1) DEVOLUTION
I find it difficult to understand why politicians in Westminster should want to decide on Abortion in Northern Ireland as it is clearly a devolved issue. The fact that not a single member of the Women and Equalities Committee represents a seat in Northern Ireland means that those of us who live in this country and feel strongly on the issue are not heard. Yes, the Northern Ireland Assembly is not operating at present but does that mean it is constitutionally appropriate to intervene at such a delicate on such an emotive subject.
I am concerned at what it will mean in future for democracy in Northern Ireland and indeed other devolved assemblies at the proposed interference of Westminster politicians.
Recent polling of Northern Ireland adults by ComRes is clear that legislation on abortion should be decided by those elected in Northern Ireland. Why should it be any other way? The people of Northern Ireland should be allowed to choose for themselves.

2) DISTINCTIVE LAW AND CULTURE
The law on abortion does make a difference from what I have read and heard lives have been saved through the abortion law in Northern Ireland. I note that recently the Advertising Standards Authority agreed that it was reasonable to infer that 100,000 people are alive today because this country had not adopted the 1967 Abortion Act.
I am utterly convinced that the law on abortion in Northern Ireland is a real protection for the disabled contra the legislation in the rest of the UK where an unborn child can be terminated up to term if an abnormality is evidence in the womb.
The statistics on the abortion of those identified as Downs Syndrome in the rest UK are frightening and an indictment on our society. I am grateful that it has been recognised in the House of Lords that Northern Ireland is a safe place for those diagnosed with handicap pre birth.

3) HUMAN RIGHTS & EQUALITY
I am aware that recently some Supreme Court Justices advised that on two arguably narrow points of law ie life limiting conditions and sexual crime our legislation on abortion is not compatible with Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights nevertheless these comments have no legal power. Furthermore, this covers less than 2% of identified abortions in England and Wales.
Some have suggested that the UN has claimed that our legislation abortion is not compliant with human rights however a quick look at the facts will make clear that the report referred to emanated from one unelected committee the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). It is also manifestly clear that the CEDAW has absolutely no legal standing and members of the Supreme Court have commented to the effect that their authority is minimal.
So much of the debate around abortion appears to accept that women can have an absolute right to abortion for any reason. Indeed this sets a woman in opposition to her unborn child. Freedom of choice is therefore measured by the potential to end the life of their own child. Life is sacred. There is surely a better and indeed more humane way which treasures the life, health and essential worth of both as much as possible.

4) PERSONAL STORIES

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