*

■ **Emma Young** was born at 25 weeks’ gestation weighing 1lb 3oz. For eight weeks she stopped breathing dozens of times a day. Nurses started her breathing again – by tickling her feet. She is now a year old and thriving. *“We still tickle her feet, but just to make her laugh,”* said mother Angela Young, of Washington, Co Durham. *“There’s no better sound in the world for us than her giggling.”*

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

Monday, October 27, the anniversary of the passing of the Abortion Act, is the National Day of Prayer about abortion. Details are in the leaflet enclosed.

If you wish to have further copies, you can photocopy the leaflet, download the contents of the leaflet at www.imagenet.org.uk or obtain further copies from the *image* office.

CHALLENGE TEAM UK

A team of young people from Challenge Team UK, who go into schools with presentations promoting saving sex until marriage, will be touring in the North of England from September 29, in the Isle of Man from November 3 and in Scotland from November 10.

Schools or youth clubs who would like a visit or people wanting details so they can support the tour in prayer should contact Tracy Black at the *image* office.

CHOSEN FOR A PURPOSE

Prayer is not about trying to persuade God to do what He doesn't want to do. Prayer is about enabling God to do what He has wanted to do all along.

God is almighty. He could do whatever He pleased without reference to anybody. But here is something remarkable. He has chosen not to work without us. He chooses to wait until we pray, so that He can answer.

He is not going to do anything that is not His will (unless perhaps we want it so badly He lets us have it just to teach us a lesson). He is quite willing, however, to do that which is in accordance with His will. But He needs to hear from us first. Ask, He says, and you will receive. He doesn't say we will receive if we don't ask.

Put it another way. "Whatever you bind on earth," Jesus said, "will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matt 18:18). Now God will not bind or loose something in heaven unless it is His will to do so. But even though it is His will, He will not do it until we do the binding or loosing down here. He waits for us to bind or loose on earth, then He will bind or loose in heaven.

God has chosen us for a purpose – to work with Him. Our purpose is to pray. Our purpose in prayer is not to see our own interests fulfilled, but to fulfil His. We are to pray "Your kingdom come. Your will be done." (If that were going to happen automatically, He wouldn't ask us to pray that prayer, now would He?)

From this you will see that what happens down here depends not only on Him, but on us. If it is His will, and Christians pray, He will do it. If it is His will and Christians don't pray, He will wait. The consequences of that could be terrible.

Last year there were 219,000 abortions in England, Wales and Scotland. That's 18,000 a month; 4,000 a week; 600 a day. In early October, there will be moves in Parliament to make abortion easier to obtain.

Pro-lifers have calculated, as we report on Page 2, that these could lead to 50,000 more abortions a year.

Don't pretend it is someone else's responsibility, and not yours. We have work to do. When Christians pray, things will happen.

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CHRISTIANS
CARING FOR LIFE

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