

COALITION AGAINST THE EXTENSION OF THE ABORTION ACT

16 Veryan Gardens Newtownabbey BT36 7HG



House of Commons
London, SW1A 0AA

Dear

During the passage of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill, it is expected that Members of Parliament will bring forward amendments to the Abortion Act. Since it is likely that at least one MP will call for the extension of the Act to Northern Ireland, we are writing to urge you to oppose any such move.

Opposition to the introduction of the Abortion Act cuts across Northern Ireland's traditional political and religious divisions and successive Governments have recognised the strength of this opposition. As recently as last year, Paul Goggins, Minister of State in the Northern Ireland Office acknowledged this, stating:

"The Government have no plans to amend the law on abortion in Northern Ireland. We believe the best forum for discussion of these questions is the Northern Ireland Assembly, once it has assumed responsibility for the criminal law." (Hansard 16/06/07)

On 22 October 2007 Assembly members from the four major political parties gave overwhelming support to a motion rejecting *"any attempt to make abortion more widely available in Northern Ireland."*

The people of Northern Ireland recognise the right to life of the unborn child – a right affirmed by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and they are deeply concerned by the growing evidence of the suffering women experience after abortion. We hope therefore that, regardless of your personal views on abortion, you will accept that we have a right to have this matter dealt with by our elected representatives in the Assembly. We ask you to reject any attempt to impose the Abortion Act on Northern Ireland.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Denvir, Secretary,
Life (NI)

Betty Gibson, Chairwoman,
Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (NI)

Callum Webster, Northern Ireland Officer,
The Christian Institute

Lynn Coles, Regional Coordinator
Silent No More

Johanna Higgins,
Association of Catholic Lawyers of Ireland

Bernadette Smyth, Director,
Precious Life

Eamon Doohan,
Doctors for Life