

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write in support of the Severe Fetal Impairment Abortion (Amendment) Bill, introduced to the Northern Ireland Assembly by Mr Paul Given MLA.

My reason is the moral principle that all people, regardless of age, gender, race, disability, orientation etc, have a high intrinsic value, purely by virtue of being people, or of being human. To discriminate between disabled and non-disabled in the abortion law is to break this very important principle of the value of all people.

While this is true in the womb, this differentiation in the law is highly likely to imply - to some readers of this law - that disabled people are also of lower value than non-disabled, which is a very unfortunate outcome. People with a disability need help and support, not to be considered of lower value.

Some people argue that a person is not a person, or not human, until they are physically born, and thus a foetus in the womb need not be allowed the support and protection given to those already born. One important counter argument is this: it is understandable that there is a gradual process between a newly fertilised egg and newborn baby. Exactly when the foetus becomes human is a very difficult question, and I believe we should err on the safe side - i.e. safe for the baby. But it cannot be the case that a baby in the womb that would be viable with support if prematurely born is not considered human. And of course the abortion age limitation for non-disabled babies does not permit the non-disabled to be aborted up to birth. The current law makes the distinction for disabled babies.

I find it very shocking – indeed morally outrageous - that this distinction has been allowed to be put into law in the first place, and fully support the attempt in this bill to correct it.