1) DEVOLUTION
Having studied politics, I recognise and understand that the respect of any government or political structure is inherent to the importance of being known as a democratic society. Northern Ireland is certainly a special case due to the nature of devolution. However, even in the absence of the Executive, the views of our people should not go unheard. The ‘Northern Irish’ voice gets lost in Westminster, particularly around the abortion conversation. This is in part due to the fact that Northern Ireland is not directly represented on the Women and Equalities Committee. Additionally, as numerous MP’s take a complete lack of interest (which is unacceptable) in generic Northern Ireland affairs, I do not believe it is acceptable for English/Scottish/Welsh MP’s to be selective upon this topic. If As our voice is not even represented directly on this issue, how can this be democratic, and our voice be truly heard? To undermine devolution sets a dangerous precedent, not just in the UK, but globally. This is a demonstration of colonialism, and as British citizen, this is unacceptable. The devolved institutions must be respected, and for this to be undermined is disappointing and irresponsible.

2) DISTINCTIVE LAW AND CULTURE
The fact that Northern Ireland did not introduce the 1967 Abortion Act has saved over 100,000 peoples lives.

Particularly, regarding babies who are diagnosed with a disability in the womb, to change law here would be discrimination. In 2016, it has been statistically proven that 90% of those diagnosed with Down’s Syndrome in the womb were aborted. Whereas in Northern Ireland, 90% of those diagnosed with Down’s Syndrome in the womb were born. Northern Ireland is, evidently, the safest place therefore to be born in the UK with a disability. To change this, would result in the death of many who have as much of a right to life, as those without disabilities do.

The abortion laws in Northern Ireland protect ALL of those in our community, and this is something that should be celebrated.

3) HUMAN RIGHTS & EQUALITY
I disagree that arguments surrounding human rights and equality should be used to further the pro-choice mandate.

Can equality and human rights at the expense of the unborn be truly justified? This places a dichotomy of a woman against her unborn child. Additionally, it also implicates that a woman only has equality and freedom when she can end the life of her unborn child. Instead, I believe the Woman and Equalities Committee should instead focus upon pressing issues such as gender pay gap, and the implications of poverty upon women, as these are true inequalities which faces our society. We should advocate for better services and mechanisms that would better support women, rather than provide them with this one, destructive narrative.

4) PERSONAL STORIES

November 2018