Written submission from John Hanson (ANI0451)

1) DEVOLUTION
N Ireland is in a very vulnerable place at the moment in relation to the Good Friday Agreement and the Brexit negotiations. It would be unwelcome, unhelpful and potentially dangerous for either Irish or British political opinion to be forced onto the people of N Ireland. Abortion is a devolved matter and the people of N Ireland have made their opinions clear.

2) DISTINCTIVE LAW AND CULTURE
The law in N Ireland on abortion has saved many lives, not just those who were born with a disability and many who were not. It is inconsistent that a disabled child can be aborted in England, Scotland or Wales up to birth, but after birth a termination is called ‘murder.’ Aborting helpless, unborn children because they may be, or will be, disabled begs comparisons with Nazi Germany before the Second World War. In N Ireland we are proud that the disabled are welcome and valued and we do not discriminate against the disabled in the womb.

3) HUMAN RIGHTS & EQUALITY
Most abortions in England and Wales are carried out for social reasons; only the woman’s opinions are considered while the child in the womb has no voice. Both mother and child are important and both should have a voice. Both lives matter but the unborn child is entirely vulnerable in the UK except in N Ireland.

4) PERSONAL STORIES
Some of the warmest, affirming and appreciative people I have ever met were people with special needs. My mother spent her life helping them because she valued them, because they were and are valuable. Able-bodied people have no right to deny them the gift of life any more than they have a right to deny life to ‘able-bodied’ people.

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