

Pro-choice activists to take 'abortion pill bus' across the country

Women with unwanted pregnancies will be able to access pills on the bus after an online consultation.

PRO-CHOICE ACTIVISTS are to deliver illegal abortion pills to women across the country over the next two days as part of a campaign to repeal the eighth amendment.

The Socialist Party's Rosa campaign group plans to leave Dublin this morning on board a bus carrying the World Health Organisation-approved drugs.

The bus will stop in Galway for a lunchtime rally at the Spanish Arch before heading to Limerick for a demonstration on O'Connell Street.

Organisers will travel on to Cork tomorrow morning, where a protest will be held on Winthrop Street, and return to Dublin for a final rally in the afternoon.

The group says women with unwanted pregnancies will be able to access pills on the bus after completing a Skype consultation with doctors from Dutch pro-choice group Women on Web, which distributes abortion drugs to countries where abortion is illegal or restricted.

"We are bringing this issue to the people most affected by the eighth amendment, ordinary women across the country who face difficulties travelling abroad for a legal abortion," Rosa activist Rita Harrold said.

We want those women to know that there are safe options available.

She added: "Abortion is going to be a big issue in the next general election.

It's the first since Savita [Halappanavar]'s death and it's an opportunity for women to say, 'You know what? We aren't living in 1950s anymore. We're not going to support politicians that won't let us make decisions about our own lives.'

It is illegal under Irish law to take and distribute abortion pills.

The Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act states that any person found guilty of "intentionally destroy[ing] unborn human life" is liable to a fine or imprisonment for up to 14 years.

In a protest last year, Rosa travelled to Belfast to bring abortion pills back to Dublin, where Coppinger and other activists swallowed the tablets outside Connolly Station.



Ruth Coppinger TD arrives back in Dublin in October 2014 after they taking a train to Belfast to bring back abortion pills.

Image: Brian Lawless

Organisers said the journey was inspired by the “contraceptive train” of 1971, when members of the Irish Women’s Liberation Movement travelled to Northern Ireland to buy contraceptives that were then illegal in the Republic.



Ruth Coppinger leaves Belfast last year with non-surgical abortion pills.

Source: *RollingNews.ie*

Criticism

The Irish Pro Life Campaign has criticised the group’s latest move, meanwhile, calling it “an irresponsible stunt”.

“This is just the latest publicity stunt from Deputy Coppinger. But it is an incredibly dangerous and irresponsible one that puts the lives of women at serious risk,” spokesperson Ruth Cullen said.

Those lending their support to the abortion pill bus have no credibility talking about women’s health in the context of the abortion debate going forward.

It is one thing to constantly misrepresent the eight amendment as Deputy Coppinger does. It’s quite another thing to use an abortion pill bus as a means of attracting publicity.

The more outrageous the stunt the better, as long as it helps dismantle the eight amendment, seems to be the thinking. The stories of those who regret their abortions are being drowned out of the debate as well as the rights of the unborn child.

Read: [More than a quarter of people say abortion will sway their vote \(http://www.thejournal.ie/abortion-next-election-2332557-Sep2015/\)](http://www.thejournal.ie/abortion-next-election-2332557-Sep2015/)

Read: [Enda won’t commit to abortion referendum \(http://www.thejournal.ie/fine-gael-8th-amendment-3-2325689-Sep2015/\)](http://www.thejournal.ie/fine-gael-8th-amendment-3-2325689-Sep2015/)

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