Written submission from Miss Bethany Hadden (ANI0260)

I am writing to share my thoughts on the impending debate on the change of abortion laws on Northern Ireland. I live here, and have done my whole life. I work as a midwife and see daily all implications of not having abortion here within Northern Ireland. I am completely opposed to any change in laws here, and firmly believe it is for the good of the women and families in Northern Ireland that this remains this way. It was only recently in 2016 that the MLA’s of Northern Ireland voted against changing the abortion laws.

I believe that the rights of both the women and their babies are parallel – just because a baby is not yet born does not mean that it should not hold any rights. It is then the women who suffer for years to come, mourning the loss and carrying the guilt of the abortion. I believe in the sanctity of life, that life begins at conception and that each baby is wonderfully knit together by God, in ways that no human mind can ever comprehend. I also believe there is a reason why pregnancies typically last around 40 weeks – things which may have been held as a disaster when a woman discovers she is pregnant usually resolve by the time the baby is born. I have looked after women, who had she been living in the mainland UK, may have ended her pregnancy for any number of reasons, yet she did not and could not. Yet when the baby is born those thoughts disappear, as she is overwhelmed with love for this little one.

It is not up to us to decide when a human life begins or ends – God has ordained that life begins at conception and I believe this is true.

I would suggest to the committee to vote against any change in abortion laws. I would encourage better contraceptive advice, alongside pregnancy crisis counselling for all women.

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