

## Free Presbyterian Government and Morals Committee

Dear Justice Committee Clerk,

We are writing in regard to the proposed amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill by Mr Jim Wells MLA.

In accordance with the teaching of Scripture we believe that life is to be protected at all cost. "Thou shalt not kill" (Exo 20:13) That belief is not to be diminished when the life in question is that of a child, whether it be in the early years of its life outside the womb or during the period of its development inside the womb. This view is contained in the "Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929" and "Offences against the person Act 1861".

The law at present within Northern Ireland protects the life of the unborn child, with abortion only permitted "*where the continuance of the pregnancy threatens the life of the woman or would adversely affect her physical or mental health in a manner that is 'real and serious' and 'long term or permanent'*".

In the past most of these legal abortions have been carried out by the NHS. In recent years though the Marie Stopes organisation, which is known for performing abortions for a fee, has opened its doors in Northern Ireland. This organisation states "If a woman feels that an abortion is in her or her family's best interests, then she should have access to safe, supportive and non-judgmental advice and help." Rather than abortion being assessed on "risk to life" it is in Marie Stopes view, merely judged on what a woman feels are her best interests.

(<http://mariestopes.org.uk/women/abortion/abortion-facts/what-abortion>)

This is an unregulated, unaccountable private clinic opened in Northern Ireland with the aim of liberalising abortion legislation in a country which continues to be one of the safest places for pregnant women and their babies.

With this in mind we support Mr Jim Wells MLA's proposed amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill and its prohibition of commercial provision of abortion 'services' in Northern Ireland.

Yours faithfully,

Rev Raymond Robinson

(Convenor)

Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster Government and Morals Committee