



## Taiwan drafts bill to allow altruistic surrogacy

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*An expectant mother undergoes an ultrasound in Taiwan. (File photo/Chen, Jheng-tang)*

Taiwan's government has proposed an amendment seeking to allow altruistic surrogacy — in which a woman agrees to carry a child for another couple through in vitro fertilization without

financially profiting from the procedure — in an attempt to tackle infertility in the country. The bill has been delivered to the Cabinet for review and approval next year.

The bill was proposed after a poll carried out in August this year showed almost 70% of respondents supported lifting the existing ban on surrogacy and assisted reproductive technology, while 85% said surrogacy should be legalized under strict regulations and complementary measures. Almost 80% also agreed married couples who can provide both egg and sperm should be allowed to seek surrogacy but under 50% were in favor if the couples can only provide one or the other.

The Legislative Yuan held a hearing to debate various versions of the bills to revise Taiwan's Artificial Reproduction Act. The Health Promotion Administration has drafted a bill to require surrogate mothers to be Taiwanese nationals. The surrogates cannot use their own eggs and cannot act as surrogates more than three times. They are also entitled to terminate the pregnancy within 24 weeks of conception. Couples who cannot provide eggs or sperm are not allowed to use surrogate mothers.

Health Minister Chiu Wen-ta said the legislation relating to surrogacy must be conservative and restricted to medical treatment for infertility. The regulations should ban surrogate mothers from donating eggs to give birth to a child under a surrogacy contract.

In 2004, a public consultation in the form of a focus group was held and a bill was drafted the following year which sparked concerns as many people feared that conflicts would arise between surrogates, the children born to surrogate mothers and their parents. Other concerns included worries over how children with birth defects would be treated and worries that allowing surrogacy would result in the commercialization of the human body and the exploitation of the poor. The legislation subsequently stalled and the ban has continued to be in force.

#### References:

Chiu Wen-ta 邱文達