Written submission from Mr George Coulter (ANI0320)

As someone who has lives in Northern Ireland I note with disappointment that yet again the position of abortion in Northern Ireland is being reviewed yet again. The matter has been debated by the N.I. Assembly a number of times in recent years, most recently in 2016 when once again a majority of MLAs voted to retain the existing legislation.

I find it most regrettable that unborn children are regarded as items rather than to be discarded on the grounds of discrimination against women rather than as precious lives to be protected and cherished. Where is the protection from discrimination against the unborn? The most basic human right is the right to life.

I have every sympathy with families which find themselves facing the prospect of bringing a seriously disabled baby into the world but rather than seeking to eliminate such “problems” via abortion I believe that families facing difficult and traumatic circumstances, such as a physically or mentally disabled child, should be offered a full range of support including counselling and post-natal care to enable them to care for such children.

Northern Ireland’s current laws on abortion have saved upwards of 100,000 innocent lives, in contrast to the rest of the UK where approximately 9 million lives have been lost through abortions since the 1967 Abortion Act was passed into law. Experience over the past 50+ years in the UK shows that an overwhelming majority of abortions are purely for social reasons.

I believe the protection provided to unborn children through Northern Ireland’s existing laws should not be weakened and Westminster should not seek to impose legislation on such an emotive issue against the wishes of the people of Northern Ireland and would ask that the Committee refrain from promoting such a course of action.

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