1) DEVOLUTION
Abortion law is an issue for the elected representatives of Northern Ireland to decide upon. It is not an issue that can or should be decided by those from beyond these shores. There is no Norther Irish MP on the Committee which seems strange, and so will not be representative. It would also be undemocratic and inappropriate to move on an issue which is the responsibility of elected representatives, and so therefore should wait for devolved government to be restored.

2) DISTINCTIVE LAW AND CULTURE
Northern Ireland has traditionally held a high view of human life, and the right to life from before birth. It was widely reported (and subsequently investigated and confirmed) that since the Abortion Act of 1967, an estimated 100,000 people are alive today because Northern Ireland did not follow the rest of the UK. Not only that, but because of the position of NI, those who were identified as having a disability are given a chance at life. The statistics from the rest of UK reveal a harrowing picture of those diagnosed prenatally with a disability are terminated. When we permit abortion in these circumstances, it will not be long before other reasons for abortion will be permitted, for example sex selection.

3) HUMAN RIGHTS & EQUALITY
I believe abortion stands in direct opposition to Article 2 of the European Convention of Human Rights. In it, everyone’s right to life shall be protected by law. No one shall be deprived of their life intentionally. Yet this is exactly what abortion does - it ends a human life and deprives that unborn child with a chance at life. It is incongruent that we would claim to value human life on one hand, and permit the taking of a defenceless life on the other. Abortion is already permitted in specific circumstances, and could be expanded slightly to include victims of sexual crime, but in the UK only 2% of abortions were for these reasons. To decriminalise abortion will lead to the deprivation of many young lives, that we should be seeking to protect under law.
To claim that abortion is a women’s rights issue is divisive and narrow minded. It excludes men from being part of the discussion and ignores the human life within the woman. Instead of terminations, there is a better way, where women can be better supported and their health looked after. In 2005 research for the Guttmacher Institute in America discovered that the most common reasons for abortion were that pregnancy would interfere with education, work or ability to care of dependents. In other words, it was not practical to have a baby, and so the pregnancy was terminated. Better availability of birth control options and better support for women with unwanted pregnancy should be the priority; not providing an irreversible alternative.

4) PERSONAL STORIES
I have two severely disabled relatives – [Name] born in the [decade] and [Name] in the [decade]. If Northern Ireland had enacted the 1967 Abortion Act, it may have been the opinion of some to terminate those pregnancies. Thankfully because of Northern Ireland’s commitment to the preservation of life, they are alive today and have made the lives of those who know them even richer and more beautiful than if they had not been here. Please do not make Northern Ireland into a place where they would not be welcome.

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