

Abortion ban 'insult to women'



Pro-choice activists including Ruth Coppinger TD at Connolly station, Dublin, after they took a train from Dublin to Belfast to bring back abortion pills

03 November 2014

A group of trade unionists have branded Ireland's abortion ban an insult to women and called on members of their organisations to join a campaign to repeal it.

Public servants, shop and general workers, teachers, nurses, students and journalists are among those being asked to throw their weight behind renewed opposition to the eighth amendment to the Constitution.

One of the key speakers at the campaign launch, TUI member Helen Mahony, said trade union leaders rightly opposed the ban in 1983 and they should lead a new campaign to have it abolished.

"It was an insult to women, anti-democratic and an attempt to hold back progress in Ireland on social issues," she said.

"The consequences of the amendment, which have included the X case and the death of Savita Halappanavar have been worse than we could have imagined in 1983."

Figures from Impact, Unite, the Teachers' Union of Ireland, the Union of Students in Ireland, the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation, the Retired Teachers' Association, the National Union of Journalists, the Dublin Council of Trade Unions and the African women's network Akidwa have called for members to support calls for a new referendum on abortion.

In a statement on the Trade Union Campaign to Repeal the 8th Amendment representatives described the ban as archaic, sectarian, an affront to the equal rights of women and a major source of discrimination.

They claimed more than 150,000 women and girls have travelled out of Ireland for abortions since 1983 and 12 more make similar journeys every day to the UK.

"It is a duty of all trade unions to secure its removal," the union members said in a statement.

"From Miss X in 1992 to the death of Savita Halappanavar in 2012 and the recent obscenity of Ms Y's treatment by the State, Irish history is littered with tragic individual cases directly caused by a Constitution that equates a woman's life with that of a foetus."

Ms O'Mahony said: "The 8th amendment is a testament to repression and hypocrisy. It was and is bad law and it is time for it to go.

"We are calling on the trade union movement to play a leading role in demanding that this repressive anti-woman hypocritical section be removed entirely from the Constitution."

The campaign launch follows a public protest by pro-choice campaigners who travelled to Belfast by train last week to collect abortion pills before returning to Dublin and ingesting them. The idea was to revive the images of the 1971 contraceptive train when women campaigners went to the north to buy condoms.

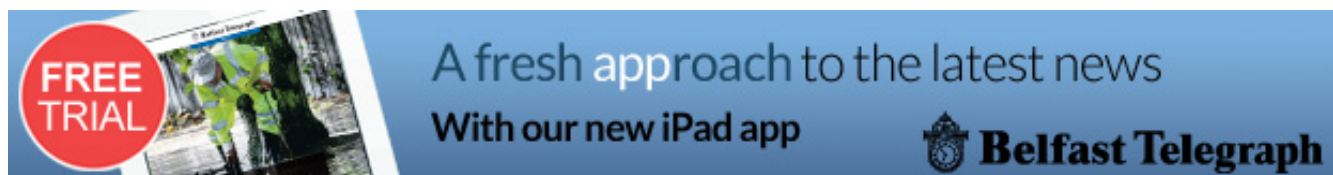
USI President Laura Harmon said: "The Union of Students in Ireland has long-standing policy which supports the need to repeal the eighth amendment.

"One quarter of those who avail of abortion services in the UK are young people aged under 25. This is very much an issue that affects students and our members and we are proud to be part of the Coalition to Repeal the 8th Amendment."

Taryn Trainor, equalities officer and regional organiser with Unite, said: "This is a human rights issue which affects trade union members and their families. Women trade union members want the movement to support this campaign."

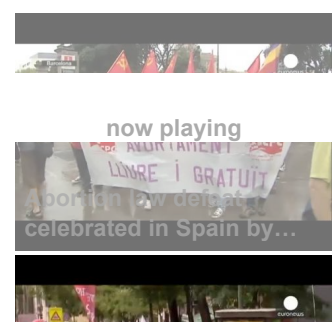
The campaign said women being forced to travel for abortion are facing incalculable emotion and financial costs.

They estimated the journey costs at least 1,500 euro, while using the internet to buy pills for an abortion could result in up to 14 years in jail.



A promotional banner for the Belfast Telegraph iPad app. On the left, there is a red circular badge with the text "FREE TRIAL" in white. Next to it is a small image of a person in a green jacket. The main background is blue with the text "A fresh approach to the latest news" in white, followed by "With our new iPad app" in a smaller font. On the right, there is the Belfast Telegraph logo, which includes a crest and the name "Belfast Telegraph" in a bold, serif font.

Abortion law defeat celebrated in Spain by Women's parades





Madrid pro-life rally warns Spain government to ful...



Sponsored videos

From around the web

Sponsored Links by Taboola



The 3 Worst Things that Age You Faster (AVOID)
MAX Workouts Fitness Guide



Warren Buffett Reveals How Anyone With \$40 Could Become A Millio...
The Motley Fool



8 Women You Won't Believe Actually Exist
LikeShareTweet



NEVER Drink These 2 Types Of MILK (cause weight gain & accelerat...
The Fat Burning Kitchen Guide Book



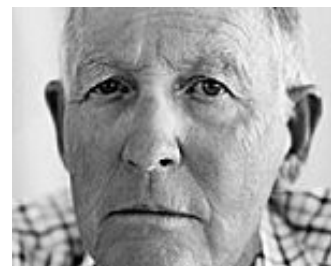
20/20 Vision Without Lazer Surgery Is Now Possible
Restore My Vision



8 Untranslatable Words From 8 Different Languages
Babbel



Is That What the Song "American Pie" Is Really About?
Mediander



'Warren Buffett Indicator' Signals Collapse in Stock Market
Newsmax

COMMENT RULES: Comments that are judged to be defamatory, abusive or in bad taste are not acceptable and contributors who consistently fall below certain criteria will be permanently blacklisted. The moderator will not enter into debate with individual contributors and the moderator's decision is final. It is Belfast Telegraph policy to close comments on court cases, tribunals and active legal investigations. We may also close comments on articles which are being targeted for abuse. Problems with commenting? customercare@belfasttelegraph.co.uk

0 comments

Powered by Livefyre

