

# President's position against abortion 'remains unchanged'



President George Vella has told The Malta Independent that his position on the subject of abortion "remains unchanged."

Vella had previously stated that, should a law introducing abortion end up on his desk, he would have "no other option but to resign."

This newsroom sent questions to President Vella after independent MP Marlene Farrugia presented a Private Member's Bill on Wednesday which aims to decriminalise abortion in Malta.

The President, a doctor by profession, has always made his anti-abortion views clear.

[In April 2019, shortly after he was sworn in as President, Vella was asked by The Malta Independent what he would do should he be asked to sign a law introducing abortion in Malta.](#)

"If such a law is passed through Parliament after a debate and a vote and I was asked to sign it, I will have a strong moral objection and my only option would be to pack my things and leave. This is another issue I discussed before accepting my nomination: I will never sign such a law, I will not have it on my conscience," he had replied.

Asked what he would do now, if Farrugia's Bill were to be passed and sent to him for approval, a spokesperson said: "On this matter, H.E. The President's position remains unchanged."

Any Bill that is approved by Parliament has to be signed by the President of the Republic to become law. It is unlikely that the Bill will reach this stage, anyway, given that both main political parties, the PL and the PN, have said they are against abortion and that they do not have a mandate to introduce it. In reality, it is likely that the Bill will not get past committee stage, although it could possibly trigger a national debate.

Marlene Farrugia's PMB was hailed as "historic" by pro-choice groups and described as "shocking" by pro-life NGOs.

Opposition Leader Bernard Grech said the PN believes in the concept of life since the moment of conception. The Nationalist Party, he said, can never back any law to decriminalise abortion.

Prime Minister Robert Abela has not yet reacted but it is understood that the Labour Party will be pronouncing itself on the subject after holding a debate within its Parliamentary Group.

The Church has come out against the proposal, with Archbishop Charles Scicluna saying yesterday: ""The womb is a sacred place, which should be a source of life and not death. The dignity of women cannot be safeguarded by killing innocent children."

"It makes absolutely no sense that a woman looking for self-

determination, looking for medical intervention, ends up being criminalised and condemned instead of being offered help," Farrugia said when presenting the Bill on Wednesday evening. "I feel that this should be the platform from which we go forward, so that all women push an agenda for health structures that support women from birth till old age, so that we can create a better life not just for women or children, but for all society."