Written submission from Stevie Harris (ANI0631)

1) DEVOLUTION
Firstly I do not agree that this issue is something that should be decided by people who do not live in Northern Ireland. The subject is extremely sensitive and its imposition, potentially against the wishes of the NI electorate, would be unconstitutional. The Women and Equalities Committee does not represent a single seat in Northern Ireland.

2) DISTINCTIVE LAW AND CULTURE
Secondly, all lives are significant. Lives of significance have been saved as a result of the current law in Northern Ireland. It has been validated by the Advertising Standards Agency that it is reasonable to conclude that 100,000 people are alive today purely as a result of the Abortion legislation in NI being different to that of England, Scotland and Wales. The rights of babies who are diagnosed as having a disability before their birth are protected in NI. As Lord Shinkwin put it recently in the House of Lords, “Northern Ireland is the safest place in our United Kingdom to be diagnosed with a disability before birth.” That is something of which to be proud.

3) HUMAN RIGHTS & EQUALITY
Thirdly, with regards to Human Rights and 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. How can this be? With regard to human rights a woman’s rights should never be at the expense of another unborn human being. In any other circumstance, the arbitrary right of one person to choose to end the life of another person would be regarded as murder.

4) PERSONAL STORIES
While I do not have anyone close to me who has been saved from abortion to live a fulfilling life, I hold deeply to the view that, to arbitrarily take one person’s life to make another person’s life more acceptable, makes us no different to non-thinking animals. As human beings, we are better than that.

Please reflect my deeply-held view on this subject in your consultation.

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