

Safe, legal and rare?

During the campaign to repeal Ireland's protections for the unborn, Taoiseach Leo Varadkar pledged that abortion would become "safe, legal and rare".¹ Yet in the years since the 2018 repeal of the eighth amendment, over **28,000** abortions have already been carried out.²

Of the **8,156** abortions carried out in 2022:



only **22** were performed due to the risk to life or health of the mother

only **4** were emergency situations



88

were carried out due to perceived disability

The vast majority, **98.6%**, were carried out under the 'on-demand' provisions of the law. Thousands of women every year abort their babies without needing to give any reason.³

MAKING A BAD LAW WORSE

Sadly, campaigners do not seem to care how many abortions take place. They are not content with the current law.

The Government-commissioned review of the law by barrister Marie O'Shea recommends large-scale liberalisation, including removing the three-day reflection period and making the home abortion arrangements permanent.

People Before Profit-

Solidarity TD Bríd Smith is another pushing to remove protections from the unborn. In June, the Dáil backed her Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) (Amendment) Bill in principle. It looks to extend abortion on demand from 12 weeks to "22 or 24 weeks", scrap the three-day reflection period, and allow abortion up to birth for babies deemed to have a 'fatal' disability and not expected to live for a year.



SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR THE MOTHER

Scientific evidence continues to show that abortion carries significant physiological and psychological risks.

Subsequent premature births

In 2013, a review of induced abortion and early preterm birth found "...a significant increase in the risk of preterm delivery in women with a history of previous induced abortion". Women who had one prior abortion were 45% more likely to have premature births by 32 weeks, 71% more likely by 28 weeks, and more than twice as likely to have premature births by 26 weeks.⁴

'...a significant increase in the risk of preterm delivery in women with a history of previous induced abortion'.

Increased likelihood of breast cancer

It is widely recognised that carrying a first pregnancy to birth is protective against breast cancer.⁵ However, despite pro-abortionists dismissing it as pseudo-science, studies have also shown that abortion is significantly associated with an increased risk of breast cancer – by as much as 44% after one abortion and even higher as the number of abortions increases.⁶

Serious complications

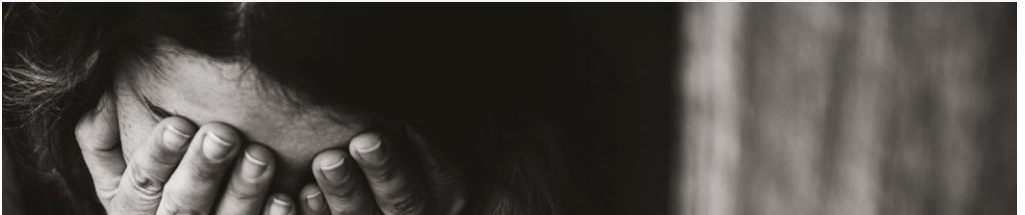
Surgical abortions carry a similar risk of complications to other invasive procedures, but medical abortions are also harmful for women. A large study found that one in five women who had chemical abortions (taking a combination of two pills) suffered complications.⁷ In

fact, women are more likely to require medical help for bleeding and haemorrhaging after chemical abortion than after surgical abortion.⁸ Home abortions are not medically supervised. This will increase the likelihood of the drugs being incorrectly administered, with potentially serious medical implications for the mother.

Damage to mental health

One study found women who have had an abortion experience an 81% higher risk of mental health problems when compared with women who have not had an abortion.⁹

Even pro-abortion professor David Fergusson concludes that there is currently "no evidence" that supports authorising abortions on mental health grounds.¹⁰



THE CREATION OF LIFE



Conception

A sperm penetrates the egg's cell membrane. The nuclei of sperm and egg fuse to create a single cell with a unique genetic code. Human life has begun.



Week 1

The embryo reaches the uterus, which has already prepared a special lining. The delicate process of implantation takes place.



Week 5

Already the baby's heart is pumping blood. Major organs have begun to grow and limb buds have sprouted. Some facial features are evident. Brain signals have been recorded from about 40 days.

BABIES SURVIVING YOUNGER



Many babies born before the common 'viability' threshold of 24 weeks can survive. The most recent figures available show that the survival rate for babies born at 23 weeks ranges from 25-47%.¹¹

There is also evidence from other countries. In the UK in 2016, 35% of babies born at 22 weeks who received care survived.¹² At the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle upon Tyne, doctors saw survival rates for 23 weeks' gestation rise from 25% in 2006 to between 60 and 70% in 2017.¹³ This shows what can be done by investing in care for premature babies.

ABORTION IMPOSED ON NORTHERN IRELAND

Despite being a devolved issue, the UK Government has imposed a radical abortion regime on Northern Ireland.

In March 2020, regulations were introduced permitting abortion on demand up to twelve weeks, up to 24 weeks for social reasons, and up to birth for disabilities. In a consultation, 79% of more than 21,000 respondents expressed opposition to legalising abortion in Northern Ireland.

In the absence of the Stormont Assembly and Executive, the Westminster Government wrote to the Department of Health to formally commission abortion services nationwide using powers

that do not require the approval of Stormont.

DUP MP Carla Lockhart called the UK Government's announcement on commissioning abortion services "shameful". She said: "Northern Ireland does not support abortion, it never has. It still doesn't."¹⁴

The UK Government claims it had a "statutory duty" to implement guidelines promoting abortion set out in a 2018 report by the UN's Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The recommendations are not binding but were given legal force by legislation passed in 2019.



THE CREATION OF LIFE



Week 9

The baby has begun to move. All organs, muscles and nerves are beginning to function. Limbs, digits, joints and even fingerprints are evident.



Week 16

The sex is apparent. The baby has hair, nails and a cartilage skeleton, and can pull faces.



Week 20

Growing rapidly, the baby can turn somersaults and suck his or her thumb.

International developments

UNITED STATES



It is estimated that **60,000 babies have been**

saved in the US since the Supreme Court overturned the Roe v Wade ruling.

According to #WeCount, an estimated 32,260 fewer abortions took place in the six months following the judgment.¹⁵

The ruling does not criminalise abortion but hands back power to individual states to legislate on the issue. In response, several states have enacted stronger pro-life laws.

- In North Carolina abortions are now only available in most cases until twelve weeks (formerly 20 weeks).¹⁶
- In Montana, the 'Dismemberment Abortion Prohibition Act' has outlawed abortion procedures that involve

"tearing apart" an unborn child over twelve weeks old. The law states that the intentional use of such procedures for "elective reasons is a barbaric practice, is dangerous for the pregnant woman, and is demeaning to the medical profession". Medics who breach the law can be fined a maximum of \$50,000 and sentenced to up to ten years imprisonment.¹⁷

- Under SB 1580 in Florida, medics and organisations that have a conscientious objection to abortions cannot be forced into performing or funding them. The new law states that healthcare providers and insurers must be able to "care for patients in a manner consistent with their moral, ethical, and religious convictions".¹⁸



POLAND

The number of abortions in EU member state Poland has **decreased by 90%**, following a court case.

In October 2020, Poland's Constitutional Court ruled that abortions on the grounds of disability violated the "constitutionally protected right to life" and could no longer be permitted. Abortions are still allowed in cases of rape, incest, or if the mother's health is deemed to be at risk.

The latest data from the Polish Ministry of Health shows that abortions decreased from 1,076 in 2020 to 107 in 2021.

Prior to the change, an estimated 98% of the country's abortions were carried out because of foetal disabilities, including for conditions such as Down's syndrome.¹⁹



WHAT ACTIVISTS WANT

Many pro-abortionists want to remove all restrictions on abortion. For them, no limits can ever be acceptable on their quest for what they call “full reproductive justice”.²⁰

Remove three-day reflection period

The 2018 Act requires women to wait three days between an initial consultation and an abortion. In her review of the law, Marie O’Shea recommends removing this condition.

But abortion is not simply another medical procedure. Taking a life is as serious as it gets. It is right that women are given time to think. Health Service Executive (HSE) figures show that between 2019 and 2021, roughly one in six women who had the initial appointment did not go on to have an abortion.²¹ The three-day period to reflect will be an important factor in such cases.

Make home abortions permanent

Since April 2020, women under twelve weeks pregnant have been able to take both chemical abortion pills at home without medical supervision, after only a phone or video consultation.

Although the measure was supposed to be temporary, the Government now intends to make it permanent. But home abortions are dangerous to women.

An investigation revealed that complications due to abortion pills led to 1



in 17 women in England who took them needing hospital treatment between March 2020 and July 2021. That is at least 10,000 women.²² Incredibly, the Irish Government has admitted that it is not collecting data on complications from home abortions.²³

The HSE has acknowledged that in-person consultations increase the chance of identifying coercion.²⁴

Censorship zones

The Government has introduced a Bill to create censorship zones around facilities that carry out abortions. Actions deemed to influence a person’s decision in relation to abortion would be illegal within 100 metres of such premises – including GP practices and hospitals. This could criminalise prayer as well as the distribution of pro-life literature across nearly all of Dublin, with

fining of up to €2,500 and six months in jail.²⁵

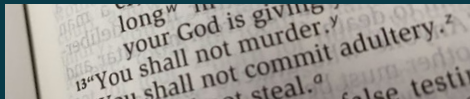
The Government has said it wants to protect women from ‘harassment’ and ‘intimidation’.²⁶ But existing law already does that. Garda Commissioner Drew Harris has said that the zones are not needed and that “no incidence of criminality has been reported or observed”.²⁷ News website Gript reported in January 2022 that it had contacted every maternity hospital in the country and found no evidence that any complaints had been received.²⁸

Independent TD Michael Collins said the motivation behind the Bill “has nothing to do with public safety” but is simply about “silencing pro-life opposition to the Government’s abortion law”.²⁹



Drew Harris

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT ABORTION



The biblical argument against abortion is simply the application of the Sixth Commandment: “You shall not murder”.

The Bible clearly teaches that the intentional taking of innocent human life is evil because it is the destruction of that which is made in the image of God.³⁰

The specific question in relation to abortion is whether the foetus is a human being in the image of God. The testimony of Scripture is that it is. The Psalmist famously praises God because he “created my inmost being... knit me together in my mother’s womb”. God saw his “unformed

body”, that is God saw the Psalmist as an embryo. In Psalm 51:5, David recognises that his need for a Saviour began at the very point of his conception.

The Gospel of Luke states that the birth of Jesus was preceded by the Holy Spirit coming upon Mary and the power of the Most High overshadowing her.³¹ In Matthew 1:20, Joseph is assured by an angel of the Lord that “what is

conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit”. Hebrews 2:17 makes clear that Christ was made human in every way that we are human. Since Christ’s human life began at his conception, this must also mark the point at which all human life begins.

The Bible clearly teaches the sanctity of every human life from conception. Abortion at any stage of gestation is the taking of human life.

A HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN OPPOSITION

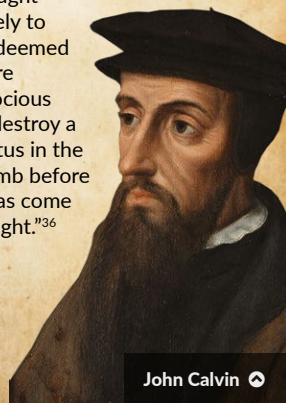
Christian opposition to abortion is not a novelty of modern theology; the Church has opposed it for 2,000 years. The early Church “with unwavering consistency and with the strongest emphasis... denounced the practice [of abortion]... not simply as inhuman, but as definitely murder”.³²

The Didache (a First or early Second Century church teaching manual) condemns abortion and the taking of life after birth: “Thou shalt not procure abortion, nor commit infanticide”.³³ The practice

was roundly condemned in the writings of Clement of Alexandria, Ambrose, Jerome, John Chrysostom, and Augustine.³⁴ David Braine concluded: “for the whole of Christian history until appreciably after 1900... there was virtually complete unanimity amongst Christians” that abortion is wrong.³⁵

Influential 16th Century Reformer John Calvin commented: “...the foetus, though enclosed in the womb of its mother, is already a human being... If it seems more horrible to kill a man in

his own house than in a field, because a man’s house is his place of most secure refuge, it ought surely to be deemed more atrocious to destroy a foetus in the womb before it has come to light.”³⁶



John Calvin

References available at the.ci/abortionbriefroi-ref

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