Written submission from a member of the public (ANI0670)

1) DEVOLUTION
As a citizen of Northern Ireland, I am convinced that this is an issue to be decided upon by the Northern Irish people. We do not need other people to speak on our behalf, we can speak for ourselves. The current political situation in Northern Ireland is not ideal, but it will be resolved. At the moment, politics is tumultuous in Britain, but it is unconstitutional and, frankly, unwise, to change our laws around this deeply important and sensitive subject. A poll done by ComRes (a polling agency who are reputable), demonstrated that 70% of 18-34 year olds believe that abortion is an issue to be decided by the people of Northern Ireland. Don't disrespect us.

2) DISTINCTIVE LAW AND CULTURE
As a citizen of Northern Ireland, I am shocked that 5% of the population within which I live would not be here had our laws been changed back in 1967 alongside the remainder of the UK. This estimation (calculated in 2017) has been upheld by the Advertising Standards Authority. This demonstrates the impact that our law has had. 100,000 lives. Don't ignore this.
I also believe that it is of significance that, despite having higher levels of poverty than any other country in the UK, we have lower levels of children in the care system (35 per 10,000 in comparison to 52 per 10,000 in England, 62 per 10,000 in Wales and 82 per 10,000 in Scotland (Bywaters et al. 2018)).
In 2016 in England, Scotland and Wales, 90% of those who were diagnosed with Down's Syndrome in the womb were aborted, in contrast 90% of those diagnosed with Down's Syndrome in Northern Ireland in the womb were born. This is the kind of a society that I want to live in, in Northern Ireland; one where disabilities are NOT discriminated against.
Our culture is distinctive to the remainder of the UK and so are our laws. We have a history of conflict and are in the process of repair, it would be crude, patronising and harmful for the remainder of Britain to impose laws upon us, you could argue that had we not been colonised by Britain in the first place the Troubles would never have taken place. Not a single member of the "Women and Equalities Committee" represents a seat in Northern Ireland.

3) HUMAN RIGHTS & EQUALITY
The Supreme Court indicated that they believe that on TWO narrow points - life limiting conditions which may prove fatal and sexual crime - they felt that the law in Northern Ireland was not compatible with Art 8 of the UNCHR. These comments were non-binding, but it must be added that 98% of abortions in England and Wales are NOT due to these causes.
A vast number of women in Northern Ireland reject the narrative that their rights are only truly achieved when they have the absolute right to abortion under any circumstance, for any reason. As a 22-year-old, educated, Northern Irish woman, I ask that you do not take from the unborn their right to life in the name of "my rights". I see my society as growing towards being a culture that stands with both - with women who face pregnancy crises and the unborn child.

4) PERSONAL STORIES
One of my closest friends has a [0-5]-year-old, she had an unexpected pregnancy when she was [18-21]. She says that, had abortion been available in Northern Ireland, she would have taken the opportunity. She comes from a working class background and has had no support from the father since the child was born. She now says that she is deeply thankful she didn’t have a "choice" that she would have taken in a panic, and she now sees, knows and loves her [child] because of the Northern Irish law. [Personal information]

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