

The abortion referendum and Northern Ireland

SIR - The people of Northern Ireland should be careful what they wish for. In the rest of Britain, abortion is legal up to 24 weeks' gestation (or later in certain circumstances), and, due to the lax interpretation of the Abortion Act, is available on demand. Is that progress and women's liberation?

It was sad to see the jubilation of so many at the result of the referendum in Ireland, which can only lead to many more abortions.

Marilyn Parrott
Bowdon, Cheshire

SIR - The original referendum in 1983 for the eighth amendment to the Irish constitution, recognising the equal right to life of a pregnant woman and the unborn, was justified in view of widespread threats to unborn life. Pressure was growing for abortion to be legalised in every corner of the world, despite the Geneva Convention enshrining the right to life from conception.

The right to life is inalienable - it cannot be bestowed or taken away by politicians, or even by majorities of the electorate. If it could, there would be nothing to stop referendums on

euthanasia for the over-70s or the killing of the disabled.

Already there are calls for Northern Irish law to be "updated", even though no vote has been taken on the issue and the matter is a devolved one.

It is ironic beyond belief that having struggled so hard to rid Northern Ireland of terrorism, by which so many innocent lives were lost, they would introduce by the back door the killing of the innocent.

The lesson of the Irish referendum is that once the line protecting human life is moved, there is no logical reason not to keep moving it. With abortion advocates demanding provision of the abortion pill as the next step to Utopia, women will soon be able to get a home abortion but not a home birth.

Ann Farmer
Woodford Green, Essex

SIR - Theresa May must be delighted. A dispute about abortion in Northern Ireland is just what she needs.

Well, there's not much else going on at the moment.

Can we sniff an election in the offing?

Barry Tighe
Hale End, Essex

D. Tidmarsh 29.5.2018