

Dear Sir/Madam,

This letter is written in response to the NI Committee for Health consultation on opt-out organ donation. I support the value and role of the current system where prior consent is required in order for organs to be donated.

I am strongly opposed to the new proposals where the Department of Health is introducing a statutory opt out system for organ donation in Northern Ireland.

My concern is that this new system will turn the crucial principle of informed consent on its head in that consent will be presumed rather than explicitly given. Such an approach is in deep contradiction to the ethos of the Good Friday Agreement.

I am also greatly concerned that such proposals will lead to the dead persons body becoming the property of the state. The decision on what happens when a person dies, must not be implied by the government but rather must be made by the individual and their families.

As a Christian I strongly believe that the objection of conscience must be respected. It is morally wrong to assume that everybody agrees. An opt out scheme risks disregarding people's concerns and offers little to no protection to the more vulnerable. Safeguards must be in place so that they are not assumed to have given consent.

This new proposal is unethical, undemocratic and as shown in other countries will do nothing to increase genuine donor rates. The current system must remain and the government should be doing more to encourage people to opt in to the current donor system through greater education and advertising on the issue.

Yours Sincerely