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Women

Those with least suffer most under Ireland's abortion ban

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On 25 May, the long-awaited and campaigned-for referendum on changing Ireland's very restrictive abortion law - encapsulated in the 8th amendment to the constitution - will finally be held. The very broad-based Trade Union Campaign to Repeal the 8th launched a tabloid campaign newspaper on 1 May. You can see the publication [Yes Repeal here](#).

Below we reprint one of the articles, by Bríd Smith, who represents Dublin South-Central in the Irish Parliament, on why abortion is a class issue. We have published two earlier pieces, on what horrors the current situation leads to [here](#) and why women are central to the campaign [here](#).

We must end the lie that abortion is not an issue for women living here,

A woman's right to choose, to control her own body, is a fundamental issue of women's rights and a key prerequisite of gender equality. But it is, and always has been, also a class issue.

The truth is, women of the upper classes, women with the money, could always get abortions.

This is of enormous importance in this referendum campaign and we cannot lose sight of it. We should never forget that every restriction, every obstacle, put in the way of accessing abortion has a disproportionate effect on women who are working class, in poverty or marginalised. It also leads to later abortions because the procedure is not accessible through the health service.

If you have to travel to the UK or elsewhere it is so much easier if you are well off and have the money and connections. If you are a terrified young working class girl, or a migrant worker, or in direct provision it's much more difficult - or impossible.

In my own experience being exiled out of one's own country to access abortion carries with it stigma and loneliness that no woman should have to go through. We must end the lie that abortion is not an issue for women living here. It absolutely is. Just not in Ireland because we exile our women or we hold the threat of criminalisation and a 14-year sentence for those who procure the abortion pill here.

Winning repeal on May 25th is an absolute necessity and I appeal to every voter to do their best at work and in their communities to get out the Yes vote. But it is also a staging post in the overall struggle for choice, for a new Ireland where every child is a wanted child with a decent chance in life.

PS:

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