I am deeply impacted by the stark statistic that relates to the rest of the UK. I understand that there have been almost 9 million abortions since the 1967 Abortion Act came into force, and that this exceeds what was expected. It is far more than envisaged when the Act was being introduced. Friends of mine in the medical profession in the rest of the UK are horrified by these statistics, but are powerless to do anything about it. It contravenes their commitment to care for all, a primary personal commitment which spurred them on to become doctors.

In Northern Ireland there is a very strong view that the two lives are important, and that the unborn child has the right to life. 21st century ethics seems to differentiate between a child living in its mother’s body, and a child that has been born. I do not see any distinction, and as a result would strongly contend that Northern Ireland’s law upholds a high ethical stance and must be respected.

Westminster should not set out to bypass the will of our electorate which is reflected in the position of the majority of our elected representatives, which was last made clear in February 2016.

Others have estimated 100,000 lives have been saved in Northern Ireland because of the existing law, and I believe this to be quite a conservative estimate.

In 2016, 98% of abortions in Great Britain were carried out for social reasons. I wonder if the parliamentary representatives in Westminster have considered the deeper reasons for this shocking statistic, and if they have ever considered whether any corrective action is necessary to Abortion legislation in the rest of the UK? I believe there are lessons to be learned regarding this on both sides.

So in conclusion, my view is that abortion fundamentally undermines human rights – above all the right to life of the most vulnerable in our society.

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