ABORTION IN IRELAND

The recent opening of the Marie Stopes abortion clinic in Belfast has brought the controversial topic of abortion in Ireland into light, and once again Ireland’s opinion is divided. As we all know, abortion is illegal in Ireland, except if it “occurs as a result of a medical intervention performed to save the live of the mother.” I disagree with this. I think abortion should be completely legalised in Ireland, and I am of the opinion that this legalisation is long overdue.

Abortion has always been an extremely debated subject in Ireland and it has always divided public opinion. There have been many cases dealing with abortion taken to the courts, most famously the 1992 “X Case”, in which the Attorney-General applied for a injunction preventing a suicidal young teenager who was pregnant as a result of statutory rape from travelling abroad for an abortion. The Attorney-General lost this case, and another high-profile case A, B and C vs Ireland. Here, it was found that C’s human rights had been violated.

I think this begs the question, why is abortion still illegal in Ireland and so hush-hush when the courts have ruled that it is okay for women to have an abortion, and the lack of information about it available in Ireland is actually a violation of women’s rights?

The Irish government are not stupid, despite what some people may believe. They know women travel abroad to receive abortions, and I just find it remarkable that they have yet to legalise it here. Surely, if they were *that* against abortion they would stop the 7000 plus women who travel to places such as England and The Netherlands from going there? And even when they did try to prevent a woman from travelling abroad, they lost the case? Doesn’t this just go to show that it is high time for a change in the constitution regarding this issue.

I really do not see the reasoning behind forcing a woman whose health is at risk because of her baby or who has conceived a baby who is not going to survive outside the womb to carry on with her pregnancy. A woman who has been raped and is pregnant as a result should not be forced to carry that child. A woman should have the right to choose and how she deals with her pregnancy should not be dictated by people who to be completely honest, have no real understanding of what she’s going through. It’s all very well for someone with their 2.5 healthy children who were conceived in a loving marriage to call abortion disgusting, but I can’t help wonder if they would change their stance if the tables were turned on them, and they learned their foetus had abnormalities and would not survive outside the womb? That carrying their pregnancy to full term could actually kill them? That their child wasn’t conceived out of love but through one of the most brutal crimes a man could commit?

Religion will always play a big part in this argument. Ireland has always prided itself on being “scholars” so why can’t these so-called scholars see past the anti-abortion propaganda that has been drilled into them by the Church who, if you ask me, really should not have a say in this matter. As Obama once said, “No, you can’t deny women their basic human rights and pretend it’s about your ‘religious freedom’. Religious freedom doesn’t mean you can force others to live by your own beliefs” The people of the church are well entitled to their own beliefs, but forcing their opinion on all their followers and not allowing them to make up their own mind about them is downright wrong. Everyone should be allowed to decided for themselves what their stance on abortion is, and not have it ruled by a group of clergymen.

Ireland ranked 5th in the world in 2012 for upholding women’s rights but is this ranking accurate when even to this day, women are being denied their right to choose? More so, perhaps our ranking would be even higher if we granted women this right or simply just held a referendum. But Ireland’s ranking is something to be proud of. We give women equal pay for equal work. The right to vote. The right to work. The right to an education. The right to marry whoever they want. The right to adopt. The right to be treated equally and many more. Just not the basic right to choose. Hmm.

All in all, I completely believe abortion should be legalised in Ireland and women should have the right to choose. A woman’s body is no one’s business but her own’s and no politician, religion or anti abortion activist should be allowed to interfere.