

# Humanist Society Scotland submission of 30 March 2023

## PE1969/D: Amend the law to fully decriminalise abortion in Scotland

Thank you for contacting us asking for our view on petition 1969. I am writing in response on behalf of Humanist Society Scotland to present our views on the decriminalisation of abortion within Scotland.

Humanist Society Scotland is in support of amending the law to decriminalise abortion in Scotland.

As advocates for the humanist community within Scotland, we believe in the importance of bodily autonomy and freedom of choice for each individual. This includes women's right to decide about their own bodies, including the decision to have an abortion if they so wish.

Decriminalising abortion is not only a matter of individual rights but also a matter of social justice due to the fact that women from disadvantaged backgrounds often face greater barriers to accessing reproductive healthcare.

In addition, decriminalising abortion would bring Scotland in line with international human rights standards. The United Nations has recognised access to safe and legal abortions as a human right and countries around the world are taking steps to ensure that women have access to these services. Scotland would join a plethora of other European nations in decriminalising abortion. These nations include Denmark (1973), The Netherlands (1984), Belgium (1990) and France (1975). Scotland has the opportunity to be a leader in this movement and show its commitment to upholding human rights for all.

We understand the complex nature of this issue and that there are many different perspectives on this matter. However, we believe that the decriminalisation of abortion is a necessary step towards creating a more just and equitable society, one that upholds the fundamental principles of humanism. We also note that decriminalisation of abortion is a view supported by many of the front-line service providers with first-hand experience of abortion care including the British Medical

Association, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Royal College of Midwives and the British Pregnancy Advisory Service,

We urge you to consider this petition PE1969 with care and compassion and to take the necessary action to decriminalisation abortion within Scotland.