

SEANAD NEWSLETTER

Spring/Summer 2015

Web: www.ivanabacik.com
Email: ivana.bacik@oireachtas.ie
f Ivana Bacik
t @ivanabacik
Phone: +353 1 618 3136



Welcome to the latest Newsletter from Senator Ivana Bacik.

I am delighted and honoured to represent the Dublin University constituency in Seanad Éireann. I will also make sure to keep you up to date with the work that I am doing in the Seanad, and would be happy to raise issues there on your behalf.

Email: ivana.bacik@oireachtas.ie
Phone: 01 618 3136

Dear Graduate,

Welcome to my latest Newsletter from the Seanad.

This short newsletter provides you with an update on some of the work I have been doing over the past year in the Seanad. For a more detailed look at some of my work, you can find both video and transcript coverage on my website. I am very grateful for all the support I have received from Trinity graduates since my election in 2007, and re-election in 2011. Please do contact me if you would like me to raise any particular issue on your behalf in the Seanad.

I also organise regular tours of Leinster House and would be delighted to invite you to join us on one of those over the coming months.

Do get in touch on ivana.bacik@oireachtas.ie and thanks for your support.

Best wishes,



Senator Ivana Bacik with Safe Ireland researcher Simone George and chief executive Sharon O'Halloran at the launch of *The Lawlessness of the Home* report. The study's recommendations include making domestic violence a crime, ensuring consistency in the application of the law and making "pockets of good practice" the norm.

Photograph: Cyril Byrne

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In October 2014, as a member of the Justice Committee I contributed to the publication of our report on domestic violence and sexual abuse. On 30th March 2015, I launched a major report on domestic violence produced by Safe Ireland at www.safeireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/SAFE-IRELAND-The-Lawlessness-of-the-Home.pdf



Email me to arrange a tour of the Seanad and Leinster House.

ivana.bacik@oireachtas.ie

MULTI-DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOLING

New Portobello/Canal Way Educate Together National School, Dublin 8

I was a founding member and Chairperson of the campaign for a new multi-denominational school in Dublin 8; and was delighted when, after spending a year in temporary premises 2013-4 in Harcourt Terrace, the school moved in September 2014 to permanent premises in the former Christian Brothers school on Basin Lane, Rialto, Dublin 8. The name of the school has now changed to Canal Way Educate Together. On 17th January 2015 a group of us organised a family tea party in the school, which was a great success.

See <http://www.portobelloetns.org/> for more details.

REPEAL OF THE EIGHTH AMENDMENT

In November 2014, I announced the establishment of a Labour Women Commission on Repeal of the Eighth Amendment, to work on drafting legislation to replace the Eighth Amendment, assisted by a panel of independent legal and medical experts including former Senator Mary Henry (our Chairperson) and Drs Peter Boylan and Veronica O'Keane. I was Rapporteur to the Commission. On 27th February, Labour Party members voted unanimously to endorse the Commission's Report and to support legalisation of abortion on grounds of risk to life or health; rape; and fatal foetal abnormality. The unanimous vote has paved the way for Labour Women to prepare legislation on abortion.

PROSTITUTION LAW CHANGE

On 12th November 2014 I represented the Oireachtas Justice Committee at an international conference hosted in Paris by the Coalition for the Abolition of Prostitution, and following that event I strongly welcomed the publication before Christmas by the Minister for Justice of the Heads of the Sexual Offences bill, Heads 10 and 11 of which create new offences of 'purchase of sexual services'. This ground-breaking change to the law comes about following a recommendation that purchase of sex be criminalised in our 2013 Justice Committee report on prostitution law.

MARRIAGE EQUALITY REFERENDUM – FRIDAY 22ND MAY 2015

It has been a long journey towards equality, but we will be given the opportunity to vote for civil marriage equality for gay and lesbian couples in the Referendum to be held on Friday 22nd May 2015.

This is a vitally important civil liberties issue for our time. I am very proud to have helped on part of this historic journey; as junior counsel in the ground-breaking Zappone and Gilligan case in the High Court, and as a strong advocate for marriage equality over many years. I have been working hard on the Referendum campaign.

REFERENDUM ON AGE OF PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

On 22nd May, we will also be asked to vote on whether the age at which candidates are eligible for election to the office of President should be reduced from 35 to 21. I support this referendum, which was recommended by the Constitutional Convention.

OIREACHTAS WOMEN CELEBRATION IN LEINSTER HOUSE



A framed picture is now on permanent display in Leinster House of the 'Oireachtas Women' event I organised in 2008 to mark the 90th anniversary of the first election in which women could vote in Ireland. In January 2014, I invited all current women TDs and Senators to the Seanad Chamber for the taking of another photo to celebrate the contribution women members have made to the Oireachtas.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' LEGISLATION

I am delighted to have had two private members' bills accepted by government. The first was the Civil Registration (Amendment) Act 2012 which for the first time legalised the solemnisation of civil weddings by Humanists – before then, only State Registrars or religious solemnisers could legally celebrate marriage.

The second is the Employment (Equality) (Amendment) (No.2) Bill 2013, which is at Committee Stage in the Seanad and is expected to be passed soon. This will amend section 37 of the Employment Equality Act and prohibit discrimination against LGBT teachers or hospital workers. It has been welcomed by teachers' unions and LGBT groups.

SEANAD NEWS

In recent months, an extensive range of legislation has been debated in the Seanad. The bills that I led on or contributed to recently include: the Children and Family Relationships Bill; the 34th Amendment of the Constitution (Marriage Equality) Bill; the Gender Recognition Bill; the Workplace Relations Bill; and the Garda Síochána (Amendment)(No 3) Bill.

In particular, I was delighted that on 30th March 2015, after many hours of debate, we finally passed the Children and Family Relationships bill in the Seanad – a bill on which I led for Labour.

This important progressive bill provides a comprehensive statutory framework for the care and upbringing of children, and a proper legal structure to underpin diverse family relationships in Ireland – including gay families.

On 1st April 2015, I proposed a motion on integration and new communities in the Seanad during Private Members time, which was taken by Minister Aodhán Ó Riordáin – we had representatives from the Polish community and organisers of the inaugural Polska Éire festival present for this lively debate.



Ivana with Minister Aodhán Ó Riordáin and Polska Éire organisers, 1st April 2015.

Use your vote and play your part in shaping our society! #Referendum2015

Make sure you are registered to vote!

www.checktheregister.ie

CONTACT SENATOR IVANA BACIK

Seanad Éireann, Leinster House, Dublin 2

Email: ivana.bacik@oireachtas.ie Phone: +353 1 618 3136

Web: www.ivanabacik.com



Ivana Bacik



@ivanabacik



Labour