Dear [INSERT NAME] MP,

I am writing to ask that you attend the Private Member’s Bill on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence on 16 December 2016.

This vote really matters. You may already know the statistics. The PSNI responds to a domestic violence incident every 18.5 minutes in Northern Ireland. Over 1,200 women and children fled to Women’s Aid refuges last year, because they weren’t safe in their own homes. Since 2010, 21 women have been killed in a domestic homicide in Northern Ireland – 17 were killed by partners or former partners and 4 were killed by family members. Even one death is one too many.

Behind these statistics are real women. Children robbed of their mothers. Real families being robbed of daughters, sisters, aunts. Not only does domestic abuse cost our police, health system and public services an estimated £931 million each year, it devastates lives across Northern Ireland.

I want our Government to ensure all of us can live free from violence and abuse. How? By ratifying the Istanbul Convention.

This historic treaty makes violence and abuse against women and girls illegal. When a Government ratifies the Convention, they are legally bound to prevent and tackle violence against women. The Convention gives all survivors of domestic abuse the right to access specialist services – such as local Women’s Aid refuges – which they need to live in safety and rebuild their lives.

The UK Government signed the Convention is 2012. But until it is ratified, the Convention remains just a piece of paper. If 100 MPs attend this historic debate on 16 December and vote in favour of the Istanbul Convention, we will be one step closer to ratification. One step closer to protecting life-saving services and the women and children that depend on them.

As my MP, please seize this opportunity to improve the lives of victims and survivors of gender-based violence, and vote to support the Private Members Bill on 16 December 2016.

You can find out more about this historic vote here: <http://icchange.co.uk/pmb/>

Yours sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]