

# New Zealand decriminalized abortion

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New Zealand has abolished the law enforcement of artificial termination of pregnancy, which has been in force since 1961 and has been subject to a sentence of up to 14 years. Abortions will now be allowed until the 20th week of pregnancy.-- March 18th, 2020

Parliament passed the bill by 68 votes for and 51 against. It is still to be signed by the Governor-General, which is a mere formality.

Justice Minister Andrew Little pointed out that the modernized legislation gave women control above their bodies. Although they never enforced the law and did not prosecute women who made abortions, Little stressed that changes were necessary as abortion was the only medical procedure considered a crime.

He noted that from now on, abortion would be rightly considered a health issue. Women, together with their doctor, can decide in the first 20 weeks of pregnancy.

Because of the previous law, women who wanted to terminate their pregnancy artificially had to go through a series of obstacles, making abortions less safe. They will now be able to receive advice and treatment on time, the minister stressed.

According to official figures, in 2018 in New Zealand, 13.5 per 1000 women aged 15-44 have made abortions. This is as much as in the US and almost twice as much as in Germany, states DPA.

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Anton Luka Šijanec

<https://sijanec.eu/>

+386 64/176-345

anton {afna} sijanec {pika} eu