

Saskatchewan MP presses for real debate on abortion

An MP who wants a law to make it illegal to abort an unborn child based solely on a baby's sex thinks her biggest challenge is not to convince Canadians of this, but instead is to convince those in the halls of power.

Cathay Wagantall said members of Parliament have a long history of staying clear of any meaningful debate in the House of Commons about abortion.

"My biggest challenge is breaking through the politics. I think most Canadians support reasonable laws that would not ban abortion outright but instead put some rules in place," said the Conservative MP from Saskatchewan. "It's the political parties that don't want to have this discussion and debate."

While the federal Liberals, NDP and Green parties all have actively discouraged and blocked pro-life candidates from gaining any traction in those parties, Wagantall concedes the Conservatives have not been keen to re-open the abortion debate either, although pro-life members can at least debate the issue internally and pro-life party members such as herself make up a significant proportion of the party's membership.

In February, before the COVID-19 pandemic severely curtailed the operations of Parliament, Wagantall introduced a private members' bill, the *Sex Selective Abortion Act* Bill C-233, that would make abortions on the basis of a baby's sex illegal.

"If just one girl is aborted simply because of her sex, parliamentarians must act," Wagantall said.

"Thankfully, Canadians of nearly all beliefs are united on this issue, with 84 per cent stating that sex-selective abortion should be illegal," she said, citing a poll in the *National Post*. "This is reasonable common ground that every member of Parliament must thoughtfully consider."

As it stands now, in essence, Canada has no law when it comes to abortion.

Although the federal Liberal minority government prorogued Parliament until Sept. 23 and there will be a new Speech from the Throne – a move which effectively killed any government bills before the House of Commons – private members' bills are in a different category. As long as the Liberal minority government survives a confidence vote after the throne speech, Wagantall's bill will continue to proceed without having to be reintroduced.

Wagantall is continuing to speak out in favour of her proposed bill in the hope

Canadians will push their MPs to support it.

"This is something that Canadians are open to and want," she said in a phone interview Sept. 12 from B.C. where she participated in "Pink Flag Display" organized by the pro-life group We Need A Law.

"I think Canadians have shown that they want some laws surrounding abortion in this country and it is the political parties and the extremists on both sides, pro-abortion and pro-life, that are not willing to compromise and come to a consensus that can be supported."