

I'm writing to you to express my views on the Severe Fetal Impairment Abortion (Amendment) Bill.

The North is so behind on its views, particularly on abortion. As a society we are failing pregnant people in general but specifically those who wish to have an abortion in the case of severe foetal impairment is a breach of human rights as set out by the CEDAW 2018. Ironically, Paragraphs 85 and 86 of the CEDAW 2018 report are now law as part of the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Act 2019. We must act on behalf of and respect legislation already in place.

Furthermore, the lack of services over decades has made pregnant people travel. Travel is not a solution, it takes people away from their support systems and limits aftercare. Telling people to travel to receive healthcare is uncalled for, and must be addressed. Given the covid-19 pandemic, it is even clearer now that we must have services at home for our people. The North is yet again left behind and stuck in old fashion ways, acting against reproductive rights of those that want abortions.

It must be made clear that choosing to have an abortion in such cases IS NOT discrimination against disabled persons. In fact, in choosing to have an abortion, many pregnant people are doing so out of love because they feel they are not protected or have enough support to provide for their offspring.

As a society, more must be done to protect the living than the unborn. So many children are living in poverty, children with autism are having to go to private doctors to get a diagnosis or wait years on the list and disabled children too also experience difficult waiting times. Make changes to society to make it a place where people want to bring children into.

Lastly, we must not take the right away from anyone to choose. Our rights include having a choice, this right must be respected irrespective of the views of those in government. The role of elected representatives is to represent their constituents, all constituents.

This bill should be opposed.