**Written submission from a member of the public (ANI0189)**

- **Devolution**
  This is a devolved issue which should be decided by politicians in Northern Ireland, not Westminster. Not a single member of the Women and Equalities Committee represents a seat in Northern Ireland.

- **Human Rights**
  Abortion is not and never can be considered 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 persons to be protected by the law.

- **Pro-life laws save lives**
  The law on abortion in Northern Ireland has been proven to save 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.

Some rights are more fundamental than others. In most cases, we consider a person’s right to live to trump someone else’s “right” to the lifestyle of his choice. Furthermore, it is simple to show that whatever entitlement one might have to a lifestyle of choice is far from categorical, even when lives are not at stake. For example, suppose my lifestyle of choice involves living on a plot of land that I do not own. My conditional right to the lifestyle of choice does not permit me to steal that property from another person, since her right of ownership is more fundamental than and therefore trumps my right to a preferred lifestyle when those interests are in conflict. In the vast majority of abortions, what is at risk for the mother is her lifestyle; what is at risk for the child is his life. We do not argue that the lifestyle changes suffered by the mother are trivial; indeed, an unplanned pregnancy is a difficult burden that society ought to do more to alleviate. But we do argue that those changes are preferable to an innocent child’s death—that the mother’s right to preserve her pre-pregnancy lifestyle is trumped by the child’s much more fundamental right to life. By killing him to preserve her lifestyle, the mother is treating the child as a mere means to an end, which is a violation of his intrinsic dignity. Again, the question is whether or not the fetus is a person. If he is, then his right to life takes precedence over the mother’s right to a lifestyle of choice when those two are in conflict. Having rigorously defended every element of the logical structure proposed at the outset, we pro-lifers are convinced that to define a person as anything other than a living human organism is to place extra constraints on the definition that are either logically indefensible or socially inconsistent. And if we accept this definition—stripped of all limitations other than the obvious necessity to be human and to be a living organism—then fertilization marks the beginning of personhood since, in ordinary circumstances, it initiates an organism’s existence.

If human embryos and fetuses are persons, then, like all other persons, they have a right not to be deliberately killed, and the pro-life position has been vindicated.
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