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From: Eleanor Phelan <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, 30 September 2015 10:24 PM
To: SARC
Subject: Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Bill 2015

A submission to the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee

Re: Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment (No Jab, No Play) Bill 2015

I write to voice my strong **objection to the proposed legislation** which would exclude partially or completely unvaccinated children from attending childcare centres and preschool kindergartens, providing no exemption to a family who has a conscientious objection to vaccinating their children.

As a mother, I can't imagine being pressured by threat of disadvantage to submit my children to a medical procedure that I didn't believe in, even if my belief were a minority one. Consent must be obtained for any medical procedure, and where there is coercion such as this, any consent obtained is simply not valid. Of course, the other more probable outcome may be that parents will not consent, and their child will miss out on preschool.

As a teacher, I am deeply concerned that a small (but important) number of children in our communities would be deprived the experience of a good quality early childhood education programme before starting school. I believe that every child has the right to an education, starting with pre-school education. Indeed, in 2008, Victoria along with the Commonwealth and the other States and Territories signed a National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education to ensure that all children have access to early childhood education. Exclusion of unvaccinated children unfairly disadvantages them, especially if they are already financially and or socially vulnerable. For disadvantaged children, access to childcare exponentially improves their educational and social outcomes.

As an Australian, I am dismayed that there are attempts to make discrimination of a minority group of children legal and mandatory. It would be completely unethical to disallow children to attend childcare or kindergarten because their families happen to conscientiously object to vaccination, no matter what their reason. An individual must continue to have the right to make his or her own medical decisions (or those on behalf of their children) without losing access to childcare or Early Childhood Education options.

What I also find deeply disturbing, is that this whole 'no jab, no play' campaign was introduced by a newspaper (the Daily Telegraph). Whilst it is not too surprising that the general population was easily brought on board with the hype, it is extremely worrying to think that the government is seriously considering it when experts such as the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) and the Australian Medical Association (AMA) do not agree with such legislation being passed.

I hope that the committee will take these concerns very seriously.

Sincerely,
Eleanor Phelan

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