

In response to the call for evidence from The Committee for Health in the Northern Ireland Assembly, I am writing to express my views on MLA Clare Bailey's "*Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Bill*", introduced in September.

The purpose of this Bill is to silence those in our community who hold a pro-life stance by denying them the fundamental right to freedom of expression and assembly which are protected in law.

I am pro-life and I applaud those who give up their time to stand outside centres for abortion services, offering help and support and a different choice, to the women who feel like they have no other choice at that moment. Many lives have been saved as a result of their excellent work.

All Rallies for Life or vigils outside such centres that I have witnessed, have been peaceful and non-confrontational; in fact, I have only witnessed abusive behaviour from those who call themselves pro-choice. Pro-life campaigners have to wear cameras now to prove that any claims of abusive behaviour are simply untrue.

There is no police evidence to substantiate Claire Bailey's claims of harassment and intimidation by pro-life campaigners and this Bill targets and criminalises only those who take a pro-life stance.