



CHURCH OF IRELAND
THE GENERAL SYNOD

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Our Ref:

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24 NOV 2016

23 November 2016

Citizens' Assembly,
16 Parnell Square,
Dublin 1.

Dear Ms Justice Laffoy,

On behalf of the Honorary Secretaries of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland, please find below a submission from the Standing Committee of the General Synod on the topic of the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution.

Submission:

While the Church of Ireland has consistently expressed the view that abortion should be confined to situations of strict and undeniable medical necessity, it has also since 1983 publicly questioned the wisdom of addressing such complex moral problems by means of amendments to the constitution. Indeed unfolding events and a range of tragic human cases over the past three decades have demonstrated the deficiencies of the constitutional approach. However, we would wish to emphasize that to review or question the value of the Eighth Amendment at this time is not by implication to call for easy access to abortion. Rather, it is to suggest that those complex and hopefully rare situations in which medical necessity might require termination of pregnancy would be more suitably addressed through nuanced legislation. The Church of Ireland offers its good wishes and prayers to the Assembly in its weighty duty of striving to find a way forward in this sensitive matter, so that the rights of both mothers and the unborn may be duly balanced and careful reflection may take place regarding the place of the Constitution in addressing complex moral and social matters.

Yours sincerely,

The Honorary Secretaries of the General Synod,

p.p.

Dr Catherine Smith,

Synod Officer

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