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Convenor, Devolution (Further Powers) Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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14 October 2015

I wanted to write to inform you that the Government intends to bring forward an amendment to the Scotland Bill to devolve abortion to the Scottish Parliament. As I set out during my appearance at the UK Parliament's Scottish Affairs Committee today, I will table this amendment in advance of the Bill's Report Stage in the House of Commons.

This will fulfil the recommendation of the Smith Commission that responsibility for abortion law should be transferred to the Scottish Parliament. As you know, the Smith Commission recommended that serious further consideration of this issue should take place. UK and Scottish Government Ministers and officials have held discussions on this issue and I informed the Deputy First Minister of the Government's decision prior to my appearance at the Scottish Affairs Committee today.

The Scottish Parliament already has responsibility for many of the most serious matters in public life, including end of life issues, and as I set out to the Scottish Affairs Committee today, I do not see a convincing constitutional reason why abortion law should not be devolved. This is clearly a sensitive issue which people have strong views on. This is why I wanted to clearly set out the Government's plans. There will be engagement with interested parties as we take this matter forward.

**Rt Hon DAVID MUNDELL MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND**