Dear MP,

We are writing to urge you to vote against Fiona Bruce’s amendment to the Serious Crime bill on sex selective abortion on 23 February, for the following reasons:

1. It overturns the key principle of the 1967 Abortion Act, which prioritises the life, health and well-being of the woman.

2. It would no longer be permitted to have an abortion for sex-linked genetic disorders that cannot be diagnosed antenatally.

3. The 1967 Abortion Act does not recognise fetal rights. If this principle is breached, then all abortion is open to challenge.

4. It introduces ethnic profiling and suspicion of South Asian women who seek abortions and of South Asian abortion providers, and jeopardises legitimate access to and provision of abortion in these communities.

5. It seeks to undermine the doctor-patient relationship and patient confidentiality, and would make doctors less willing to refer for or provide abortions, especially in the second trimester.

Lastly, we find it anomalous and disturbing that safe abortion should be addressed within a serious crime bill, which smacks of Victorian law, when abortion is a women’s health and rights issue.

The following organisations have published briefings outlining their opposition to the amendment:

- End Violence Against Women – a coalition of 60 organisations
- IKWRO
- Southall Black Sisters and CSS
- Antenatal Results and Choices with the Genetic Alliance
- Voice for Choice
- Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
- Bpas
- Reproductive Health Matters

Further articles on the issue can be found here.

Shaheen Hashmat, a campaigner on honour-based violence has written compellingly on why this amendment will increase the threat to women from at risk communities.

Yours sincerely,
Lisa Hallgarten, Chair, Voice for Choice, and pp. Voice for Choice Members
Abortion Rights, Alliance for Choice Northern Ireland, Antenatal Results and Choices, Bpas, British Humanist Association, Brook & EFC, Doctors for a Woman’s Choice on Abortion, FPA, Reproductive Health Matters

and the following signatories:
Organisations
Umme Imam    Executive Director, The Angelou Project
Rebecca Schiller  Director, Birthrights
Sarah Green    Acting Director, End Violence Against Women Coalition
Manuelle Hurwitz Senior Advisor Abortion, International Planned Parenthood Federation
Sue Robson    Co-ordinator NEWomen’s Network
Jack Fletcher National Co-ordinator, Sexpression
Vivienne Hayes  CEO, Women’s Resource Centre

International
Suchitra Dalvie Co-ordinator, Asia Safe Abortion Partnership (ASAP)
Jashodhara Dasgupta Convenor, National Alliance for Maternal Health and Human Rights in India

Sexual health experts UK
Toni Belfield Specialist in sexual health information
Dilys Cossey OBE Secretary of Abortion Law Reform Association 1964-1968, past chair of FPA & Brook
Suzie Hayman  Agony Aunt for Woman Magazine, Trustee of Family Lives and Who Cares Trust
David Paintin Hon FFRSH, FRCOG, Emeritus Reader in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, University of London

Academics in law, medicine, public health, social sciences and bioethics
Dr Geraldine Brady Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Communities & Social Justice, Coventry University
Professor Jackie Cassell Director of Research Primary Care and Public Health, University of Brighton
Mairead Enright Lecturer in Law University of Kent
Dr Ruth Fletcher Senior Lecturer in Medical Law, Queen Mary, University of London
Marie Fox Professor of Socio-legal Studies, University of Birmingham
Dr Aisha K. Gill Reader in Criminology, University of Roehampton
Val Gillies Professor of Social Research, Goldsmiths College, University of London
Professor John Harris Professor of Bioethics, University of Manchester
Dr Eva Hoffmann Principal Investigator, MRC Genome Damage and Stability Centre, University of Sussex
Dr Lesley Hoggart Senior Lecturer, The Open University
Dr Kirsty Horsey Senior Lecturer, Law, University of Kent
Dr Nicola Horsley Research Fellow, Sociology, Goldsmiths, University of London
Roger Ingham Professor of Health and Community Psychology, University of Southampton
Dr Ellie Lee Reader in Social Policy, University of Kent
Dr Pam Lowe Senior Lecturer in Sociology, Aston University
Dr Nina Martin Senior Lecturer in Psychology, Leeds Beckett University
Dr Julie McCandless Asst. Professor in Law, London School of Economics and Political Sciences
Dr Sheelagh McGuinness Fellow, University of Birmingham
Professor Liz Meerabeau Visiting Professor, St George’s/Kingston University
Daniel Monk Reader in Law, Birkbeck, University of London
Jonathan Montgomery Professor of Health and Care Law, University College London
Dr Louise Newnham Research Fellow, MRC Genome Damage and Stability Centre, University of Sussex
Tulsi Patel Sociologist, University of Delhi
Dr Alison Phipps Director of Gender Studies, University of Sussex
Dr Nicky Praulx Reader in Law, Cardiff University
Navtej Purewal Deputy Director, South Asia Institute, SOAS, University of London
Sally Sheldon Professor of Law and Medical Ethics, University of Kent
Professor Hilary Standing Emeritus Professor, University of Sussex
Dr Sorcha
Ui Chonnachtaigh Lecturer in Ethics and Law, Keele University
Maya Unnithan Professor of Social and Medical Anthropology, University of Sussex
Professor Edwin van Teijlingen Professor of Reproductive health Research, Bournemouth University