Written submission from Ruth Campbell (ANI0668)

1) DEVOLUTION
While I am encouraged that the committee is taking an interest in Northern Ireland, it is important to remember that not one of your members is an elected representative from the region and therefore cannot fully understand the experiences and culture. Care must be taken that the wishes and strongly held beliefs of people in NI are not looked upon in a patronising way as if the modern forward thinkers can come in and bring the ‘country folk’ up to date.

2) DISTINCTIVE LAW AND CULTURE
I feel great pride when I hear peers like Lord Shinkwin commend our stance on this issue; "Northern Ireland is the safest place to be diagnosed with a disability before birth". The United Kingdom triumphs the idea of a diverse society and champions difference but yet aborts 90% of foetuses diagnosed with Downs Syndrome. It is something to be celebrated that we in NI champion the rights of disabled people even before birth.

3) HUMAN RIGHTS & EQUALITY
I fear that society is believing the fallacy that women can only be truly equal when they have the right to decide to end the life of their unborn child at any time and for any reason. This, I believe, is harmful for women and society in general and many people in Northern Ireland can see a better way that allows for the needs of women and the rights of the unborn to be met in a way that values the dignity and importance of both.

4) PERSONAL STORIES
As a foster/adoptive parent, I am well aware that if the law was different my child would not exist and that, to me is inconceivable. I am glad and proud that I live in an area that takes care of both mother and baby and allows for both to flourish.

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