

Abortion pill bus greeted with 'abortion is murder' placards in Cork

Ruth Coppinger expresses distaste at 'vociferous and vocal minority' of protesters

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Socialist Party TD Ruth Coppinger has expressed her distaste at what she termed the "vociferous and vocal minority" of protesters who chanted as she attempted to make a speech when the abortion bus rolled in to Cork on Saturday.

The bus was organised by ROSA, a reproductive rights group against oppression, sexism and austerity.

It said its campaign is two-fold; to make medical abortion pills available to women who need them and to call for a referendum to repeal the Eighth Amendment in the Constitution, which deals with the issue of abortion.

Addressing the crowd in Cork city centre on Saturday morning Ms Coppinger said she was disgusted at the behaviour of individuals from the other side of the spectrum.

"They (the protesters) make a lot of noise. They represent the past and we represent the future. All the figures show that 90 per cent of people favour abortion in certain circumstances. You are screaming down ordinary women here today. You should be ashamed of yourself but you are doing so out of desperation. Because you know your days are numbered. We have been contacted by women while we have been on this journey. Women on Web have had a massive number of hits from Irish women. We need to educate women about this safe pill."

Protestors held placards with slogans such as "Love them Both - Abortion kills one and hurts another" and "Abortion is Murder."

Cora Sherlock, deputy chairwoman of the Pro Life Campaign, says the abortion pill bus is dangerous and irresponsible.

"These pills are dangerous for women. That is a fact. I am not making it up. What we have seen is a tragic and inappropriate publicity stunt. It is purely to attract media and political attention. An abortion involves the ending of a human life. It is a traumatic time and to suggest they should step on to the back of a mini bus with colourful posters on the side. That is not dealing with it with the seriousness and gravity it deserves."

However, Ailbhe Smyth from the Repeal the 8th Coalition, says the abortion pill is the safest form of termination.

"If you go through a reputable service like Women on Web you go through a very detailed medical assessment and if you are considered suitable for the abortion pill you will be sent the pill through the postal service."

Ms Smyth lamented that forty years after the 'condom train' to Belfast, Irish women are still campaigning for reproductive rights.

The bus was promoting an online service providing access to medical terminations. Women were able to come to a private room on the vehicle for a consultation with a WomenOnWeb doctor.

The bus stopped at Winthrop Street in Cork on Saturday for a rally at 11.30am before making its way back to Dublin for a demonstration at the Central Bank on Dame Street.

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