

I wish to remind the health committee that the claims of harassment and intimidation outside abortion centres made by Claire Bailey are not backed up by any police evidence. To the contrary there will be police reports of intimidation by so called 'pro-choicers' outside abortion centres and at many pro-life gatherings.

For the past thirty years I have been actively involved in pro-life work, whether it be lobbying MPs in parliament or Stormont, joining in with pro-life rallies with crowds of many thousands, leafleting around doors especially around election times, educating the public about the change in our pro-life laws and the humanity of the unborn. I have only ever worked alongside peaceful and respectful people. In contrast, I have also witnessed aggression and abusive behaviour towards myself and other pro-life people. It is the general rule that we do not retaliate and simply stand our ground, whether it be holding a pro-life poster, distributing leaflets or praying.

The purpose of this bill is to directly attack those people who dedicate their lives to actively protecting innocent lives and now they are being targeted and treated quite simply like criminals.

I can safely presume that those that support Claire Baileys access zone bill are all in fact in support of abortion. They have a clear agenda, that being to prevent women receiving or being told of free support and advice to allow them to not go ahead with an abortion. We already have laws in place to combat public unrest. We also have articles ten and eleven of the Human Rights Act which protects the right of freedom of assembly and expression.

So, this proposed bill has no place in our society. It would criminalise the innocent and prevent help being given to women and young girls, many of whom are being pressured by boyfriends or pimps who are involved in sexual trafficking. Their last chance of receiving help is often from a pro-life person outside the abortion centre.

So, I would respectfully ask for a complete rejection of this draconian proposed bill.