

# Vótáil na mBan: An Ceart Vótála agus an tSaoránacht

## Votes for Women: Suffrage and Citizenship

#Vótáil100

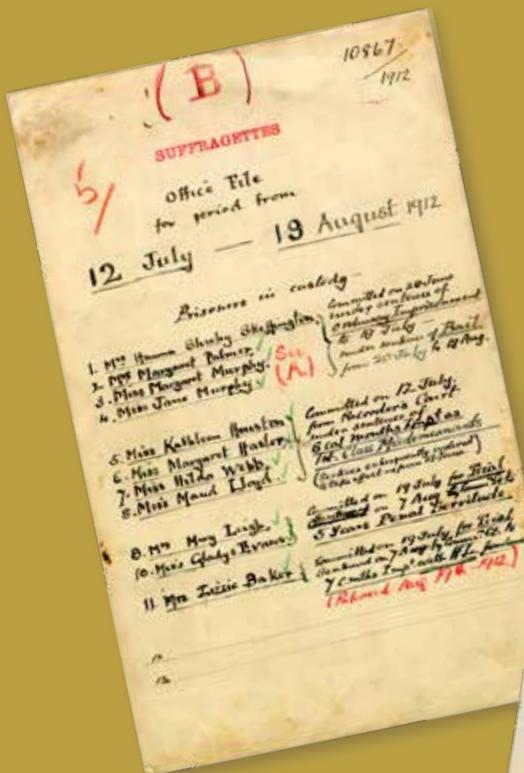


Tithe an  
Oireachtas  
Houses of the  
Oireachtas

1918  
2018

Vótáil 100  
Mná san Oireachtas

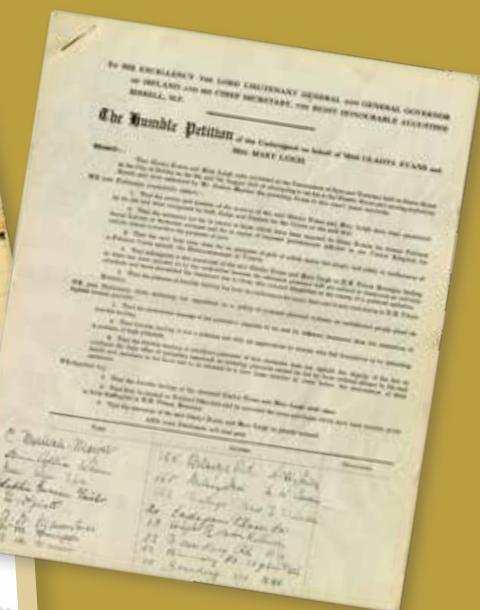
**museum**  
National Museum of Ireland  
Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann



◀ Liosta Rialtais de shufragóirí Éireannacha agus Sasanacha a bhí i bpriosún i Muinseo i 1912.

Government listing of Irish and English suffragists imprisoned in Mountjoy Jail in 1912.

*Le caoinchead ó Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann.  
Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.*



▲ Achainf a shníugh taobhaitheoirí in Éirinn agus i Sasana, ag achainí ar son na sufragóirí Sasanacha, Gladys Evans agus Mary Leigh.

Petition signed by Irish and English sympathisers, appealing on behalf of the English suffragettes Gladys Evans and Mary Leigh.

*Le caoinchead ó Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann.  
Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.*



▲ Íomhá den tsufraigéid á gabhlá le caoinchead Chartlanna RTÉ  
Arrest of suffragette image is courtesy of RTÉ Archives.

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## Votes for Women: Suffrage and Citizenship





## Focal Fáilte ón gCathaoirleach, an Seanadóir Donncha Ó Donnabháin

Mar Chathaoirleach Sheanad Éireann is mór an pléisiúr dom fáilte a chur romhaibh chuig an taispeántas seo dar teideal 'Vótáil na mBan: An Ceart Vótála agus an tSaoránacht'.

Tá déantúsáin, fomháinna agus ábhair ghearrshaolacha le feiceáil sa taispeántas seo ina ndéantar ceiliúradh ar an ngluaiseacht cearta vótála, ar an Representation of the People Act, 1918 agus ar an tionchar a d'imir siad ar an tsochaí nua-aoiseach. Insíonn an taispeántas scéal cuid de na daoine sin a throid go diógraiseach chun an ceart daonna bunúsach sin, an ceart vótála, a bhaint amach. Molaim daoibh am a chaitheamh le linn daoibh léamh faoi fhréamhacha na gluaiseachta cearta vótála, faoin obair a rinne Léig na hÉireann um Chearta Vótála do Mhná agus faoi na himeachtaí frithghníomhacha a thit amach tar éis an ceart vótála a bhaint amach.

Tháinig ann don taispeántas seo mar gheall ar chomhpháirtíocht le hArd-Mhúsaem na hÉireann agus ní mór dom focal buíochais a rá le Lynn Scarff Uasal, Stiúrthóir Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann, agus lena foireann. Ní mór dom ómós a thabhairt freisin do mhuintir Sheehy Skeffington a dheonaigh go leor de na hearraí a fheicfadh sibh anseo inniu, meirge bunaidh de chuid Léig na hÉireann um Chearta Vótála do Mhná ina measc.

Mar fhocal scoir, is mian liom buíochas a ghabháil leis an Seanadóir Ivana Bacik (an cathaoirleach), an Seanadóir Alice-Mary Higgins, an Seanadóir Gabrielle McFadden, an Seanadóir Rose Conway-Walsh, an Teachta Fíona Ní Lochlainn agus an Teachta Caitríona Ní Mháirtín a d'oibrigh ar Choiste Vótáil 100 agus a stiúraigh an clár imeachtaí seo a chaitheann solas ar stair na gluaiseachta cearta vótála agus a ceannairí in Éirinn, agus ar an tionchar de bharr cearta vótála a bheith ar fáil ar bhonn níos leithne.

An Seanadóir Donnacha Ó Donnabháin  
Cathaoirleach Sheanad Éireann

## Welcome from the Cathaoirleach, Senator Denis O'Donovan

As Cathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann it is a great pleasure to welcome you to this exhibition entitled 'Votes for Women: Suffrage and Citizenship'.

This exhibition of artefacts, images and ephemera celebrating the suffrage movement, the Representation of the People Act 1918 and their impact on modern society tells the story of just some of those who fought so hard to achieve this fundamental human right, the right to vote. I encourage you to take the time to read about the origins of the suffrage movement, the work of the Irish Women's Franchise League and the reactionary aftermath after the vote was achieved.

This exhibition was made possible through a partnership with the National Museum of Ireland and I must offer a word of thanks to Ms Lynn Scarff, Director of the National Museum of Ireland, and her team. I must also pay tribute to the Sheehy Skeffington family who donated many of the items you will see here today including the original Irish Women's Franchise League banner.

Lastly, I must offer my thanks to Senator Ivana Bacik (chairperson), Senator Alice-Mary Higgins, Senator Gabrielle McFadden, Senator Rose Conway-Walsh, Deputy Fiona O'Loughlin and Deputy Catherine Martin who worked as part of the Vótáil 100 Committee in driving this programme of events that highlight the history of the suffrage movement and its leaders in Ireland and the impact of wider voting rights.

Senator Denis O'Donovan  
Cathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann



## Focal Fáilte ón Seanadóir Ivana Bacik

Mar Chathaoirleach Choiste Vótáil 100 a d'eagraigh an ceiliúradh a rinne an tOireachtas i mbliana, 2018, ar chomóradh céad bliain ar chead vótála a thabhairt do mhná in Éirinn, bhí lúcháir orm a fheiceáil gur chuir an pobal suim mhór i gclár imeachtaí Vótáil 100. Tá lúcháir ar leith orm go bhfuil an tOireachtas mar óstach ar an taispeántas tábhachtach seo de dhéantúsáin, iomhána agus ábhair ghearrshaolacha, ina ndéantar ceiliúradh ar an gluaiseacht cearta vótála, ar rith an *Representation of the People Act*, 1918 agus ar an tionchar a d'imir na hathruiithe sin ar an tsochaí. Tá an taispeántas á reáchtáil i gcompháirtíocht le hArd-Mhúsaem na hÉireann agus le muintir Sheehy Skeffington. Is pribhléid dùinn a bheith ábalta earraí tábhachtacha a chur ar taispeáint don phobal, amhail an meirge bunaidh a bhí ag Léig na hÉireann um Chearta Vótála do Mhná.

Céad bliain go ham seo, leathnáodh an ceart chun vótála chuig mná den chéad uair faoin *Representation of the People Act*, 1918; bhí feidhm aige maidir le mná os cionn 30 bliain d'aois, chomh maith le fir os cionn 21 bliain d'aois nach raibh aon mhaoin ina seilbh acu. In olltoghchán 1918, ba í Constance Markievicz, bean Éireannach, an chéad bhean a toghadh ina Comhalta Parlaiminte chun Teach na gComontach. In ionad dul anonn agus suí sa Teach sin ghlac sí a suíochán mar an chéad Teachta Dála mná sa chéad Dáil.

Déanann an taispeántas seo ceiliúradh ar shaol na mban sin ba mhó a raibh dlúthbhaint acu le feachtas a raibh de thoradh air go ndearnadh athchóiriú reachtach agus gur baineadh amach an ceart vótála do mhná. Tá súil againn go spreagfaidh an taispeántas seo níos mó ban le bheith gníomhach sa saol polaitiúil, agus go meabhróidh sé dùinn go léir a thábhachtaí atá an ceart vótála. Cuirim fáilte romhaibh go léir le súil is go mbainfidh sibh taitneamh as an taispeántas seo agus tá súil agam go mbéarfaidh sibh inspioráid libh ón mblaiseadh beag seo de stair na gluaiseachta cearta vótála in Éirinn.

An Seanadóir Ivana Bacik

Cathaoirleach Choiste Vótáil 100

## Welcome from Senator Ivana Bacik

As Chairperson of the Vótáil 100 Committee organising the Oireachtas celebrations around the 2018 centenary of women's suffrage in Ireland, I have been delighted at the levels of public interest we have seen in the Vótáil 100 programme. I am particularly delighted that the Oireachtas is hosting this important exhibition of artefacts, images and ephemera celebrating the suffrage movement, the passage of the Representation of the People Act 1918 and the impact of that these changes have made on society. The exhibition is being held in partnership with the National Museum of Ireland and the Sheehy Skeffington family. We are privileged to be able to place important objects such as the original Irish Women's Franchise League banner on public display.

One hundred years ago this year, the *Representation of the People Act* 1918 extended the right to vote to women for the first time; it applied to women over the age of 30, as well as men over the age of 21 who did not own property. In the 1918 general election, an Irish woman, Constance Markievicz, was the first woman MP elected to the House of Commons. Instead of taking her seat there, she took up her seat as the first woman TD in the first Dáil.

This exhibition celebrates the lives of those women most closely involved in the campaign leading up to legislative reform and the winning of suffrage for women. We hope that this exhibition will encourage more women to become politically involved, and will remind us all about the importance of the right to vote. I welcome you all to enjoy this exhibition and hope that you will leave inspired by this introduction to the history of the suffrage movement in Ireland.

Senator Ivana Bacik  
Chairperson of the Vótáil 100 Committee



## Réamhrá le Lynn Scarff Uasal, Stiúrthóir Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann

Mar Stiúrthóir Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann, tá lúcháir orm réamhrá a chur ar fáil don leabhrán seo a ghabhann leis an taispeántas ‘Vótáil na mBan: An Ceart Vótála agus an tSaoránacht’. Mar an chéad bhean a ghníomhaigh mar Stiúrthóir ar Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann, is onóir ar leith dom é an deis seo a bheith agam agus tá mé thar a bheith feasach freisin go bhfuiltear faoi chomaoin ag na mná ceannródafocha sin 100 bliain ó shin. Is rud iontach é freisin gur fhás an taispeántas seo as comhoibriú idir Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann agus Tithe an Oireachtas.

Is í Sandra Heise ó Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann coimeádaí an taispeántais agus is iad Derek Dignam, Ceannasaí an Aonaid Cumarsáide, agus Liam O’Brien, Oifigeach na nImeachtaí agus na Rannpháirtíochta Poiblí, atá beirt ag obair i dTithe an Oireachtas, a rinne comhordú ar an taispeántas, agus bhí ionchur luachmhar ag Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann agus Cartlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann sa taispeántas. Táimid buíoch dár n-institiúidí comhpháirtíochta as a gcuid tacáfochta. Is í Ger Garland a rinne an dearadh grafach ar an taispeántas ar an mbealach grástúil, fuinniúil is dual di. Táimid go mór faoi chomaoin ag Oifig na nOibreacha Poiblí freisin, ag Bernard Malone, David Lee, Aidan O’Donoghue agus Thomas Forde go háirithe.

Ó mhí Iúil go mí Dheireadh Fómhair 2018 beidh an taispeántas lonnaithe sa Seomra Seapánach i bhfoirgneamh Shráid Chill Dara de chuid Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann, is é sin an seomra atá mar fhorsheomra ag an Seanad faoi láthair, agus atá lonnaithe i Seomra na Criodóireachta sa Mhúsaem. A bhuiochas mór ar mhuintir Sheehy Skeffington, beidh roinnt déantúsáin chorraitheacha ar taispeáint a bhaineann leis an streachailt chun an ceart vótála a thabhairt do mhná in Éirinn. Ina measc tá meirge de chuid Léig na hÉireann um Chearta Vótála do Mhná, a ndearna an Saor-Chaomhnoir Teicstíle Rachel Phelan caomhnú air le déanaí, agus léachtán adhmaid iniompartha a bhfuil na focail ‘Votes for Women’ greanta trasna air, léachtán a d’úsáid an eagraíocht sin agus iad i mbun a gcuid cruinnithe agus slógaí. Táthar ag súil an taispeántas a aistriú chuig suíomh an Ard-Mhúsaem i nDún Uí Choileáin i mí Dheireadh Fómhair 2018 agus é a bheith ar taispeáint ansin go dtí Aibreán na bliana dár gcionn.

Féachann Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann le croíscéalta ár bpobail agus ár n-ionaid sa saol a insint trí mheán a chuid bailiúchán. Deis a bhí sa chomóradh céad bliain seo béis a leagan ar stair streachailte a chorraigh go smior sinn, an feachtas chun an ceart vótála a thabhairt do mhná, chomh maith le machnamh a dhéanamh ar an tionchar a d’imir sé ar an saol comhaimseartha – cad as dúinn agus cár mhian linn triall. Is cuid de chumasc na gluaiseachta cearta vótála í cúis chearta na mban, síolraíonn sí ón ngluaiseacht sin agus is ábhar inspéisíse é le cur i láthair trí mheán an taispeántais seo. Tá súil againn gurb éard atá in ‘Vótáil na mBan: An Ceart Vótála agus an tSaoránacht’ ná deis dul i mbun comhrá, deis do chuaireoirí machnamh a dhéanamh agus deis chun friotal a chur ar na hathruithe a bhain dá seanmháithreacha, dá máithreacha, dá ndeirfiúracha agus dá n-iníonacha féin le céad bliain anuas, agus ar na hathruithe atá fós le teacht.

Lynn Scarff  
Stiúrthóir, Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann

## Introduction from Ms. Lynn Scarff, Director of the National Museum of Ireland

As Director of the National Museum of Ireland, I am delighted to provide the introduction to this accompanying exhibition booklet '*Votes for Women: Suffrage and Citizenship*'. As the first woman to act as Director of the National Museum of Ireland, I am especially honoured to have this opportunity and equally acutely aware of the debt owed to these pioneering women 100 years ago. It is also wonderful that this exhibition has arisen from a collaboration between the National Museum of Ireland and the Houses of the Oireachtas.

The exhibition, curated by Sandra Heise of the National Museum of Ireland and coordinated by Derek Dignam, Head of Communications, and Liam O'Brien, Public Engagement and Events Officer, both of the Houses of the Oireachtas, received valuable input from the National Library of Ireland and the National Archives of Ireland. We are grateful to our partner institutions for their support. The graphic design for the exhibition was done, with her usual grace and energy, by Ger Garland. We also owe a debt of gratitude to the OPW for their help, in particular Bernard Malone, David Lee, Aidan O'Donoghue and Thomas Forde.

The exhibition will be located from July to October 2018 in the Japanese Room of the National Museum's Kildare Street building, currently functioning as the ante-room to the Seanad Chamber in the Museum's Ceramics Room. With great thanks to the Sheehy Skeffington family, a number of emotive artefacts from the Irish suffrage struggle will be on display. These include the Irish Women's Franchise League banner, recently conserved by freelance Textile Conservator Rachel Phelan, and a portable wooden lectern, emblazoned with the words '*Votes for Women*', used by the same organisation during their meetings and rallies. It is hoped to relocate the exhibition to the National Museum's Collins Barracks site in October 2018 and to display it until the following April.

The National Museum of Ireland through its collection aims to tell the crucial stories of our people and our place in the world. This centenary has offered an opportunity to highlight the history of a struggle as visceral as the women's suffrage campaign, as well as reflect on its impact on contemporary society – where we have come from and where we seek to go. The cause of women's rights, which melds with and flows from the suffrage movement, is a fascinating subject to represent through the medium of this exhibition. We hope '*Votes for Women: Suffrage and Citizenship*' is an opportunity for conversation, for visitors to reflect and give voice to the changes experienced by their own grandmothers, mothers, sisters and daughters over the span of one hundred years and the changes yet to come.

Lynn Scarff  
Director, National Museum of Ireland

## Vótáil na mBan: An Ceart Vótála agus an tSaoránacht

Comórtar sa bhliain 2018 céad bliain ó ritheadh an Representation of the People Act, a thug ceart theoranta vótála do mhná na Breataine agus na hÉireann. Thug an tAcht cead do mhná os cionn 30 bliain d'aois, a raibh maoin acu, a raibh maoin ag a gcuid fear, nó a bhí ina gcéimithe ollscoile, vótáil i dtoghcháin pharlaiminte den chéad uair.

Rud eile a chomórtar sa bhliain 2018 ná 110 bliain ó bunáodh an Irish Women's Franchise League, an chéad eagraíocht ar son cheart vótála na mban in Éirinn a d'úsáid orbheartaíocht mhíleata sa troid ar son an vótá.

I ndiaidh bhunú Shaorástá na hÉireann i 1922, mar thoradh ar an stocaireacht dhaingean a rinne grúpaí ban, bronnadh ceart vótála ar gach duine fássta os cionn 21 bliain d'aois. Tugadh na cearta céanna do mhná na Breataine agus do mhná Thuaisceart Éireann i 1928.



▲ Hanna Sheehy Skeffington ag tabhairt óráide do chruinníú i dtaoibh an vótá lastmúigh de Phriosún Mhuinseo, Bealtaine 1914.

Hanna Sheehy Skeffington addressing a suffrage meeting outside Mountjoy Jail, May 1914.

## Votes for Women: Suffrage and Citizenship

The year 2018 marks the 100th anniversary of the passing of the Representation of the People Act, which granted a limited form of suffrage to British and Irish women. For the first time, women over the age of 30 who owned property, were the wives of property owners, or were university graduates, could vote in parliamentary elections.

The year 2018 also marks 110 years since the founding of the Irish Women's Franchise League, the first suffrage organisation in Ireland to use militant tactics in the struggle for the vote.

Following the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922, and as a result of determined lobbying on the part of women's groups, universal adult suffrage was granted, meaning that all men and women over the age of 21 could vote. The same rights were granted to British and Northern Irish women in 1928.



▲ Clár le haghaidh léiríú ar son an vótá, agus pictiúir ann, Hyde Park, Londain, c.1908.

Illustrated programme for a suffrage demonstration, Hyde Park, London, c.1908.

*Le caoinchead ó Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann.  
Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.*

## Tús na Gluaiseachta ar son an Vóta

Cuid de fheachtas idirnáisiúnta ar son chearta na mban a thosaigh sa cheathrú deireanach den naoú haois déag ab ea an ghluaiseacht a bhain ceart vótála amach do mhná i 1918 agus 1922. Tháinig mórchuid de na feachtasóirí luatha ó chúlra reiligiúnach neamhaontach, mar shampla Anna agus Thomas Haslam ó Chumann na gCairde agus an Preisbítéreach Isabella Tod. Roinnt mhaithe de fheachtasóirí na glúine sin a chuaigh isteach san fheachtas ar son an vóta, bhí siad gníomhach roimhe sin mar oibrithe deonacha in gcumainn charthanachta.

Bhain Anna Haslam agus Isabella Tod le grúpa nua de mhná meánaicmeacha oilte a bhí tar éis tairbhe a bhaint as na deiseanna feabhsaithe oideachais do mhná sa dara leath den naoú haois déag. Bhronn Ollscoil Ríoga na hÉireann céimeanna ar an gcéad naonúr ban i 1884; ba léir dóibhsean agus do chéimithe a tháinig ina ndiaidh go raibh a gcumas chun slí bheatha a bhaint amach sa láthair phoiblí thar a bheith teoranta. Níl aon amhras ach gur chuir an tuiscint seo borradh faoin ghluaiseacht ar son an vóta, toisc go bhfaca mná de réir a chéile gurbh é an vóta a chuirfeadh ar a gcumas a saol féin a rialú agus an tscoáfá a fheabhsú ina hiomláine.

◀ Grianghraf nuachtáin de Anna agus Thomas Haslam, c.1890.

Newspaper photograph of Anna and Thomas Haslam, c.1890.

*Le caoinchead ó Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann.  
Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.*



▲ Na chéad chéimithe ban ó Ollscoil Ríoga na hÉireann, 1884.

The first women graduates from the Royal University of Ireland, 1884.

## Origins of the Suffrage Movement

The suffrage achievements of 1918 and 1922 were the result of a movement that had begun in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and which was part of an international campaign for women's rights. Many of the early campaigners came from a non-conformist religious background, for instance the Quakers Anna and Thomas Haslam and the Presbyterian Isabella Tod. For many suffragists of their generation, involvement in the campaign for the vote evolved from a tradition of voluntary charitable work.

Anna Haslam and Isabella Tod were also part of a new group of educated middle-class women who had benefited from improved educational opportunities for women in the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1884, the first nine women graduates received degrees from the Royal University of Ireland; to these and subsequent graduates it quickly became apparent that their scope for a career in the public arena was extremely limited. This realisation undoubtedly gave impetus to the suffrage movement, as the vote came to be seen as women's way of exercising control over their lives, and of improving society as a whole.

## An Feachtas Luath

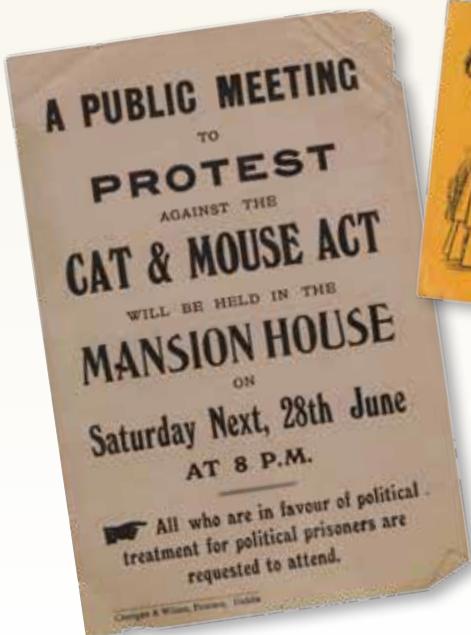
Cuireadh an chéad achainí ar son vóta na mban, arna síniú ag sufragóirí Éireannacha agus Sasanacha, faoi bhráid Theach na gCoimíneach sa bhliain 1866. Bunaíodh roinnt cumann sufragóirí ina dhiaidh sin, ar nós an National Society for Women's Suffrage, a bunaíodh i Londain i 1867, Northern Ireland Women's Suffrage Society de chuid Isabella Tod a bunaíodh i 1871, agus an Dublin Women's Suffrage Association a bhunaigh Anna Haslam i 1876. Cuireadh achainithe chuig an bParlaimint agus cuireadh brú ar Theachtaí Parlaiminte, agus dá bharr bhain na sufragóirí an ceart do mhhná a bheith ina gCaomhnóirí Dhíl na mBocht i 1896, agus sa bhliain 1898 bronnadh ceart vótála ar mhnná i dtoghcháin áitiúla.

Ba léir gurbh í an chéad chéim eile feachtas a eagrú chun an vóta parlaiminteach a bhaint amach.

## The Early Campaign

The first petition in support of women's suffrage, signed by Irish and English suffragists, was presented to the House of Commons in 1866. There followed the establishment of a number of suffrage societies, such as the National Society for Women's Suffrage, formed in London in 1867, Isabella Tod's Northern Ireland Women's Suffrage Society in 1871, and Anna Haslam's Dublin Women's Suffrage Association in 1876. Through the tactics of petitioning Parliament and pressuring M.P.s for support, early suffragists achieved the right of women to become Poor Law Guardians in 1896, and in 1898 women were granted the Local Government vote.

The obvious next step was the campaign for the parliamentary vote.



▲ Bille láimhe, I.W.F.L., ag argóint an cás maidir le vótaí do mhnná. Handbill, I.W.F.L., arguing the case of women's suffrage.

Le caoinchead ó Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann.  
Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.



▲ Clúdach curtha chuir Hanna Sheehy Skeffington ag cumann vótála Meiriceánach.

Envelope sent to Hanna Sheehy Skeffington by an American suffrage organisation.

Le caoinchead ó Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann.  
Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

## An Chumannacht i gCóir Comhthruime na mBan

Faoi thus na fichiú haoise, bhí glúin nua sufragóirí tagtha chun cinn in Éirinn. Ba é a spreag iad ná na modhanna a d'úsáid muintir Pankhurst agus Aontas Sóisialta agus Polaitiúil na mBan i Sasana, cé gur dhírigh na mileataigh Éireannacha ar mhaoin seachas ar dhaoine.

An cor ba mhó i bhforbairt ghluaiseachta na sufragóirí ag an am seo ná bunú na Cumannachta i gCóir Comhthruime na mBan i mBaile Átha Cliath i 1908. Grúpa ban, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington agus Margaret Cousins ina measc, is ea a bhunaigh, chun vóta parlaiminteach a bhaint amach trí bhíthin na mileatachta. Mná amháin a d'fhéadfadh a bheith ina lánochomhaltaí den Chumannacht, cé go bhféadfadh fir a bheith ina seachchomhaltaí. Seachchomhaltaí dúthrachtacha ab ea Frank Sheehy Skeffington, céile Hanna, agus James Cousins, céile Margaret.

Thionóladh an Chumannacht cruinntíte seachtainiúla, d'eagraíodh léachtaí agus dhéanadh trasnáil ar Theachtaí Parlaiminte Éireannacha chun aird a tharraingt ar easnamh cheist an vóta ar an mBille Rialtais Dúchais. Níor thuill lucht an fheachtais móráin bufochais ón bpobal i gcoitinne agus is minic a dhéantáí ionsáí orthu, le foréigean ar uairibh.



◀ Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, granghraif c.1916.

Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, photographed c.1916.

## The Irish Women's Franchise League

By the early years of the twentieth century, a new generation of Irish suffragists had emerged. They took as their inspiration the methods of the Pankhursts and the Women's Social and Political Union in England, although the resulting Irish militancy was directed at property rather than at people.

The most significant suffrage development of this time was the establishment of the Irish Women's Franchise League (I.W.F.L.) in Dublin in 1908. The League was founded by a group of women, including Hanna Sheehy Skeffington and Margaret Cousins, with the intention of winning the parliamentary vote by militant means. The League admitted only women as full members, although men were allowed to participate as associate members. Hanna Sheehy Skeffington's husband Frank, and Margaret Cousins's husband James were enthusiastic associates.

The League held weekly outdoor meetings, gave lectures and heckled Irish M.P.s in order to highlight the absence of the franchise issue from the Home Rule Bill. The campaign was often a thankless one, with suffrage speakers frequently experiencing aggression and sometimes outright violence.

◀ Kathleen Houston agus Constance de Markievicz, ag gníomhú i nglór-reim mar gheall ar an vóta, Márt 1912. Bhí Houston díreach tar eis teacht amach as Príosún Mhuinseó mar a priostónaidh í dá gníomhaiochtai ar son an vóta.

Kathleen Houston and Constance de Markievicz performing in a suffrage pageant, March 1912. Houston had just been released from Mountjoy, where she had been imprisoned for her suffrage activities.



## Ag Troid ar son an Vóta

Bealtaine 1912, buille ab ea é do na sufragóirí nuair a theip ar an mBille Idir-Réitigh, a d'fhéach le ceart theoranta vótála a bhronnadh ar mhná. An rud a chuaigh dian orthu ná gurb iad na Teachtaí Parlaiminteacha Éireannacha faoi ndear theip an Bhille mar mheas siad go mbainfeadh sé aird ón mBille Féin-Rialtais. Ní raibh ach ocht vótá déag idir iadsan a bhí ar son an Bhille agus iadsan a bhí ina choinne. Ag an am céanna, theip ar iarrachtaí chun cuid den Bhille Féinrialtais a dhéanamh de cheist chearta vótála na mban. Meitheamh 1912, i ndiaidh ollchruiinniú ban in mBaile Átha Cliath, cinneadh ar mhodhanna mileata a úsáid láithreach.

Ba éan an chéad ghníomh san fheachtas nua fuinneoga a bhriseadh i bhfoirgnimh rialtais. Mar thoradh air sin, gabhadh ochtar ban, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington san áireamh, agus cuireadh i bPríosún Mhuinseo iad. Go gairid ina dhiaidh sin, chuaigh beirt sufragóirí Sasanacha, a gabhadh in Éirinn, Gladys Evans agus Mary Leigh, ar stailc ocras agus rinne na húdarás phrósúin cothú éigeantach orthu. Chuaigh sufragóirí Éireannacha ar stailc ocras mar ghníomh agóide. Ba mhiniic arís a d'úsáid na sufragóirí an oirbheartaócht seo agus iad sa phrósúin arís agus arís eile ina dhiaidh sin.

► Handbill protesting the force-feeding of suffragettes, 1912.

Bille láimhe ag agóidiocht in aghaidh chothú éigeantach na sufragóirí, 1912.

*Le caoinchead ó Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann.  
Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.*

## Fighting for the Franchise

In May 1912, suffragists suffered a setback with the defeat of the Conciliation Bill, which aimed to confer a limited form of suffrage on women. What proved particularly galling was the fact that the bill had been defeated by the votes of Irish M.P.s, who viewed the issue as a distraction from the Home Rule Bill. In the event, the Conciliation Bill was defeated by only 18 votes. At the same time, efforts to have women's voting rights enshrined in the Home Rule Bill also met with failure. In June 1912, following a mass meeting of women in Dublin, it was decided to employ militant tactics immediately.

The first act in the new campaign was the smashing of windows in government buildings, as a result of which eight women, among them Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, were arrested and imprisoned in Mountjoy. Soon after, two English suffragettes who had been arrested in Ireland, Gladys Evans and Mary Leigh, went on hunger-strike and were force-fed by the prison authorities. The Irish suffragists also adopted the hunger-strike in protest. During subsequent imprisonments, suffragists would again use this tactic.



## The Irish Citizen

Bhunaigh Frank Sheehy Skeffington agus James Cousins nuachtán dar teideal The Irish Citizen sa bhliain 1912 chun cás na sufragóirí a chur chun cinn. Ba é mana an nuachtáin 'Cearta na Saoránachta ag Fir agus Mná ar aon; Dualgais na Saoránachta ar Fhir agus ar Mhná ar aon.' Ba é an Citizen an príomhfhóram chun ceisteanna maidir le vóta na mban a phlé ag an am seo agus foilsíodh é anonn go dtí 1920.

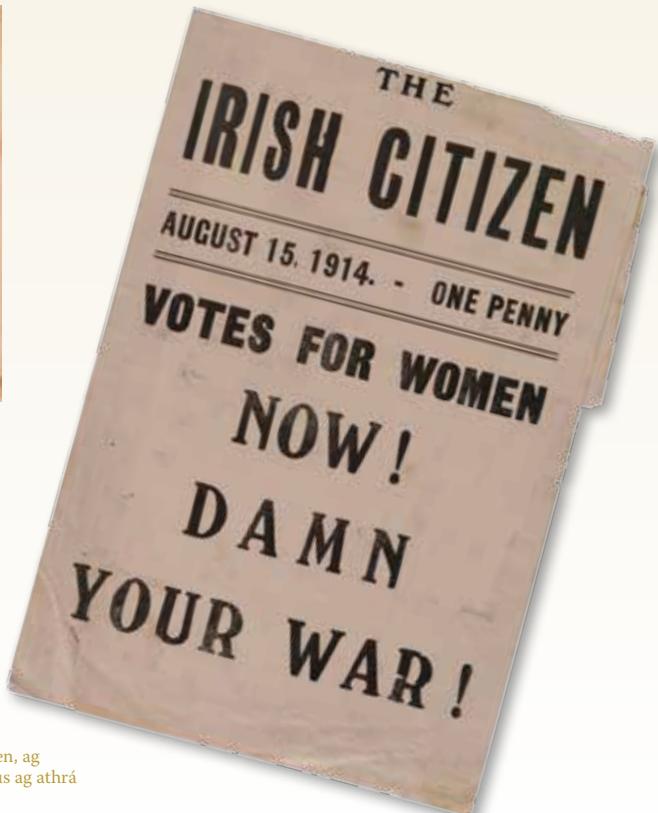


▲ Hanna agus Frank Sheehy Skeffington, granghraif a tógadh i Lúnasa 1912.

Hanna and Frank Sheehy Skeffington, photographed in August 1912.

## The Irish Citizen

In 1912, Frank Sheehy Skeffington and James Cousins established a suffrage newspaper entitled The Irish Citizen. This publication had as its motto 'For Men and Women Equally the Rights of Citizenship; From Men and Women Equally the Duties of Citizenship.' The Citizen was the main forum for discussion of suffrage issues at this time, and was published until 1920.



► Bille láimhe den nuachtán The Irish Citizen, ag cáineadh an Chéad Chogadh Domhanda agus ag athraí tábhacht na troda ar son an vóta.

Handbill of The Irish Citizen newspaper, denouncing the First World War and reiterating the importance of the suffrage struggle.

*Le caoinhead ó Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann.  
Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.*

## 1916: an Cheist Náisiúnta

De réir mar a ghéaraigh staid pholaitíochta na hÉireann, lagaíodh aontacht aidhme na gluaiseachta ar son an vóta de bharr bainteacht mórchuid ban leis an troid ar son na saorise. Bunaíodh Óglaigh na hÉireann i 1914 agus cumann cúnntach do mhgná, Cumann na mBan, chun tacú leis. Ba í an tosaíocht do mhórchuid ban saorise a bhaint amach d'Éirinn sa chéad áit agus ceart vótála a fháil níos déaná. Ach don I.W.F.L. agus do ghrúpaí eile sufragóirí, ba é an vóta an chéad rud a bhí uathu.

Nuair a bhris an cogadh amach i 1914, lean an feachtas ar son an vóta ar aghaidh in Éirinn, cé nár úsáideadh modhanna mleata a thuilleadh. Tháinig deireadh le grúpaí sufragóirí i Sasana, más ea, toisc go raibh a mbaill ag obair ar son an chogaidh.

Le linn Éiri Amach na Cásca 1916, cailleadh duine de na daoine ba mhó a thacaigh leis an ngluaiseacht nuair a dúnmharáodh an feimineach agus an síochánaí, Frank Sheehy Skeffington. Agus é ag iarraidh stop a chur leis an sipiéisireacht ar shiopaí le linn Sheachtain na Cásca, gabhadh é agus lámhachadh é fad a bhí sé á choimeád i mBéalair Portobello. Lámhachadh é ar ordú an Chaptaein J.C. Bowen-Colthurst, a fuarthas ciontach ach gealtach ina dhiaidh sin os comhair Cúirt Airm.



▲ Mary Osgood Childers agus Mary Spring Rice ar bord an 'Asgard' le linn smuigléireacht gunnáí Bhinn Éadair, 1914.

Mary Osgood Childers and Mary Spring Rice on board the 'Asgard' during the Howth gun-running, 1914.

## 1916: the National Question

As the political situation in Ireland intensified, the unity of purpose of the suffrage movement was weakened by women's increased involvement in the national struggle. When the Irish Volunteers were formed in 1914, a women's auxiliary group, Cumann na mBan, was formed in a support capacity. For many women, the priority now was to achieve national independence first and address the issue of suffrage later. For the I.W.F.L. and other suffrage groups, however, the vote remained the first priority.

With the outbreak of war in 1914, the suffrage campaign continued in Ireland, although militant methods were dropped. In England, meanwhile, suffrage groups largely ceased to operate, their members generally becoming involved in the war effort.

During the Easter Rising of 1916, the suffrage movement lost one of its most ardent supporters with the murder of the feminist and pacifist Frank Sheehy Skeffington. While attempting to stop the looting of shops during Easter Week, he was arrested and shot while in custody in Portobello Barracks. The shooting was carried out on the orders of Captain J. C. Bowen-Colthurst, who was later found guilty but insane by Court Martial.



▲ An lucht freastail ar choinbhinsiún Chumann na mBan, 1916.

Attendees at a Cumann na mBan convention, 1916.

## An tAcht um Ionadaíocht an Phobail 1918

Sna blianta i ndiaidh an Éirí Amach, ní nach ionadh go raibh muintir na hÉireann níos buartha faoi staid na tíre ná cearta vótála. Ach mí Eanáir 1918, thug an tAcht um Ionadaíocht an Phobail ceart theoranta vótála do mhná, nuair a ceadafodh do mhná os cionn 30 a bhí ina sealbhóirí thí, a raibh maoin de luach £5 nó os a chionn acu, ní ar chéimithe ollscoile iad, vótá a chaitheamh i dtoghcháin pharlaiminteacha. In ainneoin thréaníarrachtaí Pháirtí Parlaiminteach na hÉireann agus Páirtí na nAontachtaithe cur i bhfeidhm an Acharta in Éirinn a chosc, bronnadh na cearta sin ar mhná na hÉireann chomh maith. Sa chéad toghchán parlaiminteach ina dhaidh sin, mí na Nollag 1918, toghadh an Cuntaois de Markievicz mar an chéad Teachta Parlaiminte mná chuigí Teach na gCoimíneach sa Bhreatain, cé gur dhiúltaigh sí glacadh lena suíochán.

## Representation of the People Act 1918

In the years following the Rising, attention in Ireland was naturally diverted to national issues. However, in January 1918, the Representation of the People Act granted women a limited form of suffrage, allowing those over the age of 30 who were householders, owned property valued at £5 or over, or were university graduates, to vote in parliamentary elections. Despite the best efforts of the Irish Parliamentary Party and the Unionist Party to prevent the Act's implementation in Ireland, these rights were also extended to Irish women. In the first parliamentary election following this development, which was held in December 1918, Constance de Markievicz became the first woman to be elected as an M.P. to the British House of Commons, although she refused to take her seat.



◀ Constance de Markievicz in éide, i ngrianghraif a tógadh an tseachtain roimh Sheachtain na Cáscá.

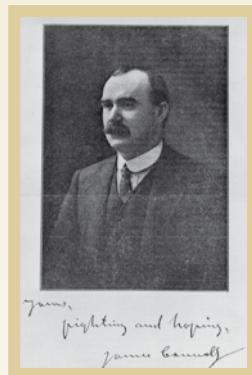
Constance de Markievicz in uniform, photographed in the week before the Easter Rising.

## An Vóta Bainte Amach

Bhí sé ráite i bhForógra na Poblachta 1916 go raibh i gceist “bunú Rialtais Náisiúnta bhuan a bheidh ionadaíoch de mhuintir uile na hÉireann agus a thoghfar le vótáil a cuid fear agus ban uile”. Bhí seisear den seachtar a shínigh an Forógra ar son vóta na mban a lua i bhfoclaíocht an Fhorógra. D’fhéadfadh sé gur Séamas Ó Conghaile a ba chúis leis sin, ó ba thacaí dionghbáilte é le cearta na mban agus bhí an seasamh céanna tugtha aige do mháin in Arm na Saoránach is a bhí ag fir.

Tugadh na prionsabail chomhionannais a bhí san Fhorógra ar aghaidh go dtí Bunreacht an tSaorstáit i 1922 nuair a bronnadh ceart vótála ar gach fear agus bean os cionn aois a 21. Bhí feachtas na hÉireann ar son vóta na mban tar éis a sprioc a bhaint amach i ndiaidh caoga bliain. Ach tháinig an Cogadh Cathartha aniar aduaidh ar an éacht seo. Díol spéise is ea é gur vótáil gach duine den seisear teachtaí ban sa Dáil aimsir idirbheartaíocht an Chonartha in aghaidh an Chonartha.

Chiallaigh sin gur tugadh vóta na mban isteach tráth go raibh Poblachtánaigh ag diúltú rialtas an tSaorstáit agus a achtaíthe a aithint.



▲ Séamas Ó Conghaile, ceannaire lucht oibre agus tacái ládir le cearta na mban.

James Connolly, labour leader and staunch supporter of women's rights.

## The Vote Achieved

The 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic had stated the intention of establishing “a permanent National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women”. All but one of the seven signatories of the Proclamation had voted to include women’s suffrage in the wording. This may have been on the initiative of James Connolly, who was an unwavering supporter of women’s rights, and had admitted women to the Irish Citizen Army on an equal footing with men.

The principles of equality embodied in the Proclamation were carried through to the Free State Constitution of 1922, with the granting of suffrage to all men and women over the age of 21. The Irish suffrage campaign that had endured for over fifty years had finally achieved its goal. This momentous achievement, however, was overshadowed by the onset of the Civil War, and it is interesting to note that all six women deputies in the Dáil at the time of the Treaty negotiations voted against the Treaty. It was amid the refusal of Republicans to recognise the Free State government and its enactments, therefore, that universal adult suffrage was introduced.



▲ Hanna Sheehy Skeffington agus Mrs. Pearse, c.1921.

Hanna Sheehy Skeffington and Mrs. Pearse, c.1921.

Le caoinchead ó Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann.

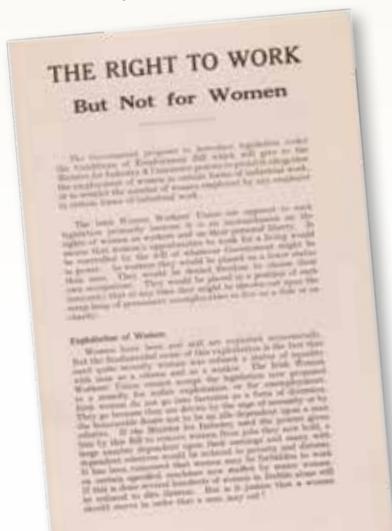
Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

## An Toradh Frithghníomhach

Rith rialtais ina dhiaidh sin, faoi cheannas Chumann na nGaedheal agus Fhianna Fáil, sna 1920idí agus sna 1930idí, reachtaíocht chun teorainn a chur le cearta saoránacha na mban. San áireamh anseo bhí an Bille Státseirbhís (Leasú) 1925 a d'fhéach le mná a choimeád as na gráid ab airde den státseirbhís, agus Bille Giúraíte 1927, a mholt go mbainfí ainmneacha ban de na rolláí giúiré. Maidir leis an gceád cheann, brúdh leasú ar an mbille, agus theip ar an dara ceann, go príomha toisc gur chuir eagraíochtaí ban agus beirt Seanadóirí ban, Jennie Wyse Power agus Eileen Costello, ina choinne.

## Bunreacht 1937

Tugadh a thuilleadh reachtaíochta leithchealaí isteach nuair a tháinig Fianna Fáil i gcumhacht sna 1930idí, lenar áriodh an t-urchosc pósta sa tseirbhís phoiblí agus teorannú an lín ban a d'fhéadfadh poist a ghlacadh i dtionscail. Bhain Bunreacht 1937 tuilleadh ó chearta saoránacha na mban, rud a laghdaigh na prionsabail chomhionannais a leagadh amach i mBunreacht Saorstáit 1922. Cheadódh an Bunreacht don stát gníomhú ar 'dhifríochtaí acmhainne, idir fhisiceach agus mhorálta, agus difríochtaí d'fheidhm shóisialta', agus sainmhíníodh feidhm shóisialta na mban mar "a saol ag an mbaile". Léirigh reachtaíocht mar í tionchar na hEaglaise Caitlicí ar shaol agus ar pholaitíocht na hÉireann, tionchar a bhí ag dul i méid an t-am ar fad.



## Reactionary Aftermath

Successive governments, led by both Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil, proceeded throughout the 1920s and 1930s to introduce legislation that would effectively limit women's citizenship rights. This included the 1925 Civil Service (Amendment) Bill, which sought to bar women from higher civil service grades, and the Juries bill of 1927, which proposed to remove women from the jury rolls. The former was defeated, and an amendment to the latter was forced, both due to campaigning by women's organisations and the opposition of two women Senators, Jennie Wyse Power and Eileen Costello.

## The Constitution of 1937

With the coming to power of the Fianna Fáil government in the 1930s, further discriminatory legislation was introduced, including the public service marriage bar of 1932 and the limiting of the number of women who could work in industry. The Constitution of 1937 further weakened women's citizenship rights, eroding the principles of equality set out in the 1922 Free State Constitution. The Constitution would allow the state to act on "differences of capacity, physical and moral, and of social function", woman's social function being defined as "her life within the home". Such legislation was reflective of the growing influence of the Catholic Church on Irish life and politics.

◀ Bille láimhe a thugann gearrchuntas ar sheasamh an Irish Women Workers' Union in éadan an Bille um Choinníollacha Oibre 1935.

Handbill outlining the opposition of the Irish Women Workers' Union to the Conditions of Employment Bill of 1935.

*Le caoinchead ó Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann.  
Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.*

## Reachtaíocht Comhionannais

Faoi Olltoghchán 1943, nuair a briseadh go trom ar cheathrar iarrthóirí neamhspleácha ban – ar dhuine diobh Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, bhí droch-chosúlacht ar ionadaíocht ban sa rialtas. Bhí sé de nós ag an lín beag ban a toghadh don Dáil vótáil de réir páirtí, in ionad iarracht a dhéanamh cearta ban a mhéadú. Lean obair na n-eagraíochtaí ban ar aghaidh sna 1930idí agus sna 1940idí, ach ní fhachtas toradh ar an obair seo go ceann blianta fada nó go ndearnadh dul chun cinn maidir le comhchearta saoránacha.

Tar éis d'Éirinn dul isteach i gComhphobal Eacnamaíochta na hEorpa i 1973, leasaíodh roinnt dlíthe idirdhealaitheacha chun reachtaíocht comhionannais an CEE a chomhlíonadh. Cuireadh deireadh le cosc pósta na Státseirbhísé i 1973, agus ritheadh an tAcht in Aghaidh Idirdhealú (Pá) agus an tAcht um Chomhionannas Fostafochta in 1974 agus 1977 faoi seach, chun idirdhealú inscne san fostaíocht a chosc de réir reachta.

## An tOchtú Leasú

Maidir le cearta atáirgthe, foráladh, nuair a ritheadh an tOchtú Leasú coimeádach ar an mBunreacht i 1983, mar seo a leanas: "Adhmaionn an Stát ceart na mbeo gan breith chun a mbeatha agus, ag féachaint go cuí do chomhcheart na máthar chun a beatha, ráthaíonn sé gan cur isteach lena dhlíthe ar an gceart sin agus ráthaíonn fós an ceart sin a chosaint is a shuíomh lena dhlíthe sa mhéid gur féidir é." I reifreann ar an Aoine, an 25 Bealtaine 2018, vótáil muintir na hÉireann le móramh dhá thrian, nach mór, an tOchtú Leasú a aisghairm, tar éis feachtas teasaí inar ndeacthas i muinín manaí corraitheacha ar nós: "I am nine weeks old. I can yawn and kick. Don't repeal me" agus, ar an taobh eile, "Get your rosaries off my ovaries".

## Equality Legislation

By the 1943 General Election, when four independent women candidates – including Hanna Sheehy Skeffington – were badly defeated, the outlook seemed bleak for women's representation in government. The handful of women candidates who were returned to the Dáil tended to vote along party lines, rather than actively furthering women's rights. While the work of women's organisations continued throughout the 1930s and 1940s, it would be many decades before this work bore fruit in the form of progress on equal citizenship rights.

Following Ireland's accession to membership of the European Economic Community in 1973, a number of discriminatory laws were amended due to the need to comply with EEC equality legislation. The Civil Service marriage bar was abolished in 1973, while the Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act and the Employment Equality Act were passed in 1974 and 1977 respectively, both legislating against gender discrimination in employment.

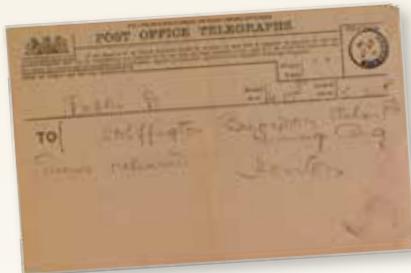
## The Eighth Amendment

In terms of reproductive rights, the passing of the conservative Eighth Amendment to the Constitution in 1983 provided that "The State acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect, and, as far as practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right." In a referendum vote on Friday 25th May 2018, Irish people voted by an almost two-thirds majority to repeal the Eighth Amendment, following an impassioned campaign that incorporated such emotive slogans as "I am nine weeks old. I can yawn and kick. Don't repeal me" and, on the other side, "Get your rosaries off my ovaries".

## Airteagail 41.2.1 agus 41.2.2

Is cuid de Bhunreacht na hÉireann i gcónáí iad Airteagail 41.2.1 agus 41.2.2:

“Go sonrach, admhaíonn an Stát go dtugann an bhean don Stát, trína saol sa teaghlaigh, cúnamh nach bhféadfaí leas an phobail a ghnóthú dá éagmais. Uime sin, féachfaidh an Stát lena chur in áirithe nach mbeidh ar mháithreacha clainne de dheasca uireasa, dul le saothar agus failí a thabhairt dá chionn sin ina ndualgais sa teaghlaigh.”



▲ Teileagram ó Kathleen Houston do Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, á rá go raibh Gladys Evans scaoilte as Príosún Mhuinseo.

Telegram from Kathleen Houston to Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, informing her of the release of Gladys Evans from Mountjoy.

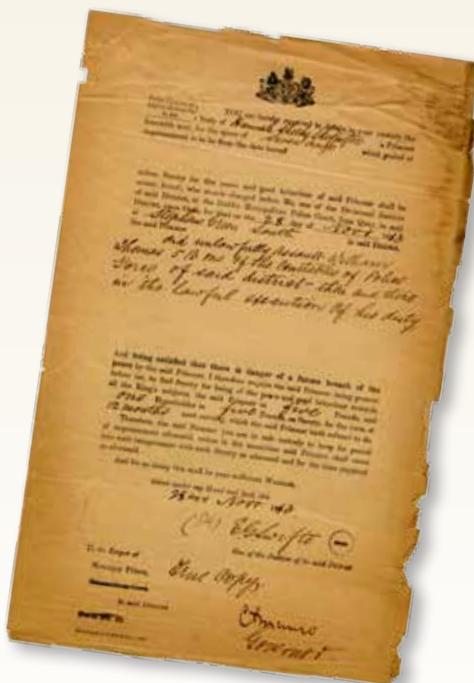
Le caoinchead ó Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann.  
Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.



## Articles 41.2.1 and 41.2.2

Articles 41.2.1 and 41.2.2 remain a part of the Irish Constitution:

“In particular, the State recognizes that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved. The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in Labour to the neglect of their duties in the home.”



▲ Ordú cimithe Hanna Sheehy Skeffington go Príosún Mhuinseo, 1913.

Order of committal of Hanna Sheehy Skeffington to Mountjoy Jail, 1913.

Le caoinchead ó Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann.  
Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

◀ Bille láimhe toghcháin ar taobh iarrthóir páirteach.  
Election handbill in favour of a pro-suffrage campaigner.  
Le caoinchead ó Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann.  
Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

## Cuid de na taispeántáin atá le feiceáil: Some of the exhibits on display:



▲ Meirge teicstile de chuid Léig na hÉireann um Chearta Vótála do Mhná  
© Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann.

▲ Textile banner of the Irish Women's Franchise League  
© National Museum of Ireland.



▲ Léachtán cearta vótála a thug turas timpeall na hÉireann ar fad  
© Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann.

▲ Suffrage lectern, which travelled all over Ireland  
© National Museum of Ireland.



▲ Bonn óir a bhronn Cumann na mBan um Prioisúnaigh a Chosaínt ar Hanna Sheehy Skeffington  
© Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann.



▲ Gold medal awarded to Hanna Sheehy Skeffington by the Women's Prisoners' Defence League  
© National Museum of Ireland.



▲ Grianghraf a rinne Underwood & Underwood, Nua-Eabhrac, de Hanna Sheehy Skeffington.

▲ Photograph by Underwood & Underwood, New York, of Hanna Sheehy Skeffington.



◀ Bonn airgid a bronnadh ar Hanna Sheehy Skeffington tar éis a scaoilte saor as Príosún Mhuinseo i mí Lúnasa 1912.  
© Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann.

◀ Silver medal awarded to Hanna Sheehy Skeffington following her release from Mountjoy Jail in August 1912.  
© National Museum of Ireland.



◀ Suaitheantas a chaith Francis Sheehy Skeffington agus a tógadh óna chóta tar éis a bháis in 1916.  
© Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann.

◀ Badge worn by Francis Sheehy Skeffington and taken from his coat after his death in 1916.  
© National Museum of Ireland.

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