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NI Assembly Health Committee,
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7th May 2021

Security: Not sensitive, private or confidential

Re: Severe Fetal Impairment Abortion (Amendment) Bill

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing to you today regarding the call for evidence for the Severe Fetal Impairment Abortion (Amendment) Bill. This response is submitted on behalf of TransgenderNI, a human rights organisation focused on supporting and advocating for trans communities in Northern Ireland.

We wish to register our firm opposition to a Bill which so clearly contravenes the human rights and bodily autonomy of pregnant people in Northern Ireland. We fully endorse the responses submitted by both Alliance for Choice and the Women's Policy Group, two expert organisations on this issue, and would urge you to heed their recommendations.

This Bill, should it progress to law, would put Northern Ireland once again in contravention of human rights as set out by the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women in 2018 in their UK report. It is worth noting that paragraphs 85 & 86 of the aforementioned report have been incorporated into domestic law as per the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Act 2020, and as such this Bill would be in violation of this legislation.

It is also important to recognise that disability rights and reproductive rights are not and should not be in competition. The fight for reproductive justice and bodily autonomy is one shared across disability rights, trans rights and abortion rights groups. To present them as in competition is not in-keeping with the needs or experiences of the communities on the ground.

Forcing people to travel for access to basic care is not an appropriate option. We have moved forward in the past year through the Early Medical Abortion service provided across the Trusts, however the introduction of this Bill would once again leave Northern Ireland behind and force pregnant people to leave the country to see their basic human rights fulfilled.

We know the toll that travelling for healthcare takes on individuals. Trans communities have virtually no access to gender affirming healthcare in Northern Ireland, and as such have to

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travel to England or further afield for access to hormones, surgeries, etc. This has such an impact on the health and wellbeing of those individuals, as well as placing them under significant financial strain. The same is true for those people - trans and cis - travelling to access abortion.

For a more in depth response covering all of the issues within this Bill, we would defer to the position set out in Alliance for Choice & the Women's Policy Group submissions.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alexa Moore', with a stylized, flowing script.

Alexa Moore
Director
TransgenderNI

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