1) DEVOLUTION
Westminster has set a precedent of not interfering in devolved issues in Northern Ireland, even acknowledging, in Karen Brady’s recent legislation, that for civil servants to legislate on contentious or controversial matters within the planning sphere would be inappropriate.

2) DISTINCTIVE LAW AND CULTURE
The Northern Irish assembly has consistently and repeatedly voted against amending NI’s abortion laws and polling data shows clearly that the majority of people here are opposed to changing the legislation and in favour of maintaining Northern Ireland’s current protections for the unborn.

The law on abortion in Northern Ireland has been proven to save lives. Research conducted by ‘Both Lives Matter’ in 2017 found that an estimated 100,000 individuals are alive today who otherwise would not be had Northern Ireland followed England, Scotland and Wales in adopting the 1967 Abortion Act. Complaints were made to the Advertising Standards Authority about this claim but after a 5 month investigation, involving health statisticians, the ASA concluded that the 100,00 figure was indeed reasonable.

Claims that the law on abortion in Northern Ireland do not stop abortion are, therefore, empirically baseless. The law does make a difference.

3) HUMAN RIGHTS & EQUALITY
To measure the freedom, equality and progress of women by their ability to end the life of their own child is a dangerous and destructive way to view women and humanity more widely.

We do not define the rights of any other human being in any other context by reference to their rights to end the lives of others.

Whilst certain members of the committee may believe that an unborn child just minutes prior to birth is in some way not a person and therefore not entitled to a right to life (the most fundamental of all human rights) this view is neither defensible philosophically nor held by the people of Northern Ireland, or indeed the rest of the UK, judging by polling data.

By decriminalising abortion right the way up to birth, as was proposed under recent legislation put before the House, this would be the necessary implication.

4) PERSONAL STORIES
I don’t personally have experience dealing with any women in Northern Ireland who have travelled for an abortion but I have met numerous mother’s who gave birth whilst they were in University or School and not a single one of them regretted not terminating their child prior to its birth.

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