



SENATOR IVANA BACIK

Spring 2017



Web: www.ivanabacik.com

Email: ivana.bacik@oireachtas.ie

Facebook Group: Ivana Bacik

@ivanabacik

Phone: +353 1 618 3136

Dear Graduate,

Welcome to my spring 2017 Newsletter, which provides you with an update on some of the work I have been doing over the last year, and my priorities for the coming year. For a more detailed look at my work, you can find full coverage on my website (including videos and written transcripts of my contributions in the Seanad).

I am very grateful for all the support I have received from Trinity graduates since my election in 2007, re-election in 2011; and most recently my re-election in April 2016. I also organise regular tours of Leinster House and would be delighted to invite you to join us on one of those over the coming months. Do keep in touch on ivana.bacik@oireachtas.ie – and thanks again for your support.

Best wishes,

Ivana

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE SEANAD

Since my first election in 2007, I have had four private members' bills accepted by Government; three of which have become law. The Criminal Justice (Female Genital Mutilation) Act 2012, which for the first time created a specific offence of FGM; the Civil Registration (Amendment) Act 2012, which enables non-religious solemnisers like those from the Humanist Association of Ireland to conduct legal wedding ceremonies; and the Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015, which amends section 37 of the Employment Equality Act to prohibit discrimination against LGBT teachers or hospital workers.

This term, my bill to give collective bargaining rights to vulnerable freelance workers - the Competition (Amendment) Bill 2016 - developed in conjunction with trade unions including NUJ, Equity and SIPTU, was accepted by the government and passed through the Seanad in November, the first private member's bill to pass either House of the Oireachtas since the general election. In September 2016, I was invited to speak at a major European trade union conference in Brussels on atypical work in the arts, media & entertainment sector, to bring this important Bill to international attention.

Most recently I introduced the Pensions (Equal Pension Treatment in Occupational Benefit Schemes) (Amendment) Bill 2016 in response to the case of Parris v TCD in which



With Minister Mary Mitchell O'Connor, members of SIPTU, the NUJ, and Equity, and fellow Senators after the Competition (Amendment) Bill 2016 passed through the Seanad

David Parris, a retired TCD lecturer, lost his challenge to his employer's pension scheme before the Court of Justice of the European Union. He had argued that the pension scheme was discriminatory, as it provided that a TCD employee's partner would only be entitled to a survivor's pension where the employee had married or entered a civil partnership before reaching the age of 60. This Bill would represent only a minor amendment to our pension law, but if passed it would make a real difference to a small number of LGBT individuals who face continued discrimination in their pension benefits, despite the Constitutional recognition of marriage equality.

THE CRISIS IN SYRIA and WELCOMING REFUGEES

Like all of us, I have been appalled and distressed at the horrific scenes of bombardment of Aleppo and other towns and cities across Syria, and disgusted at the brutality towards Syrian civilians displayed both by the Syrian regime of Assad and his Russian allies; and by ISIS/Daesh. As Labour spokesperson on Foreign Affairs, and as a member of the Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Affairs, Trade and Defence, I have been to the fore in raising concerns about the war in Syria and calling for a speedier process to welcome refugees to Ireland. I initiated an all-party motion condemning the bombardment of Aleppo which was passed unanimously in the Seanad in November 2016, and have also led the questioning at Oireachtas Foreign Affairs meetings on Syria, most recently on 1st December 2016.

LEGAL CASES THAT CHANGED IRELAND

In November 2016, my co-editor Dr Mary Rogan of TCD and I published with Clarus Press the findings from our Irish Research Council-funded study which examined key legal cases which have brought about significant social change in Ireland - the 2015 'Changing Ireland, Changing Law' (CICL) project.

The themes and cases covered include women's rights, LGBT rights, immigration rights and public interest cases generally.

Contributors include Senator David Norris; Minister Katherine Zappone; Dr Micheline Sheehy-Skeffington; Máirín de Búrca; Gandhi Mallak; Dr Lydia Foy; and Professors Yvonne Scannell and Gerry Whyte of TCD Law School.

WOMEN IN POLITICS



With representatives of all parties at Women for Election event, December 2016

The positive impact of our new gender quota law, the Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Act 2012, was clearly evident in the 2016 general election, which saw an increase of female representation from 22%, with now 35 women TDs. This law stemmed from a 2009 report on 'Women's Participation in Politics' which I authored for the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice. However, there is still much room for improvement. I will continue working to increase the presence of women in politics and am co-ordinating the 'VoteAll 100' Project, involving a series of events in the Oireachtas over 2018 to mark the centenary of women's suffrage.



REPEAL OF THE EIGHTH AMENDMENT

For many years, I have campaigned for Repeal of the Eighth Amendment; ever since my student days when I was taken to court and threatened with prison by SPUC (Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child) for providing women with information on where to access abortion. Now that the Citizens' Assembly has begun its hearings on that topic, I am hopeful that we will finally see a referendum; and in December 2016, I made my own submission to the Assembly - 'The Case for Repeal of the Eighth Amendment' - which you can find on my website. I believe that the Constitution is no place to regulate a complex and sensitive matter like abortion - I want to see the Eighth Amendment repealed in its entirety so that the Oireachtas may legislate to regulate the conditions under which abortion can legally be provided in Ireland.



MULTI-DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOLING AND EDUCATION EQUALITY

I was a founding member and Chairperson of the campaign for a new multi-denominational school in Dublin 8 (the Portobello school campaign); and was delighted when, after spending a year in temporary premises in Harcourt Terrace, the school moved in September 2014 to permanent premises in the former Christian Brothers school on Basin Lane, Rialto, Dublin 8. The school is now called Canal Way Educate Together National School. See <http://www.portobelloetns.org/> for more details..

The campaign for greater equality in education continues. I was actively engaged in the campaign for a new Educate Together secondary school in Dublin South City centre and was delighted at the announcement in November 2016 that this would happen - we are now working on the location for this new school, due to open in September 2018.



Speakers at Brexit seminar. From left: Director of Policy Network Matthew Laza, Deputy Secretary General of the Party of European Socialists (PES) Marije Laffeber, CEO of Enterprise Ireland Julie Sinnamon, Labour leader Brendan Howlin TD, Senator Ivana Bacik, Claire Hanna SDLP MLA for South Belfast

CONTACT SENATOR IVANA BACIK

Seanad Eireann, Leinster House, Dublin 2

Email: ivana.bacik@oireachtas.ie Phone: +353 1 618 3136

Web: www.ivanabacik.com

 Ivana Bacik

 @ivanabacik


Labour