Written submission from Mrs Dulcie Fidge (ANI0178)

I think that the terms of the inquiry make it clear that it has been set-up to try and put more pressure on the Government to impose abortion on Northern Ireland. The announcement of the inquiry quotes the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which said that the rights of women in Northern Ireland were being affected by restrictions on access to abortion though no one seems to be concerned about the rights of the unborn child. There is a similar lack of concern from the Supreme Court Judges regarding the rights and well-being of the unborn children when they claim that the Province's pro-life laws are incompatible with Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. This already sets the Enquiry off with a serious bias.

The Committee does not include a single Northern Irish MP which suggests that the Committee does not wish to include anyone who might put the case for retaining the status quo. One might even regard that as being unbalanced and undemocratic.

The Woman and Equalities Committee should respect the Devolution Settlement and the lives of unborn children in Northern Ireland. Westminster is interfering and attempting to impose abortion on Northern Ireland." This is a devolved issue which should be decided by politicians in Northern Ireland, not Westminster. Why do you not have a single member of the Women and Equalities Committee who represents a seat in Northern Ireland?

Abortion affects the pregnant woman and the unborn living child. It is not a human right. The call for abortion reform in Northern Ireland distorts actual human rights instruments, which are founded on the equal right of all people to be protected by the law. The law on abortion in Northern Ireland saves lives. Research conducted by Both Lives Matter in 2017 found that an estimated 100,000 individuals are alive today who otherwise would not be had Northern Ireland followed England, Scotland and Wales in adopting the 1967 Abortion Act.

I hope that there will be many personal stories from Northern Ireland where women who would have initially wanted to seek for an abortion but brought their child to birth and now realise what a blessing that was. This is found over and over again that where women are supported, helped and given to means to go through with the birth they are continually overjoyed that they made the right decision in not killing their unborn child.

At the moment Northern Ireland is one of the safest places for unborn children whose rights also must be p

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