Dear Friend,

We are writing to invite you to be involved in an event that will determine how your federal member of parliament will vote. Later this year, we are anticipating a conscience vote in the Australian Parliament on whether to remove the prohibition on mitochondrial donation.

Your federal MP, Andrew Leigh, has agreed that his vote will be guided by a deliberative democracy process, drawing on the thoughts and insights of residents. As a constituent in the electorate of Fenner, we hope you will take this opportunity to play a part in this decision-making process.

**WHAT'S THE ISSUE?**

Mitochondrial disease is a group of inherited conditions that can cause serious health issues. In severe cases, life expectancy is reduced. Up to 1 in 5,000 Australians may develop severe mitochondrial disease during their lifetime. There is no known cure.

Mitochondrial donation is an assisted reproductive technology that might help prevent certain rare mitochondrial diseases by reducing the risk of a child inheriting the disease from a woman carrying genes that cause the condition.

Mitochondrial donation involves using mitochondrial DNA from a donor egg and nuclear DNA from the mother. It would need to be performed at fertility clinics. However, clinical use of mitochondrial donation for reproductive purposes is currently prohibited in Australia.

This deliberative process is an independent, non-partisan initiative, organised by the University of Canberra's Centre for Deliberative Democracy and Global Governance in collaboration with Ohio State University.

If you would like to be involved, please register here:

We have two goals – to involveCanberrans in more aspects of the democratic process, and to expand the research base around deliberative democracy.

If you have any questions, please email:

We hope you will take up the opportunity to play a part in this process.

Sincerely,

John Dryzek
Professor John Dryzek
Director, Centre for Deliberative Democracy and Global Governance, University of Canberra

Andrew Leigh
Federal Member for Fenner

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*To ensure the safety of participants, any in-person events will observe current COVID-19 public health measures.*