

"Both Lives Matter" stand@bothlivesmatter.org 07/11/2017 15:30

To <eighthamendment@oireachtas.ie>

Subject RE: FW: draft letter to Oireachtas for approval

Dear Ted,

Thank you for your response. I apologise for the delay in our reply.

As you know, our campaign is focussed on and based within the context of campaigns to change the law in the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland. However, as we stated in previous correspondence the unique circumstances of this island also require us to be as aware as possible of events in the south, as a change in law on either side of the border, will affect the whole island. When our *100 Thousand* research came under challenge in committee, we felt it necessary to contact you and request the opportunity to clarify allegations which were made concerning its validity.

We had previously been aware of some concerns in the south/Republic of Ireland, that the committee established to consider the eighth amendment, was weighted towards a reform of existing law. But we note with alarm recent events, particularly the vote taken on October 19, before all evidence was heard, that the eighth amendment would not be retained in full. The subsequent withdrawal of Professor Casey from appearing at committee and ensuing proceedings including media coverage, has led to, what we believe is a reasonable questioning of bias, within the committee.

After initially declining to hear from us (along with we understand, other "pro-life" campaign groups who weren't considered to be expert witnesses), we suspect that the public criticism directed towards the committee, has led to your now inviting us to attend and present our research. *After much consideration* we have come to the conclusion that we will not attend in person as, like Professor Casey, "we have no desire to add any further credence to this deeply flawed process".

Because *Both Lives* in existence in every pregnancy *Matter* we cannot agree that a reform of Irelands existing *life-affirming law*, is necessary for the life, health and wellbeing of women in Ireland. We believe that *the removal from law of the current legal status which every unborn human being holds, would be a tragedy*, and we wish to have no part in a process which seems to be committed to that pre-determined outcome. We had hoped that this committee would provide opportunity for Ireland to be world-leading in its defence of and support for Both Lives, but we fear that is not to be the case.

It is still important to us that we verify the validity of our claim, that because of our life-affirming law there is a reasonable probability that 100 thousand people are alive today in Northern Ireland who may not otherwise have been. However, rather than attend in person we would propose submitting a written summation of our methodology and findings. We aim to get this to you within the next week.

We would ask that if possible our letter be read into the record of the meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Dawn

Dawn McAvoy

Both Lives Matter

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About us

We stand together, from every background, all faiths or none, united in recognising the human dignity of everyone, ready to create a new culture, where compassion, solidarity and support for both lives is the norm.

We stand for the recognition and protection of human life. Because human life and dignity are at stake, abortion is about more than a private choice, it is of community or public interest. So we advocate for the retention of our present law which seeks to protect the lives and health of both women and unborn children.

We stand with women and unborn children calling for world-leading support, services and better care than abortion.

Let's re-humanise the conversation.