1) DEVOLUTION
It is disappointing that this is being pushed through at a time when the Northern Ireland Assembly is temporarily suspended. This is a matter for our elected representatives to debate & decide, we voted for them because they represent our views. For this matter to be decided by politicians in Westminster it completely undermines our devolved government and disrespects the people of Northern Ireland. Also disappointing to note that no MPs for Northern Ireland are on the Women & Equalities Committee. How arrogant for them to think they know what's best for the people of Ulster.

2) DISTINCTIVE LAW AND CULTURE
The current laws on abortion in Northern Ireland has been proven to save lives. In addition it provides protection & equality for preborn babies diagnosed with a disability. As Lord Shinkwin put it in the House of Lords, “Northern Ireland is the safest place in our United Kingdom to be diagnosed with a disability before birth.” I count it as something to be celebrated that we in Northern Ireland do not discriminate against the disabled in the womb.

3) HUMAN RIGHTS & EQUALITY
There is a danger that the Women’s and Equalities Committee accepts the lie that women can only be equal when they have an absolute right to abortion in any circumstance for any reason. This pitches a woman against her unborn child and measures their freedom, equality and progress by their ability to end the life of their own child. This is a dangerous and destructive way to view women and humanity more widely. Many women, men and children see a better and more human way ahead which values the life, health and dignity of both as far as possible.

4) PERSONAL STORIES
I have friends whose baby was diagnosed with a life limiting condition. They were offered the option of travelling to England for an abortion, but declined, believing that the life of the baby was precious and any time they would have with their baby would be precious, no matter how brief. When the baby was born their heart condition was not as serious as diagnosed in the womb. The baby has downs syndrome & has had heart surgery to correct the problems. He is a delightful, healthy boy. Loving son, brother, grandson, nephew and friend to those who know him. Our lives would be much poorer if his parents had chosen to make that trip to England.

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