



# PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT

SOCIALISM FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

Full Reproductive Rights and Gender Equality

## Full Reproductive Rights and Gender Equality

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- Choice in pregnancy and childbirth
- Legislation for free, safe, and legal abortion on both sides of the border.
- Reproductive services, including contraception and infertility treatment provided free through the health service. Free contraception was one of the recommendations of the Committee on the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment and needs to be implemented.
- Full counselling on contraceptive options.
- Full support for transgender people during pregnancy.
- Accessible state-funded childcare facilities in communities and workplaces.
- All schools, regardless of ethos, mandated to deliver age-appropriate, fully comprehensive sex education at both primary and secondary level. This was also one of the Committee on the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment's recommendations.
- Increase in Parental Leave from 6 to 12 months, to be shared between the parents as they choose.
- All information provided on education, contraception and abortion should be evidenced based rather than based on religious ethos or practices
- Improvement in Maternity Services.
- Economic and social equality-close the gender pay gap; social welfare payments to be restored to their pre-austerity levels; adequate provision for lone parents and their families, for people with disabilities and for children with special needs.
- Full reproductive rights for people with disabilities
- Full separation of church and state, particularly in healthcare and education
- Alongside the right to chose not to be pregnant is also right to have children in the social conditions which this demands. This means the right to a house, to adequate social supports as well as access to publicly funded childcare.

### Repeal of the 8th Amendment

A mass people power movement pushed back against conservative Ireland and forced the government into conceding a referendum in 2018. The amendment was passed by 67% voting in favour to 33% voting against marking a landmark shift in Irish society.

People before Profit played a leading role both nationally and locally in the campaign. We were part of the broader campaign Together for Yes, but we stood squarely for choice and letting women decide for themselves. Our TD's were a clear voice for the campaign in the Dail and used every opportunity to support the Repeal campaign, a contribution that gave huge confidence to the campaign on the streets.

The mainstream parties were largely out of step with what the majority of women in Ireland wanted. Fianna Fail voted at its 2017 Ard Fheis against repealing the 8th Amendment.

Fine Gael may have individual members supporting liberalisation, but the party remained conservative on this issue until public pressure forced a U-turn. Labour and Sinn Fein only supported abortion in limited circumstances putting abortion into a “good abortions vs. bad abortions” scenario and not trusting pregnant people to make their own choices.

The Repeal the 8th Campaign was a tremendous victory for People Power and saw hundreds of grassroots groups organise in their local areas and nationally. Strike4Repeal and the Abortion Rights Campaign’s Annual march became flash points for huge street demonstrations that paved the way for abortion rights in Ireland and pushed political parties into more progressive positions.

But we can’t trust conservative law makers. In March 2017, People Before Profit presented a private members’ bill in the Dail to amend the Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act (2013). Our aim was to remove the 14-year prison sentence from the bill to end the disgraceful criminalisation of women that this entails. Unfortunately, this bill was voted down by most of the other political parties, proving the need for mass mobilisation and grassroots participation in the struggle for abortion rights. In addition, while the polls conducted during the Repeal campaign showed that many in Ireland wanted Free, Safe and Legal abortion, the government tacked on conservative elements to Ireland’s new abortion law: namely the needless 3 day waiting period for people seeking abortions. This just adds another barrier and infinite stress for those wanting to access abortion services.

## Free Safe and Legal Abortion Rights

People Before Profit is committed to the fight for women’s full bodily autonomy, including the right to free, safe, and legal abortion.

- We believe that access to abortion is a fundamental human right for women, and crucial to women’s economic and social independence.
- We believe abortion should be available across this island and provided free through the health service, along with full care and support. To make this a reality we need to continue to train an adequate number of staff to perform abortions and/or administer the abortion pill in all major hospitals. We must also ensure funding is provided to set up abortion clinics country-wide as transport remains a barrier for many.
- We support the full legalisation of abortion pills and want to see proper counselling and support around their use.
- We support the rights of men and women who experience disability to the special information and supports they may need to enjoy their sexual and reproductive lives

## Improvement in Maternity Services

- PBP want maternity care in Ireland to be women centred and based on international best medical practice and not the active management of labour
- This includes ultra-sound scans as a right at 20 weeks. The National Maternity Strategy recommends that all women have access to the scans, which can identify major and in some cases life-threatening problems with the development of a baby’s organs as well as fatal foetal abnormalities. The procedure is only available in 12 of the country’s 19 maternity hospitals. PBP would immediately ensure this scan is available in all of Irish maternity hospitals

## Full Social and Political Equality for Women

People Before Profit also recognise the importance of economic and social equality for women and the significance of this for full reproductive choice. For those who wish to have children, their choice should be facilitated by economic and social supports. We will therefore continue to campaign for childcare, social supports, the right to a home, equality for families and children.

- The years of austerity have widened the gender pay gap: on average, Irish women today are paid 14 per cent less than men.
- We call for all social welfare payments to be restored to their pre-austerity levels; for adequate provision for lone parents and their families, for people with disabilities and for children with special needs.
- We will campaign for an end to child poverty (almost 10% of children in Ireland live in consistent poverty, with 20% of children at risk of poverty), and for the provision of high quality childminding and child care services for all who need them.
- We will continue to campaign for fully equal social, economic, legal and political rights for women.

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