

Dear members of the committee,

I wish to express my objection to the Severe Fetal Impairment Abortion (Amendment) Bill on the basis that it will erode the current abortion legislation which was based on the CEDAW recommendations.

The legislation would target people who experience much-wanted but complex pregnancy scenarios. Adopting the hard line taken by this legislation will result in these complex situations being dealt with in a way that is not compassionate or respectful for each case.

This lack of compassion will further force pregnant people to travel outside Northern Ireland for a termination, further emphasizing the lack of understanding or care when dealing with difficult healthcare situations.

By limiting terminations to 24 weeks, we will be putting pregnant people through an incredibly stressful period. Clinicians say that very serious abnormalities can only be detected after a 20 week scan. This will force people to make a decision in a small window of time which will be very significant for them and their family.

The wording of this bill also suggests that medics will pressure pregnant people into having abortions and denies a patient-centred interdisciplinary approach to maternal care.

I urge all members of the committee to trust health professionals and trust pregnant people and not support this bill.