



**abortion never
saves a mother's life...**

...it just kills a baby

**It's time we told the
government to stop playing
games**

ABORTION IN IRELAND

In considering the question of abortion in Ireland two facts are, by now, generally accepted. Firstly the majority of Irish people have a deep-rooted opposition to abortion and secondly there exists a consistent majority who want to see the abortion issue resolved by means of a pro-life referendum.

That successive governments since 1992 have denied the Irish people their right to vote in a referendum is an outrage. Our desire to protect our mothers and babies from the horror of abortion should and must be respected.

WHAT EFFORTS HAVE THE GOVERNMENT MADE?

The Government have published a Green Paper and a Progress Report on Abortion and have stated that they want to clarify the issues involved and reach a consensus. In doing so they have conveniently ignored the very obvious fact that the 70% of Irish people who oppose abortion already form a consensus.

WHAT ABOUT THE PUBLIC HEARINGS ORGANISED BY THE ALL-PARTY COMMITTEE?

In May to July of 2000 the Government held Public Hearings prior to the publication of the Progress Report on Abortion. During those hearings the All Party Committee heard evidence from the medical profession assuring them that abortion was never medically necessary.

IS THE MEDICAL PROFESSION DIVIDED ON THE ISSUE OF ABORTION?

No. *The Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists*, which guides the doctors who care for expectant mothers, obtained a 95% consensus from their members who believe they can preserve mothers' lives and health without abortion.

The *Irish Medical Council* have said it is professional misconduct to deliberately destroy an unborn child. They also rightly insist that women should receive all necessary treatment when pregnant. In doing so they underline the difference between abortion - the direct and intentional killing of a child - and necessary medical treatment which may result in the unintended death of the baby.

DOES IT MATTER WHETHER THE DEATH OF THE CHILD IS INTENDED OR NOT?

Absolutely. The intention of any form of medical treatment is of absolute importance to the doctor involved. As Professor John Bonner stated in June 2000 "We have never regarded these interventions as abortion. It would never cross an obstetrician's mind that intervening in a case of pre-eclampsia, cancer of the cervix or ectopic pregnancy is abortion. They are not abortion as far as the professional is concerned, these are medical treatments that are essential to save the life of the mother."



WHAT ARE IRISH PRO-LIFE MEDICAL ETHICS?

1. Doctors must provide all necessary treatment for conditions arising in pregnancy, or risk being struck off the medical register.

2. Some rare conditions may require inducing the premature delivery of the child to save the mother's life, after which all efforts will be made to keep the child alive.

3. If the child is too young to survive, this is unfortunate, but the death of the child was not the intention of the operation.

In Ireland where an absolute ban on abortion existed since 1983, doctors have not been prevented in treating pregnant women for **any** conditions which arose during their pregnancies.

WHAT HAS THIS MEANT FOR THE SAFETY OF MOTHERS AND BABIES?

Without recourse to legal abortion, Irish obstetricians have developed management strategies for both the common and uncommon complications of pregnancy. According to the 1994 UNICEF Report *State of the World's Children*, Ireland is the safest country in the world for women to have children.

HAVEN'T THE GOVERNMENT PROMISED A REFERENDUM?

In the Progress Report issued in November 2000, Fianna Fail did at least favour the option of a constitutional amendment which would be put to the people in a referendum.

But the lack of clarity in that option now makes the wording of such a referendum crucial. While the sentiments in this option seem sound enough, Fianna Fail's understanding of the practical issues are profoundly flawed.

The Fianna Fail option favours legislation to "protect current medical practice" to accompany a constitutional amendment, but implies that this involves abortion in some circumstances. **This would be absolutely illogical and unacceptable.**



pro-woman **pro-child** **pro-life**

CAN THE GOVERNMENT ABSOLUTELY BAN ABORTION AND PROTECT CURRENT MEDICAL PRACTICES?

Yes. The *Irish Medical Council* has produced a guideline for doctors which clearly distinguishes between abortion and necessary medical treatment. There is no reason why the Government cannot produce a wording for a constitutional amendment which will do the same. **We must insist that they drop the pretence of confusing the deliberate killing of children with medical treatment which attempts to preserve the lives of both mother and baby.**

At this point in time, words will mean everything. And there's no doubt about it, the wrong wording in a pro-life referendum will make Irish mothers and babies victims of the abortion industry.

Our public representatives are elected to serve the people, not their own ideologies. It's time they stopped playing games with babies lives.

You are a voice for mothers and babies. Your voice needs to be heard. Our Government has an opportunity to best serve mothers and babies by absolutely banning abortion in Ireland. You can ensure that they will do just that.

Here's what you must do to play your part:

1. **Phone your local politicians and tell them that you are absolutely opposed to the legalisation of any form of abortion** in Ireland and that you want a pro-life referendum which will absolutely ban abortion.
2. You have **the backing of the *Medical Council* and the *Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists***, who are the authorities on this matter, when you say that abortion is never medically necessary and should not be legalised under false pretences.
3. **Visit your politicians** at their Saturday constituency clinics and tell them the same.
4. **Get your family** and friends to do the same.
5. To find out how you can do more in your area, **contact the Mother and Child Campaign** at (01) 8730465.
6. **Distribute copies of this leaflet** in your town or city (available free from the Mother and Child Campaign office).



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