

Prime Minister Varadkar,

We are writing you this letter surrounding the days you head to the White House for their annual St. Patrick's Day Celebration on Thursday March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018. While St. Patrick's Day has always been a day for the Irish all over the world to celebrate their heritage, and politics often takes a backseat on this special day, we feel we cannot remain silent because innocent lives are at stake.

We are aware of the current debate in Ireland over abortion and the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment and we believe that you, as the Prime Minister of Ireland, must be a voice for the most innocent and uphold the dignity and rights of each and every Irish citizen. Since 1983, Ireland's 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment has protected innocent children in the womb and their mothers from the scourge of abortion. Ireland's 8<sup>th</sup> amendment has [saved the lives of over 100,000 Irish children](#) and has helped make Ireland one of the safest places in the world for pregnant women. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Ireland has one of the lowest maternal mortality rates in the world – and this is without abortion. Experienced practitioners and researchers in obstetrics and gynecology from all over the world have applauded Ireland's 8<sup>th</sup> amendment and made it clear that [women and their children are better off without abortion](#).

We have our own experience here in the U.S. with abortion and felt it is important to share this with you, as you visit to our great country. While America has long been a nation founded on freedom -- "saoirse" in Irish -- a dark cloud was brought over our nation on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1973, when the Supreme Court ruled in the case Roe v. Wade to legalize abortion in America. While Roe v. Wade was meant to only allow abortion in "certain circumstances" and was said to make abortion "safe, legal and rare" -- much like what you claim to be pushing for in Ireland – the ruling opened the floodgates and abortion-on-demand became the law of the land. Since then, millions of women have been negatively affected by abortion, some have even died, and we are missing over 55 million children in America today simply because of a law that was initially said to permit abortion only in certain cases. And now we struggle to pass any kind of rollbacks on abortion, even something as common sense as a 20-week ban on abortion – despite having the support of at least [76 percent of Americans according to a recent Marist poll](#).

Planned Parenthood lawyer Julie Kay called Ireland, "The Jewel in the crown of the pro-life movement." But Ireland isn't just a jewel for the pro-life movement, it is a beacon of hope for the entire world. Ireland has become one of the leaders in demonstrating life-affirming laws and medical treatment. This is something to be protected and hailed – not something to be repealed. The 8<sup>th</sup> amendment should be applauded not repealed. You have the power to continue Ireland's excellence in life-affirming laws and healthcare.

Science clearly shows that life begins at conception and with modern medical advances unborn children are able to survive outside of the womb at earlier and earlier stages of development. With modern technology, we are able to see clearly the fingers, toes, heartbeat, brainwaves, all of the facets of a living, breathing human being – and this is all present before 12 weeks.

We stand alongside so many other Irish and Irish-Americans -- 34 million Americans claim Irish ancestry – as we ask you to please do the right thing and uphold the rights and dignity of every life, including those of the unborn, in Ireland. The theme for the 45<sup>th</sup> annual March for Life in our nation's capital earlier this year, which brought all of us and hundreds of thousands of people from across the nation together in support of the right to life, was "Love Saves Lives." When John Paul II visited Ireland many years ago he proclaimed, "Love is never defeated, and I could add, the history of Ireland proves it."

Taoiseach Varadkar, please don't let love be defeated. Please uphold the right to life and the dignity of all persons – both born and unborn – through Ireland's life-affirming 8<sup>th</sup> amendment. Ireland has been a beacon of hope for America, that one day we too could have life-affirming laws that promote excellent

healthcare for women and their children. You have the power to take a stand against the repeal of the 8<sup>th</sup> and protect women and their children from abortion. Please do the right thing: uphold the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment and take a stand for life and for love.

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