

Barbara Kay: Abortion trips on its Achilles heel

[National Post](#) - Friday December 7th, 2012

Conservative backbencher Mark Warawa is making life miserable for the opposition. He has asked the Commons to approve a motion – M408 – to “condemn discrimination against females occurring through sex-selective pregnancy termination.”

This is a clever motion, because Warawa is not asking for any legislation to outlaw the practice; he is only asking for a motion of condemnation of discrimination against women.

What could be less controversial? Sex selection is discrimination against women. Nobody disputes that, not even those practising it. So what’s not to like about scolding people who discriminate against women? It’s like telling smokers they run the risk of lung cancer, hoping they’ll quit smoking on their own. They’re still free to smoke, but is it so bad if they feel guilty about it?

The NDP has already said it condemns sex-selective abortion. But they won’t support Warawa’s proposal. It sticks in the NDP craw to agree with any conservative on anything around abortion, simply knowing that people like MP Warawa dislike abortion in general. And neither will Liberal interim leader Bob Rae support the motion. Rae said: “We’re a country that’s against discrimination and everybody understands that...But I think the way [Warawa] is doing it is an attempt to break down this very basic consensus in the country that this is essentially a private matter.”

Are you sure about that, Mr. Rae? A 2011 Environics poll found that 92% of respondents opposed sex-selective abortion, and a January 2012 Angus Reid poll found about two-thirds of respondents (about half of them women) favoured laws prohibiting sex-selective abortion.

There’s an old saying that when you’re surrounded by alligators, it’s hard to remember that your original objective was to drain the swamp. The abortion movement never saw the day coming when its absolute commitment to abortion for whatever reason whatsoever would come back to bite its members in the butt.

Sex-selective abortion is the Achilles heel of feminism. A systematic culling of embryos on the basis of sex ridicules the very notion of “choice,” particularly since it is well known that abortion according to cultural prejudices often leaves no practical choice to the pregnant woman at all. She takes her abortion orders from her patriarchal authority figures.

It is also becoming apparent that sex selection is changing world demographics. Governments can’t afford to indulge the practice under the rubric of “privacy.” It affects everyone. Left to nature, 105 baby boys are born for every 100 girls. But in countries like Korea, for example, the ratio was headed to 120 boys for every 100 girls until a concerted effort was made to move back toward normal ratios. Today the ratio is about 107 to 100, which is a hopeful sign that intervention of the kind Mr. Warawa is proposing – that is, expressions of disapproval of the practice – can restore a saner and more ethical perspective.

In the U.S. the subject is up for discussion. Last spring Republicans in Congress proposed a bill that would outlaw sex-selection abortion. The abortion lobby actively opposed it, arguing like their Canadian counterparts that “choice” is sacrosanct. The bill failed, but the issue will not go away there either.

In an August column, my colleague Chris Selley wrote: “A woman’s right to choose should be absolute, but that doesn’t excuse women from being judged for their choices.” Exactly. I would add that not only women should be judged, but men who urge women on to abortion on the basis of sex should also be judged. And the best way to do that is through a bipartisan condemnation of a practice all three parties agree they find worthy of condemnation.

And if NDP leader Thomas Mulcair simply cannot bring himself to vote for anything related to abortion that comes from the mouth of a pro-life Conservative MP, even though he freely declares he hates the practice of sex selection, then let Mr. Mulcair propose his own motion of condemnation. I am sure Mr. Warawa will not repay Mr. Mulcair’s childish

obstinacy with a like-minded refusal to cooperate. For Mr. Warawa, it's about the principle, not the personal beliefs of the person enunciating it.

National Post

bkay@videotron.ca