Written submission from Sheila Steele (ANI0645)

1) DEVOLUTION
I feel it is important for the people of Northern Ireland to decide on issues regarding changes to the abortion bill. It is a matter for the devolved government (always supposing one gets up and running again!) and not for Westminster to impose upon us.

2) DISTINCTIVE LAW AND CULTURE
For a woman to discover that the baby she is carrying is almost certain to be disabled must be a very traumatic experience and she deserves much more understanding and support than has been previously given, but to kill the unborn child is surely not the answer. The definition of disability is open to interpretation and, in any event, does not equal uselessness. Moreover, if abortion is readily available for all, any woman choosing to keep her baby despite possible disability could be made to feel a drain on the NHS and the education services for defiantly keeping a baby who is going to need a lot of input from different organisations when she could have made life so much easier for everyone all round if she had chosen!

3) HUMAN RIGHTS & EQUALITY
Once abortion is granted on the grounds of disability or as a result of sexual crime it is the thin end of the wedge which leads inevitably to abortion on demand. As I understand the figures only a very small percentage of abortions are carried out in Great Britain as a result of rape or because of fatal foetal abnormality. Horrifying and distressing though these situations are I do not believe we can base our laws for all upon the exceptions of a few. It would appear that the vast majority of abortions take place because the baby is "inconvenient" so we kill him/her.

Much is made of the human rights of the woman; what about the human rights of the innocent baby? Much is also made of the right of a woman to control her own body, but this is not just about her own body-- it is about another's life also. Both lives matter. We have, wisely in my opinion, abolished capital punishment on the grounds that human life is to be preserved, even the life of one who has taken another's life, but as a society we do not seem to think twice about killing babies!

4) PERSONAL STORIES

November 2018