I want to start this by saying I am a father, but with no personal experience of abortion from either side of the spectrum. I have never been in the position to want or need to research abortion services, nor has anyone (wife, girlfriend etc.) that I have had a relationship with.

The reason for writing this submission is one of simple empathy and belief in the rights of an individual to have control over their own body.

I fear the anti-abortion side of the argument have packaged their feelings as ‘either/or’. If you are not anti-abortion then you must be pro-abortion. Abortion for everyone, all the time!

The belief that any woman who is pregnant must be considering an abortion if they are not anti-abortion, is disingenuous and one that makes me anxious and sad. For I am a man who has no need for an abortion, but is aware and empathetic to the idea that pregnancy is not always the beautiful and cherished thing that comes from a loving, caring and supporting environment. It can be something that brings fear, anxiety, pain and even death. For those women I am making this submission.

I have a slightly more hard-line position also that can be seen as one of anger or emotion, but I do feel I need to make the point, whilst trying to not sound ‘militant’.

Many pro-life/anti-abortion stances can place the idea of abortion as ‘playing God’. That whilst as humans we have created this technology, but should not feel we must use it just because we can.

However, I must return that sentiment to the opposite side of abortion – birth. There are many instances of Pro-life banners, adverts and speeches, extolling the joy at a child born when only 23 weeks, 22 weeks or in very rare cases, 20 week gestation. How, if we can abort these babies when they are so small, yet able to live, how will that stop abortions up to term (some have even stated ‘past birth’??!!).

My frustration comes from the position that, without medical intervention; without incubators, respirators, various surgeries to help these pre-term births become living, surviving babies then they would not survive. Without doctors ‘playing God’ by helping these babies survive, the idea that pre-24 week survivals can happen would be simple myth. Medicine and health care are just that; medicine and health care.

Life should not be for the sake of life.

I do not believe in abortion ‘on-demand’. I do not believe that all difficult pregnancies and those where prospective parents are unsure of their abilities or desires, should be allowed to be aborted.

However, I do believe that if we are willing to intervene to keep a baby alive where it would otherwise die, that we must, where circumstances are justified, allow abortion as an option. All prospective mothers who question what to do, should be given ‘all’ options. Then they can choose. Not all will choose the same option. I believe the majority would not choose to end their pregnancy given the choice. However, those that do not wish to continue, or cannot continue for a plethora of medical conditions, should be allowed that choice.

That is the ultimate point of this. The choice.

Therefore, as a Northern Irish resident I believe all women should have that choice.

Please, either change Northern Irish law to match that of the rest of the UK, or decimalise abortion across the whole of the UK. Whichever this consultation approves I will happily support. But the current position cannot continue.

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