

### **39. Mandy La Combre on behalf of 'The Trade Union Campaign to Repeal the 8th Amendment'**

The 'Trade Union Campaign to Repeal the 8th Amendment' is continuing in the tradition that ICTU and DCTU have played historically in campaigning for a woman's right to choose. We are a group of trade union activists committed to playing our part in repealing Article 40.3.3 of the constitution. The trade union movement has a proud history of advancing women's rights and defending reproductive choice and any barriers to reproductive rights for women are also barriers to full social, economic, political, and workplace equality. The Irish Congress of Trade Unions opposed Article 40.3.3 in 1983 stating, "the rigidity and inflexibility of constitutional directives on social and moral issues is inappropriate in a democracy". We know that over 150,000 women have travelled abroad for abortions since 1983 and 12 more travel each day for a medical procedure they should be able to access in their own country. Men in this country face no such restrictions to any medical care. We cannot over emphasise enough how much of an equal rights issue this actually is and the fact that you are legally entitled to travel abroad for a procedure that is illegal in your own country shows just how hypocritical the amendment is.

Women make up more than 50% of all trade union membership in this country. Much of the care work in families also falls on women. CSO figures show that 50% of working women earn €20,000 euro or less. If a woman finds herself in the position of a crisis pregnancy the 8th amendment as it stands forces her to travel abroad. This can cost anything from €850 - €2,000, and for a low paid worker this can equate to 10% or more of their annual income. They may also be forced to take unplanned or unpaid leave which could be an added cost. The situation is significantly worse for no income or migrant women. Migrant women in particular are unable to access abortions abroad as a result of insurmountable travel and legal obstacles; they also face the hardship of accessing funding to travel. Which means that facing this dilemma falls hardest on the poorest. This amounts to significant stress for a low paid worker, that compounded with the added emotional stress of travelling abroad often alone and in fear and distress denies women any semblance of dignity and is an affront to their basic human rights.

If a woman chooses not to travel and tries to obtain abortion pills through the Internet, she can face up to 14 years in prison and so to can anyone who tries to help her. This proves to be particularly ironic in the case of a victim of rape. A woman who aborts a foetus in this manner as a result of a rape through this amendment is viewed as a worse criminal than the rapist.

We have seen the hypocrisy of this amendment exemplified many times over the past 30 years, from the X case in 1992, the tragic death of Savita Halappanavar in 2012 and the shocking obscenity of the treatment of the Y case. Where a migrant woman was treated with utter contempt and a total lack of humanity. Lest we forget, the foetus in the Y case was afforded its own legal team in the high court while Miss Y was suicidal, on hunger strike and forced to have a baby that was conceived through a rape. We have seen more recently the appalling scenario of the incubation of a foetus in a medically dead woman. This is due to nothing other than this states refusal to deal with an archaic amendment that equates the life of a woman with that of a foetus. This is tantamount to reproductive slavery.

The 8th amendment of the Irish Constitution states "The State acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in laws to respect, and, as far as practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right".

The 8th amendment is a barrier to progress, it denies women their rights and dignity further fuelling the shame that this state has heaped on women over the decades who may have found themselves in the position of a crisis pregnancy. Why should it be possible for complete strangers individually or collectively as government legislators to make personal decisions on behalf of someone else? Abortion is a personal decision and not a legal debate.

With the Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act being passed, there is the possibility of women being allowed to have an abortion, but only under very strict circumstances and having been seen by a panel of experts. We acknowledge that abortion in Ireland is still a very contentious issue for many people but also believe that people with different views can all work together to achieve the repeal of article 40.3.3. Recent polls have indicated that consistently attitudes to abortion have changed, Ireland is now a much more liberal country where individual rights and freedoms are more respected.

Through our campaign, many Unions and Trades Councils have affiliated, and activists are mobilising to bring their unions to a position of repeal. Without the deletion of article 40.3.3, we believe nothing can be done to ease the ban on abortion other than where suicide is a risk.

It is crucial that progressive initiatives such as Right2Water have the courage to take a leadership role on repeal and act as persuaders to those who have not yet reached that position. We hope that Right2Water will embrace the demands made by women for an equal society. This can be achieved by affording women the ability to have autonomy over their own bodies. All women in Ireland deserve to know that their choice, bodily autonomy, economic freedom, health and lives are theirs and theirs alone. We urge Right2Water to support all proposals to enable a referendum to delete the 8th amendment to the constitution.

The Trade Union Campaign to repeal the 8th Amendment is affiliated to the Coalition to Repeal the 8th Amendment. We are supported by Unite the Union, Mandate Trade Union, Dublin Council of Trade Unions, Waterford Council of Trade Unions, CWU Youth Committee, Bray & District Council of Trade Unions & ICTU Youth Committee.

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#### **40. Shane O'Leary**

As an Irish person who could not travel home for the marriage equality referendum, I feel I missed an opportunity to vote even though registered. I know many more were in my boat, particularly young people. Thankfully the yes side won but the landslide could have been even greater and the presidential age vote may have had a chance if a postal vote system was in place. I think this would be useful for many other young people such as those studying in universities away from their home towns or the increased number of people who have to travel for short term unstable work. Please include this so that every person is democratically represented. Good job so far, keep up the great work.

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**41. Eoin Ward**

The length of time between elections is too long to hold any one to account.

Pension rights should be in direct proportion to the deliverance on election manifesto.

All decisions in regard to sale of the people's assets (i.e. Aerlingus, water, oil, gas, gold, forestry) should go to referendum.

Direct democracy is the only way to put control in the people's hands.

If Irish politicians have proved anything since the foundation of the state it is that they cannot be trusted to govern in the people's interest.

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**42. Siobhan Hughes**

There are a few things which I would like to see implemented listed below which I feel will give more power to citizens of Ireland.

Bonuses for those in government should be based on the countries satisfaction with their work. Those voted into government should have a probation period of 2 years, if the country is not satisfied with their work, they can be voted out and a new party voted in. Decisions made by the government should first be put to the public and then the public can have an input in decisions which ultimately affect them. Pension packets should only be given to those who reach full term in government and have not been voted out by the public. The government should work for the people; the people do not work for the government. The public need to have more power than the government or else we ultimately see the same pattern of corruption and austerity forced on the most vulnerable. The people should be of main concern, not the money as money has corrupted them all. Those in government should only benefit to the amount of what their country decides, they're elected in by us, they work for us therefore we are their employer, we pay their wages so we should ultimately have more power than they do however the way the system is now and has been for a long time, has allowed the government to have more power than the people. THAT is what's wrong with the country, THAT is what's caused all of this mess! If the people have more power, the people know what is needed in this country, the people will be the ones who fix the mess, who improve the country and the government will carry out the work set out by the people and work for the people. I do hope that you can put forward these ideas on my behalf as I truly believe that a complete reform of the system and a shift of the power balance is needed in order to improve our country for all focusing firstly on the most vulnerable who have waited too long for change.

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**43. Fionnuala Greene**

My submissions are as follows and are not in any particular order (there are so many more, these ones I feel are important)

1. Reform the prison services follow Norway's lead they take a holistic approach i.e. the punishment is in the taking of one's freedom. The rate of re-offense in Ireland is very high; in Norway by contrast it's very low. In Norway time is invested in the restorative approach. The societal view that prison runs in families is changing and people who have never been in jail or a family history are now in this 'system'. Services support liaisons needed for prisoners, their families and children in society. We so seldom hear their voices and yet there are those who do Trojan work in this area.
2. Mental Health the poor relation of the Health System. As we all know the 'drug' industry is a huge business and our most vulnerable amongst the props used to keep it going. Supports at earlier stages in primary post primary and third level. Training for teachers and all who work with young people. Long school holidays a feature of many who work in schools could be used constructively to begin this training which ultimately will benefit all in society. Mental hospitals are woeful places to visit never mind to be a patient in a total overhaul needed, 1 in 4 will suffer a mental health issue at some stage in their life. Isn't it time this illness was treated with the same dignity and respect given to physical illness?
3. Unemployed initiatives to include them in society. Use the talents and skills they have (and we all have talents and skills) perhaps ten -twelve hours per week visiting old folks homes, hairdressing, music chat. Volunteering this need not be restricted to hospitals, schools and could include businesses, homes etc. some work obviously may require Garda vetting. This measure will keep them connected to society and the community and should they be in a position to return to the workforce it will perhaps give them more confidence.
4. The fact that I have to even type the following says it all about a society that is seriously 'sick'. Abolish child poverty and set a deadline on this e.g. 2018, 2019. This should be cross-party and every politician, independent, party or grouping in the Dail would sign up to this. Differences would have to be put aside for this and a co-ordinated policy agreed which would be reviewed every three months ensuring targets are met etc.
5. Education we are bombarded with the fact it is the key. The most vulnerable our special needs children have had so many cuts, resource hours, special needs assistants extra supports removed it is imperative these are restored and extra supports added. Education is the key, our Government have taken the key away, left the door but there is no way to get in.
6. General points I could be typing forever brief synopsis cuts to Lone Parents stopped and conditions reviewed. Medical cards for all under 6's?? Politicians accountable to the public, if they are not working to the electoral mandate they are not doing the job and it's time to go. While union and public sector talks and pay increases welcome feel the increases should concentrate first on the lower paid public sector works, i.e. the special needs assistants, the caretakers the cleaners etc. Corporation tax that's a joke needs to be reviewed. Third level grants the whole process and 'Susi' needs to be speeded up waiting 2, 3, 4 6 months is not an option for so many poorer families. Fuel allowance for social welfare gets cut in April regardless of the weather twenty euro may not be a lot to many but for those on social welfare it certainly is, feel this fuel allowance should be paid right up till the end of May and start again the end of September. There are so many things that can be sorted quite easily others which will obviously need considered thought, discussion and planning. It's called common sense. I am no economist and appreciate the strong need for business, responsible

banking a business / economic policy which is well thought out and progressive. Hoping you will get submissions from those with an economic background. Look forward to perhaps public meetings and open discussions on policies and ideas down the line.

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#### **44. June Maher on behalf of Bray Right2Water**

Following our R2W Bray meeting on 27th May 2015, our group has agreed the three submissions below:

1) That the Irish Water Board be dissolved and that water management be put back into the remit of the Local Authorities to be funded from central taxation as before. The existence of a singular Irish Water Board provides a convenient and ready platform for successive governments to return to the agenda of water privatization. We must ensure that all such available avenues are shut down and closed off permanently so that they cannot be revisited at any time in the future. The staff in the Local Authorities are equipped with the experience and knowledge required to manage our water services. Unfortunately the money necessary for investment, refurbishment and maintenance has been ignored by central government for far too long but we will not stand by and allow their negligence be used as an excuse to privatize our water.

2) We call for a Right2Water Ireland Conference to be held as soon as possible and open to all those who wish to attend. In the interest of democracy we quote verbatim from the policy document which we think is appropriate and applicable to R2W Ireland itself:

*"A community is democratic only when the humblest and weakest person can enjoy the highest civil, economic, and social rights that the biggest and most powerful possess."*

*- Asa Philip Randolph, leader in the African-American Civil Rights Movement*

"We need to undertake a programme of substantial democratic reform that is about more than tweaking time slots for questions or tokenistic measures. There must be real and meaningful reform of our local and national democratic processes which would put citizens at the heart of decision making."

We also propose that there be equal representation from the three stands of this campaign being Unions, Community and Political to form a steering committee with a view to deciding campaign policy going forward. We call for assurances that R2W Ireland will continue to fight on the issues as set down by Right2Water Europe being:

Our goals:

1. Guaranteed water and sanitation for all in Europe.
2. No liberalisation of water services.
3. Universal (Global) access to water and sanitation.

3) We refer to the Policy Principles Document and agree with all of the agenda therein. What is unclear is how do Right2Water Unions propose to fund these policies? We need a financial plan in order to substantiate the policies legitimately.

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#### **45. Jonathan Victory**

I would emphasise the importance of citizen-initiated referendums and forget about the recall of politicians. There is a time to recall politicians and that's during an election. Citizens petitioning for a referendum on the other hand is a very important mechanism for democratic accountability and needs to be publicised more. A recall policy will distract from that.

If you are looking for more detail on governmental reform why not look through the proposals of the Constitutional Convention which this government could so easily have advanced but are refusing to: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1UktBFBdnjY4Lz1Kv6WsepQIQPIJNyKugUUVfyXSBwO4/>

Also, if you are proposing the building of more houses you should emphasise that they should maximise energy efficiency and minimise environmental impact in their construction so that Ireland can become a world leader of this and that there isn't just another Celtic Tiger-style property boom.

In general, I like the content and presentation of the document but I can tell you that most of what you propose is already Green Party policy. I think it would be a strategic mistake to organise candidates of your own or think of a platform for candidates to adopt when the Greens are already providing it. I will list below every policy in your draft document that is already a policy of the Green Party:

- a single national water and sanitation board that is guaranteed to be in public ownership following a referendum to outlaw the privatisation of water services:  
<https://www.facebook.com/ourwaterirl>
- investment in upgrading our water infrastructure with a focus on conservation, sanitation and good management
- housing policy to tackle homelessness, control rents and build houses sustainably rather than on the basis of speculation
- support a European Debt Conference
- introduce a Financial Transaction Tax
- build alliances with other progressive movements throughout the EU (e.g. the European Greens)
- provision for Special Needs' Assistants
- a citizens' petition of 50,000 signatures should be able to trigger a referendum on legislation or constitutional change
- Elections should be held at a convenient time and be made easy to participate in
- relax the Whip system
- strengthen committees
- implements reforms that would empower local government

You should leave out that last point #5 under the Democratic Reform section as it's too vaguely worded. In terms of the rest of the document you're already in agreement with the Green Party on most of it. Perhaps it would be most straightforward to support the Green Party.

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#### **46. Sinéad Kennedy and Ailbhe Smyth On behalf of the Coalition to Repeal The Eighth Amendment**

Who we are?

The Coalition to Repeal the Eight Amendment is an alliance of organisations set up campaign for repeal of the eighth amendment in order to protect the lives, health and choices of women living in Ireland.

What is the Eight Amendment?

Article 40.3.3, known as the Eighth Amendment, was voted by referendum into the Irish Constitution in 1983. It equates the life of a pregnant woman with that of an embryo or foetus.

Why is the demand for Repeal the Eighth so important?

The presence of the eighth amendment in the Irish constitution is a source of discrimination against all women living in Ireland. It particularly affects marginalised women who have suffered disproportionately for decades; migrant women, women with low or no income, women who are unable to travel for whatever reason, women facing a crisis pregnancy and women who need an abortion for medical reasons.

The Eighth Amendment prohibits abortion in cases of rape or fatal foetal abnormality. It makes an unworkable and dangerous distinction between a pregnant woman's life and her health, and may prevent doctors from acting in the best interests of their patients. It forces at least 12 women a day to leave Ireland for a medical procedure they should be able to access here. The Eighth Amendment violates a woman's human right to bodily integrity and to self-determination, and goes against international human rights standards and we therefore urge

Proposal

The Coalition to Repeal the Eighth urges Right2Water to include the demand for a referendum to repeal of the eighth amendment as a minimum requirement for a progressive government.

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#### **47. Karen Doyle**

Right2Democratic Reform

I would like to make a proposal under the heading of Democratic Reform.

That all citizens should have access to a communal space, facilitated by non-politically aligned community activists.

Where open discussions and workshops could take place to talk about local, national and European governmental policies that affect all of our lives on a daily basis.

By utilising these spaces I believe that the citizens' voice would become central to the decision making process locally, nationally and internationally therefore each person and community would play an active part in our democracy on an ongoing basis, becoming the vital part of the big picture.

The spaces themselves should act as a vehicle for political and economic education to help empower and strengthen grassroots activism.

This initiative would be supported by both union and political pillars within the Right2Water movement.

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#### **48. Christopher Lowe**

Equality/Other

Right2Water should adopt the social model of disability. Disability is a social situation on top of our (physical, neurological, mental, etc.) impairments determined by social conditions currently tied to the needs of capital, aspects of which cannot be treated in isolation and should be abolished. Disabled people should have control of their own lives, and those in expert positions need to be committed to this. (Fundamental Principles of Disability (1975)).

This means work, education etc., need to be restructured to maximise access, restricting access with the clause of an accommodation being unreasonable must cease. Employment must be as meaningful and on parity with that of non-disabled people and all sheltered workshops must be closed along with similar institutions. The practice of using charity as privatised welfare needs to cease and instead be incorporated into the welfare state. Inequalities which may overlap with impairments must also be tackled.

There should be broad hate crime legislation including disability hate crime and speech. The Lunacy Act (1871) needs to be repealed under the principle of bodily autonomy for all people (<http://www.inclusionireland.ie/content/page/replace-lunacy-act>).

Carers require both labour protection and a standard of living in line with the living wage whether they are professional or otherwise.

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#### **49. Suzanne Brewer**

The Equal and inalienable rights of our Natural Environment, akin to Bolivia's "Law of Mother Earth", to be enshrined into Our Constitution.

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## **50. Donal Mac Carthaigh**

The biggest threat to democracy and workers' rights is TTIP, especially the ISDS, This (ISDS) would override the constitution and all labour laws. Its decisions by corporate lawyers cannot be appealed and once it is signed there is no exit.

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## **51. Brian O'Boyle on behalf of People Before Profit**

Do not wait – keep up struggle

Right2 Water supports the formation of a progressive government. But in order to achieve this it shall continue to promote the mobilisation of people power to defeat water charges. Specifically, it shall support all who have boycotted payment and defend them against anti-state attacks. It shall organise further mass demonstrations against austerity.

No coalition with establishment parties

The Right2Water campaign is opposed to any involvement of FF, FG or the Labour Party in its present form in a progressive government. These parties would use a veto to prevent the implementation of any measures which hurt their rich backers.

Tax big business and corporations

The burden of paying for establishing more social rights must be placed on big business and the wealthy. Right2 Water therefore calls for a minimum effective rate of corporation tax of 12.5 %, a wealth tax, an increase in employer contributions to social security to the European average and third rate of income tax for those earning above €100,000 and a Financial Transaction Tax.

Debt

Should a European Debt Conference not take place or should it fail to produce a write down of debt, Right2 Water believes that a progressive government should take the following measures

- All of Ireland's debt should be subject to audit.
- The debt associated with the banking collapse should be written down unilaterally.
- All other debt must be subject to ongoing public scrutiny

Other actions

- A progressive government should repeal the Industrial Relations Act to give workers the right to take effective industrial action.
- It should also call a referendum to repeal the eight amendment to the constitution.
- It should close down direct provision centres and give asylum seekers a right to work
- It should stop the use of Shannon airport for the purposes of helping to conduct military actions which infringe Irish neutrality

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## **52. Seamus Ward**

The one most important issue for me is having peoples initiated referendums re-instated back into our Bunreacht na hEireann; maybe not as was with articles 47 and 48 (deleted in 1939) but maybe on the lines of the one year initiative [www.1Yi.ie](http://www.1Yi.ie). This would present more democratic and honesty into the Government.

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## **53. Declan Bree**

The Irish local government system is the most constrained, narrow-based and weakest system of local government in the European Union.

At best, we have a system of local administration, through which un-elected chief executive officers make the executive decisions for our cities, towns and counties.

The management system as operated in our local government has contributed to an extremely weak local political system. Chief executives don't have a political mandate to represent the local community while at the same time local elected representatives don't have the responsibilities, structures or resources to ensure the provision of genuine local governance.

Ireland puts a lower proportion of its public spending through local authorities than any other European country and local government in Ireland performs a more limited range of functions than anywhere else in the E.U.

If people are to have a real say in the politics and administration of their local area and if Ireland is to have genuine local self-government and local democracy it will be necessary to implement a fundamental and radical democratic transformation of our local government system including the restoration of municipal local authorities.

It needs financial autonomy and a major devolution of government functions from the national to local authorities. It also needs accountability, openness and transparency and it requires the powers and functions of the chief executive of councils to be limited and subject to the policy decisions made by the elected council.

The powers and authority of local councils should come from the people. This means that the will of the elected representatives of the people, should, subject to law, take precedence in the conduct of council business.

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## **54. Antony O'Flaherty**

End tax evasion that has been legitimised by successive governments of Fianna Fail and Fine Gael. Residence brought in by Bertie Ahern, Irelands Billionaire Tax Exiles use this to avoid paying tax. Form RR1 is a form for high wealth individuals. This is like an Al Carte Menu of Tax Evasion. Here are some of the measures Stallion Fees, Artists Exemption, Urban Renewal and so on.

Dishonesty, corruption and Election Fraud are also quite significant and endemic in Irish Politics. Any politician and their party must be held account for their election promises, and other promises to the people, with stiff consequences for those who break them and for the political party.

Renationalise our essential services and utilities, electricity, gas, water, air and bus transport. This could be achieved by levying crippling taxes on their profits and salaries of management and dividends paid to shareholders.

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## **55. Michael O'Brien on behalf of the Anti-Austerity Alliance**

Introduction - For a real alternative government

The huge movement against the water charges and austerity has the potential to create a new radical political alternative to the agenda of cuts and unjust impositions that working people and the unemployed have endured since the crisis began.

Campaign groups should be encouraged to stand candidates supporting non-payment of water charges; pledging to oppose all austerity measures; and not to coalesce with any parties or Independents supporting austerity, e.g., FG, FF, Labour, Renua. An alternative to austerity in the form of refusal to pay odious debt, a commitment to taxing personal and corporate wealth in Ireland and to reverse the austerity cuts could gain massive support in society. We have also seen a huge radicalisation on social issues such as LGBTQ and women's rights. An opportunity exists now for the building of a new movement and a mass left party to represent working class people, based on the ideals of Connolly and Larkin, and involving all those who've faced oppression.

We need government that ends all austerity and challenges the capitalist market which spawned the policy of austerity and can never be the basis upon which an economically and socially just society can be built. By extension we will not do deals or be part of any government with parties that implemented austerity or accept the capitalist market, in particular Fine Gael, Labour or Fianna Fail. Instead we should confidently fight to rapidly achieve a majority for fundamental change in the years ahead.

### Housing

Only public investment by the state can end the housing emergency. The human right to housing must supersede the property rights of landowners, developers, landlords and speculators.

Guaranteeing the right to housing means banning economic evictions and making affordable housing available to all, including the 100,000 individuals and families on the housing list. Achieving this will require compulsory acquisition of building land and private rental properties.

Use the €7.5bn left in the National Pensions Reserve to end the housing crisis. Likewise the estimated €4bn from selling overseas NAMA properties could finance 25-40,000 homes.

100,000 extra local authority homes would help push down housing costs. But rent and house price controls and a residential mortgage write-down to affordable levels are essential.

For a public banking system

The private banks which collapsed have been bailed out at massive cost to the taxpayer of at least €64 billion. Now they are being fattened up for privatisation again. As with Eircom, privatisation would mean a bad deal for workers and the public, and a bonanza for speculators.

Instead, AIB/EBS and PTSB should be used as the basis for a publicly-owned and democratically controlled banking system to rationally plan investment in the interests of the majority. By running the banks in the interests of society, instead of society in the interests of the banks, they could be used as a public utility – providing cheap credit to small business and small farmers and write-downs for mortgage-holders.

Social Protection, Poverty and Deprivation, Pensions

We reject the neo-liberal mantra that the unemployed need to be ‘incentivised’ back to work, people want to work. Immediately reverse ALL social welfare cuts implemented since 2008.

Exploitative labour activation schemes such as JobBridge, Gateway and TUS are an attempt to pass the blame onto the individual rather than the system & undermine wages and working conditions. Social welfare is a universal entitlement – Anyone unemployed should have an automatic entitlement. The unemployed, pensioners, lone parents, carers should not live in deprivation. Recognise the unique role played by carers.

Repudiate the debt

The national debt ballooned from 25% of GDP before the crisis to well over 100% now. This was a result of the most expensive bank bailout in history, a collapse in tax revenues from construction and austerity that pushed the economy into a downward spiral. €7 billion a year is spent on servicing this debt every year. That is the equivalent of €1,500 for every person in Ireland and is unsustainable.

A central point of a left programme for government is a strategy to repudiate the debt that results from the decision to bail out the bankers and the economic collapse that resulted. This would include a public audit of the debt to investigate the odious debt and a commitment to refuse to pay that debt. Instead, this money should be used to fund socially useful projects and create jobs, for example in investment in housing and renewable energy.

Any debts owed as a result of the bailout, the financial crisis and economic collapse it caused, should not be paid. Build a united movement of ordinary working people, mass campaigns and trade unions throughout Europe to resist any sanctions threatened by EU institutions against Ireland and other defaulting countries. Initiate an international campaign to fight the financial markets and the EU institutions that back them up and for an alternative Europe that is run for the millions not the millionaires.

Against EU blackmail – for a Europe of the millions, not the millionaires

The disgraceful blackmail and threats against the Greek government for daring to suggest it would break from the austerity consensus is an indication of what would face any left government in Ireland or elsewhere. A left government must be prepared to stand up to those threats and break

the neo-liberal straitjacket of the EU rules such as the Fiscal Treaty, Six-Pack and Two-Pack, which make austerity law. It should refuse to be blackmailed by threats from the ECB or EU Commission and stick to its commitment to break with austerity. It should work to build a common movement of the 99% across Europe to build a fundamentally different Europe, which operates of the interests of the millions, instead of the millionaires.

### Public services

Public services have been devastated by austerity. Billions have been cut since 2008 and thousands of jobs shed, with a knock on impact in depressing the economy and devastating public services. As part of a plan of public investment that can redevelop the economy, all these cuts should be reversed and public services expanded. No outsourcing of public services for private profit. Croke Park 2 and other such agreements that erode the working conditions and rights of public sector workers should be scrapped.

### Health

The provision of high quality health care, free at the point of use, is a basic right that should be available to all. Universal Health Insurance will be a stepping up of the two-tier system and will serve to make healthcare more expensive while creating profits for private companies, it should be scrapped. Free GP care for all. Reverse privatisation in the health system. Healthcare should not be a source of profit.

### Transport

There needs to be a massive investment in public transport. A key goal is the minimisation of car usage, to achieve this there needs to be a reliable, frequent and extensive transport system. Investment in rail, trams and bus networks as well as supports for cyclists. Public transport should be brought back under 100% public ownership. Liberalisation of the market should be rolled back and there should be no outsourcing of routes or services. Public transport should be run under democratic control and management with workers and local communities being brought to the heart of taking the key decisions about the services. No routes should be outsourced. Full solidarity with workers in CIÉ in their campaign against privatisation and outsourcing.

### Education

Education is a basic right. Access to a well-funded and free at the point of use education system, from pre-school up to and including post-doctoral level is essential for all people to be able to reach their full potential and develop their talents and skills.

The provision of courses and the content of curricula should not be determined by the demands of big business. All people should be able to access a well-rounded and comprehensive education.

Churches and religious organisations should be removed from schools with all school property being returned to the state. No religious group should have an influence on the management of schools or in what is taught in schools. Reversal of all teacher and SNA cuts. Third level should be accessible for all. University fees should be abolished. Grants for all and should be increased to reflect the real cost of going to third level.

Massive expansion in access to education at every level for adults, in particular early school leavers.

#### Childcare

Having children should not mean financial hardship for women or their families. High quality childcare should be provided, free at the point of use, to all families that require it. Ireland has some of the highest childcare costs in Europe and also has one of the highest reliance on private childcare. Childcare should not be seen as a source of profit. Childcare facilities should be brought under public ownership and run in the interests of the children, their families and the workers in the sector.

#### Justice and policing

The justice system and the policing service have been shown to act for corporate interests, not those of working class people and social movements. The policing of water charges protests has shown examples of political policing. Gardai and policing priorities should be under the democratic control of local communities. Gardai should be properly accountable for their actions. The culture in the Gardai and judicial system should be transformed so that there is no tolerance of abuse of power, sexism, racism, or anti-traveller prejudice.

#### Equality

The issue of equality is central. All forms of discrimination on the basis of gender, sexuality, ethnic background, religion or disability should be challenged and removed. Civil rights for LGBTQ people have recently mobilised thousands into action. Full equality for LGBTQ people is now imperative, including repeal of Section 37. The legacy of Catholic Church domination has added to the oppression of women. Separation of church and state in health, education and other spheres must be championed, with commitment to Repeal the Eighth Amendment a core principle. Equal pay for women, public and affordable childcare and a restoration of child benefit and other cuts is vital.

No racism or discrimination. End the poverty and discrimination faced by travellers, including resources for traveller-specific accommodation and recognition of culture. Disabled people have borne the brunt of austerity cuts. New immigrant communities should be welcomed to play a full role in campaigns and political organisations. Direct provision must be scrapped.

#### WATER

Water is a human necessity and should be publicly owned. Extra charges for water, outside of the central taxation system, pave the way for privatisation and profiteering. Thus, the boycott of water charges is essential for the non-financing of Irish Water and preventing privatisation. The water network needs substantial investment: Pipes need upgrading to lower the 47% unaccounted for water rate, while new water infrastructure and reservoirs are required. This investment must come from progressive taxation. Irish Water must be abolished and responsibility for water returned to local authorities. There is a need for some central coordination between councils, but rather than a new bonus-culture company with overpaid CEOs, this can be done by public servants.

#### End the Give-Away of Natural Resources

We are against the give-away of our vital natural resources. The oil and gas given away has an estimated value of over €1 billion. This should be brought back into public ownership. Instead of

being used to further bloat the profits of Big Oil, it should be refined safely offshore, used to finance public investment and to assist a transition to renewable energy.

### Workers' Rights

We support all pay claims that meet and exceed rises in the cost of living. A national minimum wage of €12 should be a core objective. We support the creation of a unified, society-wide, compulsory defined benefit occupational pension scheme and the right to retire at 60.

Our movement supports legislating for compulsory trade union recognition and a right to organise effectively in the workplace. We need a new generation of shop stewards/representatives with the confidence and authority to lead action on the ground to improve pay and conditions and no return of social partnership which squeezed the life out of the trade union movement. A revived trade union rank and file would then need to find its democratic reflection in the leadership of the trade union movement.

The experience of many industrial disputes, e.g. Greyhound, demonstrated that again the Industrial Relations Act 1990 and the application of other laws are designed to prevent effective strike action. This act must be repealed but while it is in place we support workers who breach it and likewise break injunctions obtained by employers in order that occupations and pickets can be carried out.

### Fiscal, Budgetary

€31 billion in 'adjustments' - unjust cuts in public services, public service pay, welfare as well as impositions like the USC and property tax - have been loaded overwhelmingly on working people and the unemployed. We must end the tax rip-off and the use of Ireland as a tax haven. The super-rich must be made to pay, including actually paying the effective corporation tax rate.

New revenues must be targeted from a combination of a higher rate of corporation tax, a millionaires' wealth tax, a financial transactions tax and a rise in the effective rate of income tax on the top 10% of households all of whom take in more than €100,000.

The tens of billions that could be raised from the above policies could then be used to begin to reverse the recent austerity measures on ordinary people, expand public services and fund a programme of necessary public works and house building to create jobs. So we must end the reliance on the private sector which caused the crisis and is incapable of providing a strong economy with secure and well paid jobs for all. Reject the fiscal diktats, rules and restrictions of the EU. Instead implement massive public investment to develop a strong and sustainable economic and industrial base run on the principle of democratic public ownership and control where people's needs come before profit.

### Respect for Environment

We are heading towards environmental disaster because of the drive for profit of major industries, multinational companies and big agribusiness. The Irish government and governments across the globe have shown that they are not prepared to take the measures necessary to protect the environment.

Recognise the importance of safeguarding the environment over the need to make profit. We need a 55% cut in greenhouse gases by 2030; an immediate ban on fracking; introduction of a new carbon tax on big business related to their levels of carbon pollution; disbanding of the Environmental Protection Agency and its replacement with a new board truly independent from business, and the establishment which has the power to prosecute and close businesses who consistently pollute. Particular enforcement is required in the agri- business sector to enforce standards that protect the environment and animal welfare.

#### Democratic Political change

The main political problem over the last years has been the policies the parties in government have implemented which benefitted the banks and big business interests. There should be a democratic mechanism to recall elected representatives and governments. All public representatives should live on the equivalent of the average industrial wage and should only receive necessary and vouched for expenses.

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### **56. We Won't Pay Campaigns in Dublin South West**

#### 1. Non-payment of water charges

The battle against water charges is at a crucial stage with bills dropping around the country. If a significant level of non-payment of water charges is built, any future government will be under immense pressure to scrap water charges. We therefore call for people to refuse to pay the water charges and commit to building active groups on the ground to give people confidence to refuse to pay. This will go alongside encouraging active resistance to water metering and the building of mass protests against water charges.

#### 2. No Coalition with FF/FG/LP

Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and Labour have dominated politics for decades and we have never had a government that represents the 99%. Over the last seven years of the crisis, Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and Labour have implemented austerity policies that have been disastrous from the point of view of the majority. Any government that involves them will manage the capitalist system in the interests of the 1% and will betray the aspirations of working class people. Therefore, we rule out in advance of any election any participation in a coalition government with Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and Labour, or any other party like Renua which is committed to continuing austerity. Instead, we will work to build a majority for fundamental change and a real Left government, which breaks with austerity.

#### 3. Repudiate the debt

The national debt ballooned from 25% of GDP before the crisis to well over 100% now. This was a result of the most expensive bank bailout in history, a collapse in tax revenues from construction and austerity that pushed the economy into a downward spiral. €7 billion a year is spent on servicing this debt every year. That is the equivalent of €1,500 for every person in Ireland and is unsustainable.



A central point of a left programme for government is a strategy to repudiate the debt that results from the decision to bail out the bankers and the economic collapse that resulted. This would include a public audit of the debt to investigate the odious debt and a commitment to refuse to pay that debt. Instead, this money should be used to fund socially useful projects and create jobs, for example in investment in housing and renewable energy.

A united movement of working people, trade unionists and left activists should be built across Europe to defend any government which repudiates illegitimate debt and resist any sanctions against them.

#### 4. Against EU blackmail – for a Europe of the millions, not the millionaires

The disgraceful blackmail and threats against the Greek government for daring to suggest it would break from the austerity consensus is an indication of what would face any left government in Ireland or elsewhere. A left government must be prepared to stand up to those threats and break the neo-liberal straitjacket of the EU rules such as the Fiscal Treaty, Six-Pack and Two-Pack, which make austerity law. It should refuse to be blackmailed by threats from the ECB or EU Commission and stick to its commitment to break with austerity. It should work to build a common movement of the 99% across Europe to build a fundamentally different Europe, which operates in the interests of the millions, instead of the millionaires.

#### 5. End the Give-Away of Natural Resources

We are against the give-away of our vital natural resources. The oil and gas given away has an estimated value of over €1 billion. This should be brought back into public ownership. Instead of being used to further bloat the profits of Big Oil, it should be refined safely offshore, used to finance public investment and to assist a transition to renewable energy.

#### 6. For a public banking system

The private banks which collapsed have been bailed out at massive cost to the taxpayer of at least €64 billion. Now they are being fattened up for privatisation again. As with Eircom, privatisation would mean a bad deal for workers and the public, and a bonanza for speculators.

Instead, AIB/EBS and PTSB should be used as the basis for a publicly-owned and democratically controlled banking system to rationally plan investment in the interests of the majority. By running the banks in the interests of society, instead of society in the interests of the banks, they could be used as a public utility – providing cheap credit to small business and small farmers and write-downs for mortgage-holders.

#### 7. Decent work

Schemes like JobBridge, Gateway and First Steps are used to undermine wages and conditions for all and to massage the unemployment figures. These free labour schemes should be scrapped. Instead, there should be investment in education, apprenticeship schemes and the creation of real jobs.

The so-called 'recovery' is being built on a model of increasingly precarious and low-paid work. Zero and low hours contracts are becoming prevalent. They should be replaced by decent well-paid and secure work. The minimum wage should be increased to the Living Wage of €11.45 an hour. There

should be mandatory Trade Union recognition, forcing employers to negotiate with trade unions who represent their employees.

## 8. Taxation Justice

Regressive taxes, such as the property tax and the water charges should be scrapped, as should the Universal Social Charge for those earning under €40,000.

Instead, there should be a progressive taxation system, which taxes profits, high incomes and wealth.

A Financial Transactions Tax of 0.1% on bonds and shares and 0.01% on derivatives should be introduced which would raise around €500 million.

A third higher rate of income tax could be introduced on incomes over €100,000

A 5% 'Millionaires tax' on net assets of over €1 million should be introduced.

While the headline rate of corporation tax is 12.5%, the reality is that the average effective rate of corporation tax is 8% or lower. For every increase of 1% in effective corporation tax paid, around €500 million more would be raised. The corporations should immediately pay at least 12.5% and we should seek to raise corporation tax to the EU average (and average rate of income tax paid by a low paid worker) of 17.9%.

## 9. Housing

The right to housing must supersede the rights of developers, landowners, speculators and landlords to maximise their profit and rent.

Rent controls should be immediately introduced to stop sky-rocketing rents.

A major house building programme is needed to provide affordable housing for all, including the hundred thousand on the housing waiting list. NAMA is the largest property owner in the state and controls thousands of acres of building land. It should be democratised and run as a state construction company, undertaking a massive local authority house building programme and providing tens of thousands of construction jobs on decent pay and conditions.

## 10. Democracy

A new political movement needs to be built on the principles of grassroots democracy and participation. Decision-making conferences should be made up of primarily of delegates from local campaigns together with representatives of trade unions and political parties. Local campaigns should be free to select their own delegates and conferences should make decisions democratically, with a process of amendments and voting.

## 11. Workers' wage

Anybody standing for election as a TD for a new left movement should commit to only personally taking the average industrial wage if elected, donating the rest to progressive movements and causes.

