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# Gospel freedom at risk

Free speech and religious liberty are blessings that we cannot take for granted. Impending laws on so-called conversion therapy and tackling 'hate crimes' have worrying implications for gospel freedom. Mainstream Christian teaching is at risk in churches and in the public square.

But Christians are far from alone in not wanting these controversial measures. Our recent polling found a new 'conversion therapy' law is only a priority for 6% of Irish voters. More and more people are also publicly raising

concerns about the likely chilling effect of 'hate' legislation on free speech.

The prominence of transgender ideology, especially in schools, as well as the devaluing of life through abortion and assisted suicide, and the undermining of marriage all present significant challenges.

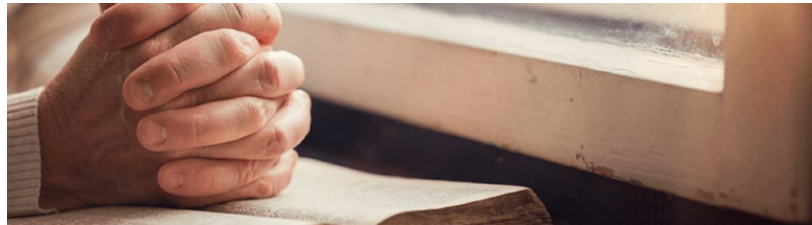
But they also present unique opportunities to share God's good design for all of humanity. This is not a time to hide away, even less to go with the flow. Instead we must continue to live out our calling as salt and light in the world.

# 'Conversion therapy' Bill not a priority for 94% of voters

Voters want the Government to focus on healthcare and housing not an oppressive conversion therapy Bill, a major new poll has revealed.

Commissioned by the Institute, pollsters Whitestone Insight asked a representative sample of 1,002 voters to select their top five policy priorities for the coming twelve months out of a list of 17. Only 6% chose the controversial proposals on banning 'conversion practices'.

Welcoming the results, the Institute's Deputy Director Ciarán Kelly said they call into



question Equalities Minister Roderic O'Gorman's June announcement that the Government was treating a ban as a 'top priority'.

Mr Kelly argued: "Instead of rushing to placate the highly vocal but tiny minority intent on banning 'conversion therapy', the Government

needs to heed the overwhelming majority of voters telling them very clearly: 'This is not a priority.'"

A Government-commissioned report published in February revealed little or no evidence of 'conversion therapy' in Ireland.

Activists are lobbying for a ban that outlaws the ordinary

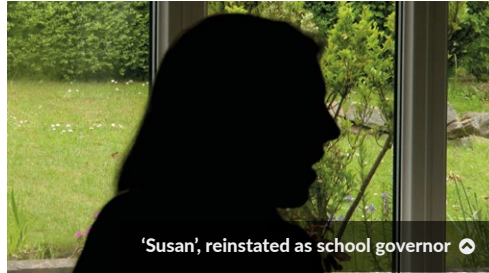
work of churches – preaching, prayer and pastoral advice – that does not endorse LGBT theology. It also risks criminalising parents of gender-confused children if they do not allow them to take experimental puberty blockers. Such a ban is expected to breach the European Convention on Human Rights.

# Christian governor reinstated after CI intervenes on sex ed dismissal

A Christian parent governor in England dismissed for questioning an inappropriate sex ed policy has been reinstated by the High Court after the CI stepped in.

'Susan', not her real name, first highlighted legal issues with the Gateshead primary school's Relationships and Sex Education policy in 2021.

Lesson plans encouraged children to question their own 'gender identity' and included the use of the discredited 'Genderbread person' resource. It claims that gender is non-binary and determined by 'personality traits, jobs, hobbies', rather



than biological sex, which itself 'exists on a continuum'.

The school's Governing Body accused the Gateshead mum of opposing its decision to use the policy, and dismissed her even though the official complaints procedure was still in progress.

But, following a legal challenge supported by The Christian Institute,

the High Court reinstated her, and the governors and Local Authority admitted the sacking was unlawful. She was also granted anonymity in order to protect her children.

Susan said: "I'm absolutely delighted that I've been vindicated. It feels wonderful to be back and helping the school get the best outcomes for all the

children there."

The CI's Ciarán Kelly commented: "This is a great result. Had this decision stood, it would have sent a terrible message.

"Parents don't want their children's education left in the hands of 'woke' teachers, or governors who are more concerned with not 'rocking the boat' than doing what is right."

In March, more than 200 church leaders wrote to the Irish Government, urging it not to promote "unbiblical and unscientific" transgender ideology in schools.

**WATCH:** [the.ci/Susan](https://the.ci/Susan)

# McEntee's new hate crime law 'will keep gardaí from real police work'

The hate crime Bill being championed by Justice Minister Helen McEntee risks keeping gardaí desk-bound, a rank-and-file representative has warned.

Det Gda Mark Ferris believes time-consuming investigations prompted by the Criminal Justice (Incitement to Violence or Hatred and Hate Offences) Bill 2022 will take gardaí away from

policing the streets.

Ferris said such a law appears to create "an opaque legal climate where offences will be a matter of subjective interpretation" and "could significantly expand the workload of ordinary gardaí".

Other critics of the Bill argue it will have a chilling effect on free speech.

In a Seanad debate, Senators expressed fears that people would rather remain silent on 'controversial' issues than run the risk of prosecution.

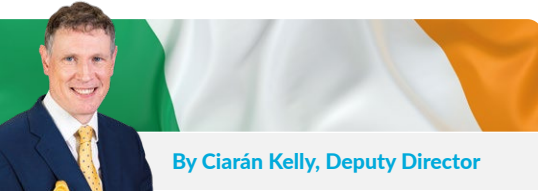
Former Attorney General Senator Michael McDowell called for the Bill to be amended, warning it could become "a charter for freezing genuine free speech and prevent people from articulating unpopular views".



**"a charter for freezing genuine free speech"**

# The Christian Institute in Ireland

## *An Institiúid Chríostaí*



By Ciarán Kelly, Deputy Director

In recent months I have met church leaders and Christians from all over Ireland who recognise the need for greater public engagement from the Church.

I have also been greatly encouraged by the gratitude for our work, and the tremendous enthusiasm for our efforts to expand in the Republic.

The Christian Institute was founded precisely because we saw that in the UK too many Christians had deserted the public square. Important debates were being left almost entirely to people and philosophies that cared little for the truths of the Bible.

Now this is happening in Ireland.

In fact, it seems Ireland wants to outpace everyone at being the most 'progressive' country in the world.

Every day we're helping Christians facing pressure because of their stand for Christ – whether street preachers, churches, businesses or ordinary people like the parent governor 'Susan' (left) dismissed for challenging transgender ideology in her school.

Jesus doesn't call us to hide or retreat from engagement with

society. He wants us to speak and act with grace and truth even when – perhaps especially when – the issues we engage with are unpopular.

The CI exists to help Christians do just that. We want to use our more than 30 years of experience to help equip and encourage believers here in Ireland.

Please pray for us as we engage with the Charities Regulator over Irish charitable status, and as we seek suitable candidates to work here on the ground.

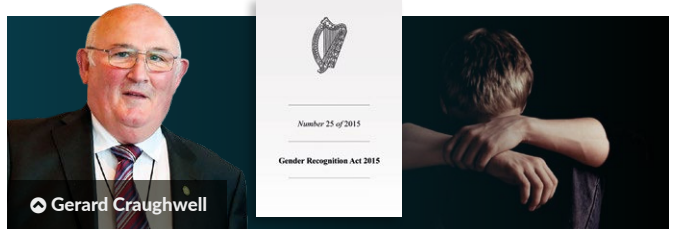
## Parents reject pro-trans sex ed for kids

Hundreds of parents flocked to the National Stadium in Dublin in July and September to contest the promotion of gender ideology in the new Social and Personal Health Education (SPHE) curriculum for primary schools.

Keynote speaker Senator Sharon Keogan accused the Government of pushing "state-sponsored gender confusion", the "long-term impact of which can only be guessed at".



## Senator Craughwell: 'Sex-swap madness must end'



Independent Senator Gerard Craughwell has said Irish sex-swap legislation is in urgent need of reform.

The Senator voted in favour of the Gender Recognition Act in 2015, but is now "horrified" at its long-term impact.

At present, over-18s can change their legal sex by self-declaration, and 16-year-olds may also do so if they obtain

parental consent and medical approval.

Snr Craughwell warned that the law currently risks sexualising children, and expressed his shock that children as young as ten are encouraged to start thinking of 'transitioning' from one biological sex to another.

He said the law "has been abused and twisted beyond anything I could ever have imagined".



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## Full-time discipleship for 11 to 16-year-olds

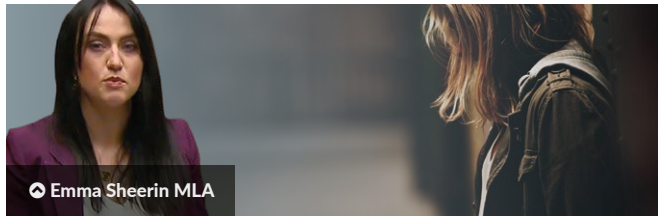
The new animated series exploring God's calling for young people in the world.



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# NI: Puberty blockers for teens is 'normal healthcare'



Emma Sheerin MLA

Sinn Féin's Emma Sheerin has said gender-confused teens should be given puberty-blocking drugs.

During a panel discussion at Belfast Pride, the MLA claimed that prescribing the experimental drugs to youngsters was simply "normal healthcare".

Sinn Féin later issued a statement seeming to back

Sheerin's view, saying the party "supports an update to gender recognition laws in the North to be harmonised with the south".

In response, a spokesman for the TUV party said that following the recent strong criticism of such practices, "one would have hoped that there would be greater caution around giving life-altering drugs to children".



# US Supreme Court free speech win for Christian web designer

A Christian web designer has won her US Supreme Court case against a state law which could have forced her to promote same-sex marriage.

In 2016, Lorie Smith filed a legal action against Colorado's Anti-Discrimination Act, which requires

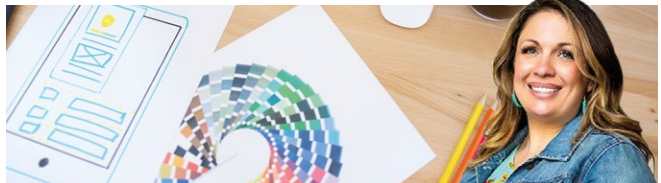
artists to convey messages they disagree with.

In a landmark decision, the Supreme Court has now overturned a lower court's ruling upholding the compelled speech law.

Justice Neil Gorsuch argued

that Colorado sought to force Smith "to speak in ways that align with its views but defy her conscience about a matter of major significance".

He said this endangered "our most cherished liberties" of freedom of thought and expression.



# Euthanasia law raises fears over coercion of the vulnerable



Members of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Assisted Dying are warning that vulnerable people may be coerced into killing themselves if assisted suicide is legalised.

The Committee is scrutinising a Bill from Gino Kenny TD, which proposes allowing doctors to administer lethal drugs to some

patients.

Senator Mary Seery Kearney warned that any 'safeguards' proposed would be eroded over time, exposing an increasing number of elderly people to the dangers of euthanasia.

Alan Farrell TD similarly expressed "great concern" that a new law would

pressure vulnerable people to end their lives early.

Fellow Committee member Robert Troy TD agreed, reflecting that no penalty could ever "compensate" for a life lost to assisted suicide under coercion.

The Irish Association for Palliative Care has told the Committee that

it "does not support any change in the law to legalise euthanasia or physician assisted suicide".

The TDs and Senators, who met for the first time in June, will hold further meetings in the coming months. They are expected to report to the Dáil and the Seanad next year.

# Senior garda Justin Kelly warns against decriminalising drugs

The head of Ireland's fight against organised crime has warned the Citizens' Assembly on Drug Use against recommending liberalising drug laws.

In August, hundreds of concerned Dublin residents and

business owners met with the Garda to discuss the impact of people publicly buying and taking drugs in the city centre.

Assistant Commissioner Justin Kelly believes that decriminalisation will see "a surge in open drug use" and will not stop organised crime undercutting legal prices and making drugs more potent.

Kelly has also highlighted the apparent "insatiable appetite" for cocaine in Ireland. The Health Research Board indicates

a 259 per cent increase since 2016 in the number of cases where cocaine is the main drug for which people are seeking treatment.

Separate data from the Health Service Executive (HSE) shows that hospitalisations for mental and behavioural disorders related to cannabis were up 25 per cent, from 526 in 2018 to 658 last year. Some doctors have accused the HSE of ignoring the "huge amount of avoidable misery" caused by cannabis.



# Employment opportunities

Candidates will be graduates, highly accurate, numerate and with good communication skills.

They must be able, from a biblical perspective, to analyse, evaluate and summarise information.

An understanding of law and public policy in

the Republic of Ireland is required. Full and part-time applications will be considered.

Candidates for the posts will be Evangelical Christians who are highly motivated to apply biblical principles to the family, education, the world of work and public policy.

**Please contact our head office for more details.**

 **0044 191 281 5664**

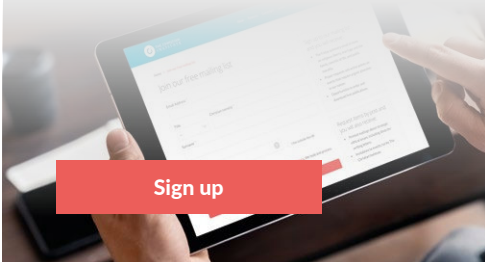
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