1. What are the views of the general public, women and medical and legal professionals in Northern Ireland about the law on abortion and whether it should be reformed? How have those views changed over time?

Ans: The view of the general public is, I believe, that the law on abortion in Northern Ireland should not be reformed. The law as it stands protects the most vulnerable in society and that protection should continue as it is at present rather than be reduced or removed. I do not accept that views have changed over time. I do accept that a minority of people may now want changes to the present law but I believe that those minority views are being elevated and given prominence by a media which is supportive of a more liberal agenda but which is not representative of the majority view.

If the Committee is examining this issue with a view to understanding the views of the people in Northern Ireland then the second part of the question ought to have been asked in neutral i.e. 'Have those views changed over time?' The question that has been posed gives little confidence that the outcome of the consultation is not pre-determined and therefore it is not really a consultation at all but rather a ‘box ticking’ exercise.

2. What are the experiences of women in Northern Ireland who have been affected by the law on abortion?

Ans: The media gives prominence to the experience of those women who have gone to the mainland for an abortion. It does not give equal coverage to those who have chosen to have their babies and were glad that they did, or who have had abortions and who have subsequently been overwhelmed with guilt. I am therefore of the view that it is not possible to comment on this question save to say that the experiences of the unborn children whose mothers have chosen to travel to the mainland for abortions has been catastrophic in 100% of cases. It is a sad reflection on society that in 2016 in Great Britain, 98% of abortions were carried out for social reasons.

3. What are the responsibilities of the UK Government under its international obligations for taking action to reform abortion law in Northern Ireland? How should these be reconciled to the UK’s devolution settlement?

Ans: The wording of the two parts of this question again suggest that the outcome of the consultation has already been determined. The second question presupposes that answer to the first part must be that it has some responsibility to change the law. The issue of the law on abortion is a devolved matter and should be left to the Northern Ireland Assembly to deal with. Abortion fundamentally undermines human rights. It is barbaric and recent studies have shown that the procedure is such that the baby suffers pain. It is a shame on the UK Government if it has allowed itself to become subject to international obligations which require it to legitimise the murder of unborn children. There is a time to do the right thing and if that means standing up to those who would wish to kill babies in their mother’s wombs then the UK ought to take a stand. The politicians in Northern Ireland took that stand in 2016 and I believe that the stand which was taken represents the view of the majority of the people living in Northern Ireland and accordingly the UK Government should not interfere in this devolved matter.

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