

In reference to the 'Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Bill' introduced in the Assembly by Claire Bailey, I wish to state my opposition both to the Bill and to her disregard of those who are opposed to the destruction of human life and who believe abortion to be detrimental to the well-being of women.

Although I do not belong to any organisation, I have stood outside clinics alongside members of prolife organisations. I have NEVER seen any behaviour which could be interpreted as unsafe or threatening. Indeed people were at pains to ensure that no behaviour would occur which could jeopardise the legitimate right to stand quietly holding posters with POSITIVE messages, offering information to women who feel pressurised into aborting their child.

We witness today the pain of mothers who were forced, with society's collusion, to give up their children for adoption. They are eventually being given a voice. Will we witness, in years to come, the pain of mothers who felt coerced into ending the lives of the children in their wombs?

Prolife people whom I have encountered are not full of vitriol and anger. They want to help. They use their own time and money to support women with problem pregnancies. However I have experienced vitriol and anger on prolife marches from some people who do support abortion. I have been called 'scum', told to 'get your rosaries off our ovaries' (whatever that is supposed to mean) and had my little homemade poster taken from me to be ripped up. But such behaviour often comes from pain and ignorance.

The right to protest is enshrined in our common heritage. Dictatorships ban such behaviour.

As Peter Tatchell declared on the Ashers Bakery Supreme Court judgement, "In a free society, people should be able to discriminate against ideas they disagree with."

What could be more important than the protection of the life and well-being of a mother and her child?