Written submission from Owen Patterson (ANI0070)

My name is Owen Patterson and I live in Downpatrick, Northern Ireland and I am a minister and a chaplain. I am writing to you in defence of our current pro life abortion laws and to share with you my experience. My life has been greatly enriched by 12 years working as a teacher in the special education sector and I believe that those with physical and mental disabilities would be adversely affected by any change to abortion law.

In 2016 the majority of our elected representatives rejected changing our laws in this area and I feel you have no right to step in and work against the people of Northern Ireland and our wishes. I believe that abortion fundamentally takes away human rights, the main one being the right to life.

In my role as a minister I have had to council several women who live with abortion regret and in these cases I have found abortion to be extremely damaging to the women involved and their families.

During our period of the troubles in Northern Ireland over 3600 people lost their lives and this is truly tragic. Over 4500 people have taken their own lives in the years since but these figures are dwarfed by the estimated 100,000 live that have been saved by our current pro life legislation.

I truly hope that the voice of the majority of people here in Northern Ireland will be listened to.

December 2018