



INSIDE

- Dáil backs liberal abortion Bill
- New hate crime Bill could penalise people for 'thought crimes'
- Parents can withdraw kids from sex ed, confirms Foley
- New publications from the CI

Be a Christian influence

Proposals to ban so-called conversion therapy and introduce new forms of hate crime are top of the Government's agenda.

This will be a concern to Christians and others who defend the reality of biological sex or affirm marriage as only between one man and one woman.

Accusations of promoting 'hatred' are regularly used to stifle free speech. These new proposals risk criminalising church leaders who faithfully preach biblical sexual ethics and parents who refuse to affirm their

child's gender confusion.

However, we can be thankful for growing scrutiny of transgender ideology.

There is more widespread concern over women's safety. And there is increasing recognition of the harm being done, particularly to young people, by promoting the idea that it is possible to change sex or be 'gender-fluid'.

Thank you for all your support as we seek to equip you to be a Christian influence in a secular world.

Conversion therapy ban is Government's 'top priority'

The Government has agreed to move forward with the ban on 'conversion therapy' proposed by Equalities and Integration Minister Roderic O'Gorman.

The Minister told Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore that the ban "is a priority for Government this year". He claimed it would be informed by "international best practice" and research such as the Government-commissioned report by Trinity College Dublin.

That report, published last February, revealed

little or no evidence of 'conversion therapy' had been found in the country and its authors admitted that the survey sample was too small for any meaningful conclusions to be drawn.

The Christian Institute's Ciarán Kelly said: "People should of course be protected from physical and verbal abuse, but these practices are already illegal.

"The Irish Government would do well to apply the law as it stands and if genuine loopholes exist close them. But it should



➤ Roderic O'Gorman TD

steer clear of the sort of totalitarian ban seen in the Australian state of Victoria that criminalises parents and the ordinary work of churches."

Victoria's ban, which came into force last

year, criminalises prayer if it is deemed not to support a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. The penalty can be up to ten years in prison and a maximum fine of over £100,000.

Dáil backs liberal abortion Bill

The Dáil has backed a Bill that would remove key legal protections for the unborn.

At the second stage, TDs passed Brid Smith's abortion Bill by a slim majority. It seeks to extend abortion on demand from 12 weeks to 22 or 24 weeks and scrap the three-day reflection period.

It would also allow abortion up to birth for babies deemed to have a disability that would cause their death within a year.

It follows the publication of Marie O'Shea's review of the 2018 Act, which repealed Ireland's pro-life laws but retained some legal safeguards for the unborn.

O'Shea proposed scrapping the current three-day reflection



▶ Brid Smith TD

period, which gives women time to think over the decision after having requested an abortion.

She also recommended that the Health Service Executive recruit more pro-abortion GPs, even saying that hospitals should be allowed to screen out job applicants who conscientiously object to abortion.

But Smith has admitted that her Bill

goes even further than O'Shea's recommendations. Both the Bill and O'Shea's report will now be examined by the Health Committee.

Ahead of the 2018 abortion referendum the Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, promised safeguards that would make abortion "safe, legal and rare".

Peadar Tóibín reminded the House of that pledge as he accused the

Government of "looking to get rid of those safeguards and to renege on those promises".

WATCH

Sile Quinlan of Pro Life Campaign responds to the O'Shea report



▶ [the.ci/Quinlan](https://www.the.ci/Quinlan)

New hate crime Bill could penalise ordinary people for 'thought crimes'

There is growing alarm that people will be put at risk of arrest for 'hateful thoughts' under the Government's proposed Criminal Justice Bill.

During a Dáil debate in April,

Paul Murphy TD warned that the Bill could criminalise someone in possession of supposedly 'hateful material', even if it remained private and caused no harm. He asked: "How can we hold people

responsible for actions that they have not taken?"

But amendments moved by the People Before Profit member "defending the right to freedom of expression", which sought to prevent the Bill from undermining "basic issues of civil liberties", were voted down by the House.

In November last year, the Department of Justice pledged that "individuals can hold and express opinions which others might find offensive or shocking".

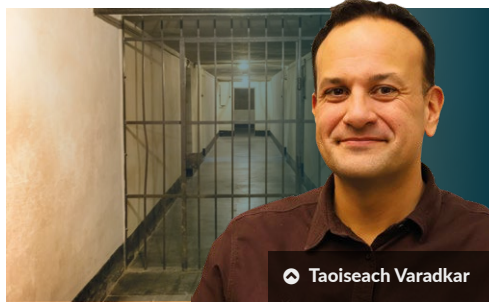


Leo Varadkar: 'Violent men should not be allowed in women's prisons'

Leo Varadkar has accepted that men with a history of violence should not be allowed in women's prisons.

The Taoiseach made the comment when challenged about the case of Gabrielle Alejandro Gentile. Known as 'Barbie Kardashian', he was imprisoned in a segregation unit in a female prison after he threatened to rape and murder his mother.

Varadkar acknowledged the case's similarities with that of convicted rapist Adam Graham



in Scotland, who was placed in a women's jail before a public backlash prompted the Scottish Prison Service to change its policy "to make sure that women were protected".

Minister for

Justice Simon Harris acknowledged "there is no circumstance, regardless of gender, where anybody should be at risk of violence in a prison".

He said the Irish Prison Service is

currently finalising its policy, which would be "informed by best international practice".

Currently, prisoners are placed in the jail directed by court and are only subject to a risk assessment upon arrival.

Under new rules introduced in England and Wales, the majority of male prisoners who claim to be women will no longer be allowed to be housed in female jails. In Scotland, no man in jail with a record of violence against women will be transferred to a women's prison.

New publications from the CI

GNOSTICISM

Revd Dr Nick Needham

Understanding Gnosticism and the Christian response to it will encourage and equip believers to stand firm against trans ideology.



THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

Rupert Bentley-Taylor

The fourth commandment was given as a blessing for the whole human race. When we turn away from honouring it, we pay a high price individually and corporately.



THE CHRISTIAN ORIGINS OF HUMANISM

Revd Dr Richard Turnbull

Originally, humanism was an expression of human flourishing under God, not apart from him. Secular humanism has hijacked the name and noble legacy of historic humanism.



CRITICAL THEORY: CHALLENGING TRUTH AND REALITY

Dr Sharon James

'Critical Theory' is the ideology behind woke activism and 'cancel culture'. Both Christians and non-Christians are facing fierce challenges at university or at work because of this lethal blend of postmodernism and Marxism.



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Pro-life laws in the States save thousands of lives



A raft of stringent safeguards protecting the unborn have been introduced across the US since its Supreme Court overturned *Roe v Wade* and returned abortion law to state legislatures.

The pro-abortion Society of Family Planning estimates that 32,260 fewer abortions took place in the six months following

the judgment. It documented a fall in the national abortion rate from 13.2 per 1,000 women to 12.3 per 1,000 women over the same period.

But while the number of abortions decreased overall, the report noted that home abortions increased by 137 per cent from April to December 2022.

Tiny minority of Northern Ireland identify as LGB+

Barely two per cent of the population in Northern Ireland identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or 'other'.

Official 2021 census figures show that fewer than 18,000 people, or 1.2 per cent of the population,

identified as gay or lesbian. Just over 11,000 (0.75 per cent) said they were bisexual, and fewer than 2,600 (0.17 per cent) opted for "other sexual orientation".

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency revealed

that more than a third of all adults in Northern Ireland who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual live in Belfast.

The Republic of Ireland's Census 2022 did not ask about residents' sexual orientation.



Parents can withdraw kids from sex ed, confirms Foley

Ireland's Minister for Education has pledged that pupils will not have to sit through sex education classes that promote gender ideology opposed by their parents.

Norma Foley TD made the commitment after parents raised strong objections about content in the draft Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme denying the reality of biological sex.

The Government-backed document



targeting 12 to 15-year-olds teaches that 'gender identity' "may or may not" correspond with 'sex assigned at birth'.

Findings from the National Council

for Curriculum and Assessment consultation on the draft programme observed that a commonly expressed view by parents was that the curriculum is

"seeking to promote 'gender ideology' by refusing to acknowledge that biological sex is binary."

It notes: "These respondents are strongly of the view that we are born as either male or female and that sex is binary and immutable."

The new material will provide 100 hours of SPHE teaching over three years and is due to be implemented from the start of the next school year.

Pastors: 'Stop pushing porn and trans ideology on school children'

More than 200 church leaders have urged the Government not to promote harmful content in sex and health education lessons.

In a letter to ministers in March, the pastors warned of serious repercussions for Irish society if pornography and transgender ideology is pushed in schools.

The church leaders said

it grieved them deeply to see the promotion of values that contradicted "the Bible's teaching on marriage, sexuality and gender". They added that thousands of Bible-believing Christian parents and grandparents nationwide found the content "wholly unacceptable and deeply troubling".

The signatories asked the Government to "rescind" proposals for 12 to 15-year-olds to discuss pornography, to "stop the promotion of transgenderism to impressionable children", and to "desist from undermining parental authority".

The letter described transgender ideology, which is

to be taught at both primary and secondary levels, as "both unbiblical and unscientific". It pleaded with ministers not to take Ireland down a "tragic and misguided path" that would inevitably result in "damaged young lives".

Co-authors Pastor John Ahern and Revd Mark Loughridge (below) told the Institute they had to take action to combat the "sexualisation of children" and the undermining of parental rights.



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the.ci/ROI-Pastors



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