

I would like to record my objection to this bill.

Clinicians advise that very serious abnormalities are only detected at the 20 week scan, sometimes even later. Since this bill seeks to restrict abortion to 24 weeks, it would result in women having a maximum of four weeks to make a decision. No one should feel rushed into making such an important life decision.

I feel it is important to look at the Republic of Ireland's abortion legislation, which only provides for fatal foetal impairment, and consider what the practical outworkings have been. Namely, that at least one woman continues to travel from the Republic of Ireland to GB for abortion every day. We should avoid making the same mistake here.

It is also worth pointing out that the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists warn that it is not always possible to distinguish between a severe and fatal foetal impairment so this proposed legislation is clearly impractical and would put unnecessary pressure on both clinicians and patients.

One of CEDAW's recommendations is that abortion access should be expanded in parallel with "ensuring appropriate and ongoing support, social and financial, for women who decide to carry such pregnancies to term". This is something I would like to see the Assembly focus on since it would actually support people with disabilities, something that this bill fails to address.