

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**  
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

1<sup>st</sup> December 2020

*Dear Constance,*

**RE: FOETAL SENTIENCE & ABORTION**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of foetal sentience and abortion; your comments upon which I have read with enormous interest and compassion.

I completely understand what an incredibly emotive issue this is, and I appreciate the strength of feelings on all sides. It is for this reason that, as with other matters of conscience, the Government rightly adopts a neutral stance on abortion, allowing Conservative MPs to vote freely according to their moral, ethical, or religious beliefs. This is a convention that I wholeheartedly support.

I understand that, in the last ten years, the body of knowledge relating to foetal sentience has been expanding, such that in 2019 the NHS recommended pain relief for foetuses undergoing surgery for spina bifida from 20 weeks onwards. I also know that the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists has not recommended the use of analgesia or anaesthesia for the foetus in utero, including for abortions. There is a wide range of guidance and research in this area, reaching a wide range of recommendations and conclusions.

I believe it is vital that, on a matter this sensitive and important, the broadest possible scope of scientific research is examined, informing a comprehensive debate. I would encourage all my colleagues across the House and on all sides of the discussion to engage in this debate.

With that in mind, thank you for having invited me to the Pro Life APPG meeting on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November, but unfortunately, prior parliamentary commitments prevented me from attending. I shall, however, always continue to review emerging research in this area with interest.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you, then please do not hesitate to contact me again. Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

*With best wishes,*

*Tom*

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT**  
**CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**