

# Letters to the Editor

## The eighth amendment

Sir, - Since January 2002, I have sought compassionate treatment for the unviable unborn and its parents. In 2006 the then Fianna Fáil government defended its position on my action against Ireland in the European Court of Human Rights by stating that I had not exhausted domestic remedies (ie, taking an action against the State while pregnant).

It seems that the legislature wants to have pregnant women in court, dead or alive, so that it can adjudicate on their unviable unborn. Government after government has demonstrated that it does not trust our doctors.

In *D v Ireland* (European Court of Human Rights 2006), the State's expert opinion suggested that "remorseless logic" would not be applied to Article 40.3.3 in relation to the "unborn" and that if, tested in court, the interpretation of "unborn" may not be applied to an unviable foetus that has no prospect of being "born".

I now ask our politicians again, 13 years after being told my unborn had no prospect of life outside the womb, that women should not suffer the exponential sadness of being sent away to deliver early.

Successive governments have treated the issue as a gamble too far in the teeth of an election. It is high time the issue of termination for medical reasons in the case of fatal foetal abnormality was dissociated from politics.

It, by an unfortunate gestational anomaly, an incompatibility with life has occurred, and we have the medical technology to inform us, women should not be forced to continue incubating as human ventilators. We want to safely deliver and respectfully bury our unborn. Not have them sent home as ashes in the post, as has been the case for many parents.

Obstetricians differ from politicians; they are in the business of caring for mothers for the long haul, not relentlessly seeking re-election, power and position.

Where their expertise is engaged, it is the doctor over the politician who should, in conjunction with the parents, decide what is best.

For this reason, I urge the present Government to accede to the majority wish that the eighth amendment should be repealed on the next referen-

dum day. The mother of a non-viable unborn should not have to be dead to receive respect, assistance and compassion. - Yours, etc,

DEIRDRE CONROY,  
Dublin 14.

## SECOND LOOK PROJECT

*Beatha & Slainte Teoranta*  
T/A The Second Look Project  
78 Merrion Square South  
Dublin 2

Website: [www.secondlookproject.ie](http://www.secondlookproject.ie)  
Email: [Secondlook2014@gmail.com](mailto:Secondlook2014@gmail.com)  
Telephone: 01 685 4038  
Fax 01 676 6314