



---

**THE 8TH AMENDMENT -  
A LIFE-SAVING BEACON OF HOPE**

SUBMISSION TO THE CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

---

prolife  
campaign

Room 60, Clifton House,  
Lower Fitzwilliam Street,  
Dublin 2  
01 6629275  
info@prolifecampaign.ie  
www.prolifecampaign.ie

***“If I had listened to the pro-choice line when I discovered I was pregnant, I wouldn’t have my beautiful three-year-old daughter, Hollie. And those pushing for repeal of the 8th Amendment would have no words to console me for the loss I’d have suffered. I am so grateful that the 8th Amendment was there when I faced a crisis pregnancy. I dread to think what might have happened if there had been an abortion clinic just down the road from where I live.”***

Mary Kenny, young mother from Limerick at launch of LoveBoth Project in Dublin, November 2016

## THE 8TH AMENDMENT - A LIFE-SAVING BEACON OF HOPE

There are very few laws it can be said with certainty save lives. The 8th Amendment is one.

Mary Kenny’s story represents the experiences of countless families in Ireland today. There are so many stories of mothers and parents who contemplated abortion only to change their minds at the last minute. Many people involved in the pro-life movement today openly say they owe the life of their child to the 8th Amendment.

Having to travel to England meant a few extra days planning and gave them the time to think things through a bit more and decide against abortion. Today, they cannot believe they ever entertained the idea of ending the life of the son or daughter who now means the world to them.

Ireland’s life-saving 8th Amendment doesn’t deserve the criticism and ridicule it receives in certain quarters. It has served as a beacon at a time when other countries legalised abortion in wide-ranging circumstances. Ireland has shown it’s possible to prohibit abortion and still be a world leader in protecting the lives of pregnant women.

No country is perfect but we have every reason to be immensely proud of our pro-life laws. As a society, instead of dismantling the 8th Amendment, we should be pooling our energies and working together to create a more welcoming and life-affirming environment for expectant mothers and their unborn babies.

## 100,000 LIVES SAVED BY THE 8TH AMENDMENT

A recent independently produced actuarial report<sup>1</sup> compared the number of Irish women who travel abroad to avail of abortion, to abortion rates in other EU countries. It concluded that at least 100,000 lives have been saved from abortion by the 8th Amendment in the last two decades. That’s 1 in every 50 people in Ireland or the population of Co. Kilkenny.

When examined closely, the call for repeal of the 8th Amendment is an extremely radical proposal. Usually referendums add protection to human rights. Repeal of the 8th Amendment, however, would strip the unborn child of all meaningful protections.

## IN THE UK, 1 IN 5 PREGNANCIES END IN ABORTION

Every abortion on demand regime began as “restrictive” but once the door to legalised abortion was unlocked it was only a matter of time until the grounds for abortion were widened.

Over time, abortion becomes normalised. Laws shape our behaviour. We’ve all seen how attitudes to smoking and wearing safety belts have shifted following changes to the law.

The same would happen if the 8th Amendment were removed. 1 in 5 pregnancies are aborted in the UK,<sup>2</sup> France and Spain – this is 300% more than the Irish rate. Other countries have learned there is no such thing as “restrictive” abortion. Let’s not make the same mistake. There is nothing democratic about supporting the holding of a referendum that if passed would take away the right to life itself.

191,014 abortions were carried out in the UK in 2015. 98% of these were performed for social reasons. 37% were performed on women who had at least one previous abortion.

## 90% OF BABIES DIAGNOSED WITH DOWN SYNDROME IN BRITAIN ARE ABORTED

In Britain, 90% of babies diagnosed with Down syndrome in the womb are aborted.<sup>3</sup> Abortion is legal in Britain for any detectable disability through all nine months of pregnancy. In Denmark there is a goal to make it a Down syndrome free country by 2030.<sup>4</sup> In Iceland, shockingly, they have already reached that target.

Once the right to life itself is surrendered, it’s no surprise that the most vulnerable and dependent human lives are the first to be discriminated against.

In Ireland, we have a culture of equality and inclusion that we can be proud of. Nowhere is this more evident than in the work of the Special Olympics. With over 9,000 athletes and a network of 25,000 volunteers, it has become one of the largest and most successful voluntary organisations in Ireland.

Let’s extend supports to families and continue to improve outcomes and quality of life for people with Down syndrome and other disabilities, instead of following other countries down the destructive road of abortion.

## IRELAND – A WORLD LEADER IN SAFETY FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

Ireland ranks in the top league in the world in terms of safety for pregnant women.<sup>5</sup> So the argument that Ireland without abortion put women's lives at risk simply doesn't add up.

Since 2009, Ireland has adopted the methodology used by the UK's triennium report Confidential Enquiry into Maternal Deaths (CEMD) for measuring maternal deaths.

The UK's CEMD is in operation for over sixty years and is recognised as the gold standard for enquiries into maternal deaths worldwide. It provides the most comprehensive assessment of maternal healthcare anywhere in the world, including other developed countries.

Underestimates of maternal death rates are extremely common. The most recent Confidential Maternal Death Enquiry in Ireland published in 2015 says that in Europe alone underestimations of maternal deaths vary between 30% and 50%. It is important to keep this in mind when comparing Ireland's maternal mortality rates to other countries, aside from the UK.

Based on the methodology used in Ireland's Confidential Maternal Death Enquiry, Ireland has a safety record very close to the UK's, indeed the 2015 Maternal Mortality Estimates by the World Health Organisation, UNICEF, UNFPA and World Bank Group, put Ireland ahead of the UK, with 8 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, compared with 9 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, in the single year.

## BETRAYAL OF WOMEN

Women contemplating abortion are told their unborn child is nothing more than a "clump of cells". They are encouraged not to look at the ultrasound monitor when receiving counselling before the abortion. That's the accepted routine practice of those who facilitate abortion.

Women are also kept in the dark about how in some cases their unborn child will be dismembered or have his/her life ended with an injection into the heart. If abortion was such an acceptable procedure, why the suppression of such basic information?

In truth, the only way the case for abortion can be sustained is through deep denial and euphemisms like "choice" that conceal what it actually involves.

It is a significant human rights abuse of women to systematically withhold from them vital information about the development and humanity of the unborn child and the possible adverse mental health after effects of the abortion on them. This gives the lie to the pro-choice mantra about "trusting women" to make an "informed" decision on whether or not to proceed with an abortion.

## WHAT ABORTIONISTS ARE HAPPY TO SAY BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

It seems it is okay for abortionists to talk openly about what they do when they meet in private behind closed doors. But clearly, it is not information they trust women having access to.

At the National Abortion Conference in San Francisco in 2015, leading abortionists were filmed talking about how, in order to protect the abortion industry, they are under pressure not to disclose details of their profession.

They were comfortable discussing such details among colleagues: the “violence” of what abortion does, “heads” getting stuck during the procedure, and expressions of unease about deliberately “inflicting pain” on the baby.

Another abortionist gave an account of an “eyeball” falling onto their lap during a procedure. The audience of abortionists laughed when the chairperson remarked that this was a sign that the abortion was going well.

As distressing as it is to hear these descriptions of abortion, a genuine debate on a life and death issue requires facing the brutal reality, not turning away from it or sanitising it.

## IMPACT OF ABORTION ON WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Medical research, far from confirming that abortion protects women's mental health, has failed to find any benefit to women from abortion. Although there are hundreds of thousands of abortions annually on mental health grounds in Britain, there is no evidence that abortion improves the mental health of women.

Many peer-reviewed studies, however, confirm the testimony of post-abortive women that abortion itself heightens the risk of future mental health problems.<sup>6 7 8</sup> And there is comprehensive longitudinal research showing that women who have abortions are more likely to commit suicide compared to all women of reproductive age.<sup>9 10</sup>

At the core of the campaign for repeal of the 8th Amendment is a systemic denialism about the extent and strength of the peer reviewed research debunking claims that abortion helps women's mental health. This reluctance extends to suppressing the voices of groups like Women Hurt, which brings together women who regret their abortions and wish to tell their stories.

## A BABY'S HEART BEATS JUST 21 DAYS AFTER CONCEPTION

Each of us, as a vulnerable unborn child, completed the journey from conception to birth. In 1967, when the abortion law was introduced in Britain, people could have pleaded ignorance about the humanity of the unborn child. Today, we don't have this excuse. Most of us have seen the amazing ultrasound pictures of our own children or those of family members.

The baby's heart starts beating at 21 days. At just six weeks, the baby's eyes and eye lids, nose, mouth, and tongue have formed. Electrical brain activity can be detected at six or seven weeks, and by the end of the eighth week, all the baby's organs are developing.

By ten weeks the child can make bodily movements. At 12 weeks the baby can be seen sucking its thumb and wiggling in the womb.

The amazing advances in ultrasound technology illuminate the truth that the unborn child is a human being – a human life with potential, not a potential human life.

Each human being, regardless of age, dependency, gender, disability or circumstance, possesses a profound, inherent, equal and irreplaceable value and dignity. If as a society we arbitrarily decide to pick and choose which human lives are worthy or unworthy of protection in law, we diminish respect for all human life, born and unborn.

## FEELING PRESSURED TO “CHOOSE” ABORTION

Some families of babies diagnosed with life-limiting conditions are devastated at the pressure they came under from medical professionals to abort their child.

They say the only “choice” they were given was experienced by them as pressure, often in a cold and very unsympathetic manner.

At a time when they desperately needed genuine help and support to carry them through the crisis, they felt they were being pushed to opt for abortion.

In one case, a mother was told her daughter had a “fatal foetal abnormality” with zero chance of making it to birth. Sinead Mc Breen says: “We were pressured to abort Grace and told by medical staff ‘why are you carrying on with this pregnancy - it’s not going anywhere?’ I was made feel like a foolish mum and told that I already had healthy children at home and that we should go for a termination to a ‘sister hospital’ in England.”

In the end she decided not to abort Grace who was born with Down syndrome but with none of the life-limiting conditions doctors said with certainty the baby would have. Stories like this are not isolated. More and more families are coming forward to talk about similar experiences.

It is appalling that this creeping insensitivity and pressure to abort now exists. It amounts to doctors making value judgements on which lives are worthy of protection and which ones are not. It very clearly crosses a line from duty of care towards every patient, to adopting what can only be described as a eugenic mentality.

If this is already happening with the 8th Amendment in place, how much worse would the pressure be on parents if the 8th Amendment were dismantled?

## COMPASSIONATE CARE IN CASES OF “FATAL FOETAL ABNORMALITY”

The debate about abortion where an unborn baby has a life-shortening condition is not a medical one. It is about how we look out for one another as a society. Anyone can have a disability, a handicap or a terminal illness and it can come in old age, middle age, in childhood or even before we are born. In each of these challenging situations we have to look after one another in a way that respects the dignity of every human life.

The term “fatal foetal abnormality” is a loaded term.<sup>11</sup> It is meant to indicate how a number of conditions (e.g. anencephaly, Trisomy 13 and Trisomy 18) are necessarily fatal for children either in utero or almost immediately after birth. The reality is different. Doctors have no way of knowing how long a child diagnosed with one of these conditions will live.

They could live for months and even years after birth. Studies have found over 70% of children conceived with anencephaly have live births, with roughly a third of these babies living for at least two days.<sup>12 13</sup>

Almost one in ten children born with one of the Trisomy conditions live for a year or longer, in rare cases even into adulthood.<sup>14</sup> They have been reported to show awareness of people around them, to react to sound, and to learn and remember.

In Ireland today there are parents who have returned home after aborting their child with a terminal illness only to learn for the first time about the existence of perinatal hospice care as an alternative to abortion. It is tragic and unacceptable that this is happening. The primary reason is the sustained media focus on abortion in these situations.

Instead of pressuring parents to go down the road of abortion, health care professionals should be given additional resources to provide high quality palliative care and facilitate families in sharing those precious moments with their baby for whatever length of time he or she lives.<sup>15</sup>

## JOHN PAUL JOHNSON

John Paul Johnson had anencephaly and lived for 17 minutes after he was born. His mother Cliona says: “While 17 minutes might seem like a very short time, it is a moment in time, etched in our hearts forever. It has been such a gift to look back during our time of suffering and loss and remember that precious life. John Paul had every bit as much right to be given a chance to live as anyone. He might have only lived for a few minutes but he had a lifetime’s worth of love in those few minutes. Every human life is of value regardless of how short their life might be.”

When politicians or doctors support abortion for babies like John Paul, they are making a negative judgement on the value of those babies’ lives. No one would dream of saying the law should not protect the right to life of, say, a three year old with a disability. Why then is it deemed acceptable to campaign for abortion where an unborn child has a potentially life-shortening condition?

## “WHAT ABOUT ABORTION IN THE CASE OF RAPE”?

Rape is a vicious crime. When a woman becomes pregnant as a result of rape it is an immensely difficult and agonising situation for her and tests our true compassion and solidarity as a society. Indeed, abortion may be the easy solution for everybody except the woman and her unborn child. The fact that it involves the taking of an innocent unborn life and exposes the woman to emotional hurt and possible long-term psychological harm is constantly overlooked by pro-choice campaigners.

The landmark Roe v Wade decision, which legalised abortion in the United States, shows how abortion advocates use highly emotive cases like rape to open the door to wide-ranging abortion. It’s happening in Ireland at present with the campaign to dismantle the 8th Amendment. Norma Mc Corvey (Jane Roe from Roe v. Wade) admits she was exploited by pro-abortion campaigners and then quickly abandoned once they successfully used her case to get abortion legalised. She now campaigns publicly against abortion.

## WE'RE ALL WANTED BY SOMEONE

Ryan Bomberger is a human rights campaigner based in the US. He was born following rape and publicly thanked his birth mum for giving him life. Ryan has movingly said: "We're all wanted by someone." Heather Gemmen faced a horrendous situation when she became pregnant after rape. In her book *Startling Beauty* she tells how relieved she is that she gave birth to her daughter Rachael: "So much of my anguish was in deciding what to do with the pregnancy. Now I know that going through with it brings healing." Her daughter Rachael, she says, "is the epitome of joy." Every pregnancy following rape is a Ryan or a Rachael. Their stories and others like them deserve to be heard in the abortion debate. Each child conceived in rape is one of us, smaller and hidden from view like every unborn child, but equally a person. The child is absolutely innocent of their father's crime. They are not a part of their mother's body, or responsible for their father's character. Seeking stronger sentences for rapists and real justice for those who are victims of rape is surely a more just way to proceed than campaigning for the right to end the life of an utterly innocent child?

Ethical concerns apart, any legislation for abortion in the case of rape would be unworkable. How would an alleged rape victim prove that her pregnancy is a result of rape? A criminal trial could take years. Many of those pushing for abortion in the case of rape know that the law would be absurd in practice. The truth is campaigners the world over have used the same tactic to get wide-ranging abortion.

## MS C'S ABORTION REGRET WRITTEN OUT OF THE PICTURE

The woman at the centre of the high profile C case was taken to England for an abortion as a minor. Her case surrounding abortion and rape was the subject of weeks of headline news before the State was granted leave to take her abroad. Soon after the abortion, it emerged that she deeply regretted going through with it. Overnight, the light of media scrutiny was switched off and Ms C was forgotten. The public's only memory of this case would be the outrage engendered in media circles making sure that the abortion took place. And that's how many in the media would like people to remember it.

## THE TRUTH ABOUT ABORTION IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Official Canadian figures show that over a ten year period starting in 2000, 491 babies who survived botched abortions were abandoned by medical staff and left to die alone in the corners of hospitals.<sup>16</sup>

In the UK, the Confidential Enquiry into Maternal and Child Health revealed that 66 babies were born alive and left unaided to die after failed abortions in England and Wales, in one year.<sup>17</sup>

These figures give us a glimpse into the chilling and grotesque reality of legalised abortion. The fact that these practices are rarely talked about in public doesn't diminish one iota the horror of what takes place. In fact, the silence surrounding it, if anything, adds to the barbarity of what happens in the name of "choice" and "compassion".

It is routine in countries with legalised abortion that doctors in one part of the hospital are doing everything possible to save a premature baby born at say 23 weeks, while in another part of the same hospital a baby at 24 weeks gestation is having its life ended by abortion.

The only difference between the two babies is that one is wanted and the other is not.

Certain UN committees and groups like Amnesty International are quick to challenge Ireland about its abortion laws and the 8th Amendment. But these bodies have point blank refused to raise even a murmur of criticism against the human rights abuses involved in these cases where babies born alive after botched abortion are left alone in hospital corners to die without receiving any comfort care from medical staff.

It is important to keep these double standards in mind when we hear these international bodies attack Ireland's pro-life laws.



## STORIES THAT DESERVE A HEARING

Gianna Jessen was born alive following a failed abortion, leaving her with cerebral palsy. Today, she campaigns for legislation that protects human life. If abortion is about women's rights, then what about Gianna's?

Melissa Ohden was also born alive after a failed abortion. Instead of receiving specialised care she was tossed in with discarded medical waste. A nurse heard her crying and intervened to save her life. Today Melissa has a Master's Degree in Social Science and is a care worker.

In 2007, artist Emma Beck committed suicide, leaving a note saying: "I should never have had an abortion. I see now I would have been a good mum. I told everyone I didn't want to do it, even at the hospital. I was frightened, now it is too late." Heart-breaking tragedies like this don't get the coverage they deserve.

Dr Anthony Levatino is a former abortionist. He speaks candidly about the horror of his time in the abortion industry, like many other practitioners who could no longer stomach what they were doing.

There is no end of stories like these showing the dark side of abortion. It is important that we reflect on them in the context of the debate on the 8th Amendment.

## IMPACT OF THE 2013 ABORTION LEGISLATION

Since the 2013 abortion legislation came into force, at least six abortions have been performed on the "threat of suicide" ground, according to officially published figures.<sup>18</sup> Before the law passed, the Government gave assurances that it was unlikely the "threat of suicide" clause of the legislation would ever be activated given that medical evidence clearly shows abortion is not a treatment for suicidal ideation. The fact that several abortions have already taken place on this ground shows how hollow the Government's assurances were.

No one claimed at the time, as has been suggested, that the passage of the 2013 law would open the "floodgates" to abortion overnight. The loss of even one baby's life from abortion is an immense tragedy. It is a very sad fact that the Government's legislation in 2013 is directly responsible for the fact that so far several babies have had their lives ended under the 'threat of suicide' ground. The passage of the 2013 legislation is also directly responsible for emboldening the pro-choice movement's campaign to dismantle the 8th Amendment.

It is difficult to determine from the information published to date whether the deaths of the other 46 babies under the new Act resulted from induced abortion that directly targeted their lives or whether some or all of them resulted from necessary medical interventions in pregnancy to save the life of the mother where every reasonable effort was also made to save the life of the unborn child.

## CLAIMS ABOUT “CRIMINALISING” WOMEN FOR ABORTION

Some of those campaigning for repeal of the 8th Amendment have attempted to create the false impression that Ireland is somehow unique in the world in having criminal sanctions for procuring an illegal abortion.

The truth is that most countries, even ones with very permissive abortion laws, have some sanctions against illegal abortions.

Abortion is an extremely serious issue. It ends the life of an innocent unborn child. There have to be deterrents in the law for something as serious as that. In the event, however, that any prosecution were to take place, it should focus on the abortion provider and not the woman seeking the abortion. Campaigners for repeal of the 8th Amendment know full well that in Ireland, just like in most other countries, women seeking abortions have not been targeted by the law or prosecuted.

There are legitimate reasons, however, for this section of the law to remain as it currently stands. Take, for example, situations where individuals illegally import abortion drugs to self-administer without medical supervision. That’s a very serious health and safety matter not just for the unborn baby’s life that is endangered but also for the woman involved. Situations like this arise in every country with or without legal abortion. It’s a reality today that all kinds of drugs, some very dangerous, are traded over the internet. It is not a justification for legalising some of the dangerous drugs in question. It is an area though where the criminal law acts as an important deterrent.

Things are further complicated by situations like the one recently where abortion advocates, including at least one member of Oireachtas, illegally brought abortion drugs into the country and self-administered them as part of a publicity stunt. There has to be a sanction against such irresponsible life-endangering behaviour.

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ABORTION AND LIFE-SAVING MEDICAL TREATMENTS IN PREGNANCY

It is important to be clear what we mean by phrases like “termination of pregnancy” or the need for abortion “where there is a real and substantial risk to the life of the mother.”

Those campaigning for abortion purposely use emotive language, blurring the key ethical distinctions to push the case for legalised abortion.

Words like “abortion” and phrases like “termination of pregnancy” are routinely used in quite different ways in different contexts.

Regarding the phrase “termination of pregnancy”, it is important to remember that all pregnancies are terminated. Most of them terminate with the birth of a normal healthy baby. Some unborn babies die as an unavoidable and unintended result of some life-saving treatment of the mother.

Furthermore some babies die, in spite of the best efforts of all involved, as a result of being born too early: such births may occur spontaneously or may be induced in cases where it represents the only, albeit very low, chance of survival.

Clearly, then, there is a real ethical distinction between necessary medical interventions in pregnancy where the baby may be exposed to some risks and induced abortion where the life of the baby is directly and intentionally targeted.

## THE MOTIVATION BEHIND THE 8TH AMENDMENT

In 1965, the US Supreme Court ruled that there was a right to privacy in the US Constitution. In 1973, the US Supreme Court ruled on the basis of this privacy right that a woman had a right to abortion. But it also ruled that unborn children are not persons protected under the 14th Amendment so they have no protection against abortion, even up to birth, in some cases.

In 1974, the Irish Supreme Court followed the US Supreme Court and identified a privacy right in the Irish Constitution, citing the 1965 US Supreme Court ruling. It later became clear that under the Irish Constitution as it was then, the right to life of unborn children was not protected: only citizens had that protection.

It also became clear that there was great reluctance on the part of the European Commission of Human Rights to hold that unborn children were protected under the European Convention on Human Rights.

In view of these decisions and trends, an amendment to the Constitution was needed to give unborn children constitutional protection for their right to life against abortion.

If the 8th Amendment were to be repealed, the protection for unborn children would be removed. As Professor Gerry Whyte, a leading expert on Constitutional Law, has explained in his article in the Irish Times on 28 September 2016 (“Abortion on Demand the Legal Outcome of the Repeal of the Eighth Amendment”), “[t]he most obvious interpretation of any decision to delete article 40.3.3 is that the people will have decided to completely withdraw constitutional protection from the unborn. In this situation, the only constitutional factor at play will be the constitutional rights of the mother and clearly these would support a much more liberal regime of abortion.”

## INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE TO ABANDON CONSTITUTIONAL PROTECTION FOR THE UNBORN

Human rights in the Irish Constitution are based on the equal inherent worth and dignity of every human being – no human being has a lesser right to life than another. Some of the international committees monitoring international treaties, however, do not accept this principle of universal human equality. Some members of these committees vociferously back the “right to choose”. They do not accept that unborn children have an inherent right to life and are trying to badger Ireland into bringing our laws and Constitution into line with their position. The members of these committees are of course entitled to their opinions; but the people of Ireland are entitled, as a sovereign independent community, to adhere to their value system and to continue to protect unborn human beings who are members of that community, based on a humane philosophy that recognises and respects the equal worth and dignity of every human being.

## MEDIA COVERAGE OF ABORTION

The current media focus is almost exclusively on stories that push the case for dismantling the 8th Amendment, while stories that show abortion up in a bad light barely get a look in.

By way of example, in a one month period, RTÉ Radio 1, afforded 81 minutes to those campaigning for repeal of the 8th Amendment and just a paltry 4 minutes to the pro-life side.<sup>19</sup> During the same period, there were 23 articles in the national papers pushing abortion and just 2 pro-life articles. With this degree of bias, the public is getting a totally distorted presentation of the issue. It is virtually impossible to have a proper democratic discussion on the 8th Amendment until the issue of media bias is addressed.

## A BETTER VISION FOR IRELAND

The 8th Amendment has had a hugely positive, humane and life-saving impact on society. Our abortion rates are a fraction of those in Britain, taking our different population sizes into account.

Rather than look at ways to dismantle this life-protecting provision, we should be building on the life-affirming vision that is at the heart of the 8th Amendment. We should be focussed on issues that unite our society rather than divide it.

On any given night, there are more than 20 homeless pregnant women living rough on the streets of our cities.<sup>20</sup> This is a national scandal. It could be resolved and suitable sheltered accommodation found, if the political will existed. Likewise, we should be working together to make Ireland a pioneering centre of excellence for perinatal palliative care facilities to help families of babies with a life-limiting condition. And as a country, we should be putting resources in place to conduct research with organisations like the Lejeune Foundation to enhance the lives of children with Down syndrome and improve their quality of life and outcomes.

These are just some of the areas we should be focussing our energies on as a society, rather than following other countries down the road of abortion.

When we are welcoming a pregnancy as a community, we talk about “expecting a baby” but when a child is unwanted we talk about aborting a “foetus”. The corruption of language and the betrayal of both mother and baby are inescapable in the abortion debate.

We can do better than abortion for mothers and babies. The sign of a truly caring society is not one that corrupts language to exclude – rather it is one that welcomes everyone in life and protects everyone in law.

## CONCLUSION

The debate surrounding the 8th Amendment presents two radically different visions of society and human rights. When a particular group of human beings is singled out as undeserving of legal protection, we undermine respect for all human life, born and unborn.

Once abortion is introduced in certain circumstances, it's only a matter of time before the grounds for abortion are expanded. That's the undeniable international experience of legalised abortion.

We cannot sanction abortion and also claim to defend human life. The right to life is the first and most important right. Without it, all other rights are meaningless.

We call on you as members of the Citizens' Assembly to take a comprehensive look at the positive effect the 8th Amendment has had on Ireland and the lives of its citizens. When you do, we are confident you will conclude that it should be retained and not repealed.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our submission.

Pro Life Campaign - 15.12.16

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> [www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/eighth-amendment-has-saved-100-000-lives-group-claims-1.2783045](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/eighth-amendment-has-saved-100-000-lives-group-claims-1.2783045)

<sup>2</sup> Department of Health, Abortion Statistics, England & Wales, 2015

<sup>3</sup> Parliamentary Inquiry into Abortion on the Grounds of Disability, UK, 2013

<sup>4</sup> <http://cphpost.dk/news/down-syndrome-heading-for-extinction-in-denmark.html>

<sup>5</sup> Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990 to 2015, Estimates by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and the United Nations Population Division

<sup>6</sup> Abortion and mental health disorders: evidence from a 30-year longitudinal study, David M. Fergusson, L. John Horwood and Joseph M. Boden, *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 2008, 193:444-451

<sup>7</sup> Abortion in young women and subsequent mental health. Fergusson DM1, Horwood LJ, Ridder EM. *J Child Psychol Psychiatry*. 2006 Jan; 47(1):16-24.

<sup>8</sup> Pregnancy continuation and organizational religious activity following prenatal diagnosis of a lethal fetal defect are associated with improved psychological outcome. Cope H1, Garrett ME1, Gregory S2, Ashley-Koch A1. 2015 Aug; 35(8):761-8

<sup>9</sup> Injury deaths, suicides and homicides associated with pregnancy, Finland 1987–2000, Mika Gissler, Cynthia Berg, Marie-Hélène Bouvier-Colle, Pierre Buekens, *European Journal of Public Health*, 2005

<sup>10</sup> Decreased suicide rate after induced abortion, after the Current Care Guidelines in Finland 1987-2012. Gissler M1, Karalis E2, Ulander VM2. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 2015; 43: 99-101 Comment: The research revealed that women had a 2-fold risk for suicide after an induced abortion, compared to all women of reproductive age. The authors state: “Neither were our data suitable for investigating whether an increased suicide rate after induced abortion is caused by common risk factors or by causality.”

<sup>11</sup> Fatally flawed? A review and ethical analysis of lethal congenital malformations. Wilkinson DJ1, Thiele P, Watkins A, De Crespigny L. *BJOG*. 2012 Oct;119(11):1302-8

<sup>12</sup> “Incompatible with Life”: Does Article 40.3.3 Permit Abortion for “Fatal Foetal Abnormality”?” Simons, Caroline, *BCL LLM Medico-Legal Journal of Ireland*, 2015, 21(1), 11-4

<sup>13</sup> Monika Jaquier, Report about the birth and life of babies with anencephaly' (2006), [www.anencephalie-info.org/e/report.php](http://www.anencephalie-info.org/e/report.php), M Jaquier, A Klein, E Bolthausen, 'Spontaneous pregnancy outcome after prenatal diagnosis of anencephaly' (2006) 113(8) *British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology* 951-953.

<sup>14</sup> Zoler, Mitchel L. (2003) "Trisomy 13 survival can exceed 1 year", *OB/GYN News*.

<sup>15</sup> EVALUATION OF THE CHILDREN'S PALLIATIVE CARE PROGRAMME (CPCP) A jointly funded programme of work arising from Palliative Care for Children with Life-limiting, Conditions – A National Policy, SUMMARY REPORT, Dr Joanne Jordan GEN Research & Deirdre Fullerton Insights Health and Social Research, 2016

<sup>16</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 102-0536 - Deaths, by cause, Chapter XVI: Certain conditions originating in the perinatal period, 2012

<sup>17</sup> Confidential Enquiry into Maternal and Child Health, Perinatal Mortality 2005 England, Wales and Northern Ireland, April 2007

<sup>18</sup> Department of Health, Annual Report of notifications in accordance with the Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act, 2013, (2015 and 2016)

<sup>19</sup> Abortion related coverage, RTÉ Radio 1 (9th June 2016 – 8th July 2016)

<sup>20</sup> Source: Anew Dublin, registered charity providing sheltered accommodation to homeless pregnant women