My mother was born and raised in [Northern Ireland]. She worked hard all her life and went on and had six children. The importance of family means a lot to many people in Northern Ireland, families help and support one another, the love between families is unconditional. I could not imagine my life without any one of my brothers or sisters. During those years my mother was the main provider; she worked hard to provide for all of our family needs whilst my Father stayed at home and watched the children.

In later years my Mother became a single mum and brought her six children up on her own. I am the middle child, and during my mother’s pregnancy she developed pre-eclampsia, a pregnancy complication characterised by high blood pressure and in some cases can cause damage to organs such as liver and kidneys, and if not treated can cause maternal death.

During this period of difficulty and uncertainty my mother’s mind was swapped with anxiety and stress. She really felt she was unable to cope because of this pregnancy related condition, and even though about going to England to have me aborted. But thankfully my Mother confided in a good friend who gave her support and I believe also because of the great medical care she received from her doctor I am alive today.

I can only say If abortion had of been legal in Northern Ireland I may not be alive today to write this submission. I am so grateful that she received the maternal care she needed to help her through the difficult pregnancy, and I believe I am alive because of our pro-life laws.

After I was born my Mother went on to have two more beautiful children, her destiny and the destiny of her children and future children depended on our pro-life laws. We know from research that negative and harmful thoughts lead on to mental health problems, feelings of worry, anxiety and depression can and does lead on to individuals making irrational decisions.

Woman who find themselves in these situations need love, care and support, emotional and financial support. Aborting a baby does not solve problems/issues – it only adds to them. If an expectant mother finds herself in a moment of distress, worry and panic, causing the woman to feel a surge of harmful emotions. It is important to identify the problems/issues in order to help and support woman through them. It's important to eradicate the problems, and not the unborn child.

Below are some recommendations I would like to put forward to the committee:

Recommendations

Increase services and support for life affirming care and support:

Increase awareness and educate the public on the protection of life of the most vulnerable - unborn babies.

Increase community support services and pregnancy centres for expectant mothers.

Increase pregnancy support services within NHS hospitals, there is a massive lack of support services for expectant mothers within the health service in NI.

Hospice care for sick babies and for babies with a life limiting conditions.
Increase support for expectant mothers through financial, practical and emotional support.

Increased support for stay at home mothers.

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