

Ladies & Gentlemen of the Justice Committee

At the outset I would like to welcome this Bill and I would encourage you to support it also. Just as some people from Ireland bravely opposed slavery by vested interests in the 1700s I would love to see MLAs from all backgrounds take a stand against human trafficking.

The best way to curtail trafficking is by reducing the demand for prostitutes and this can be done most effectively by criminalising the purchasing of sex. You will be aware that our locally born prostitutes are overwhelmingly from very difficult backgrounds. Many will have been abused as children and many will be suffering from addictions. Men who pay for sex from such women are preying on their vulnerability.

I'm sure no girl in her early teens sets her sights on a career in prostitution. Rather it is something that she either slides into or is coerced into. As a society we do not permit poor people to sell body parts to wealthy people. Why then should we allow vulnerable women to sell their bodies to men risking disease, robbery, vicious assaults and even death.

Thank you
David Wallace