



We are writing to you on behalf of organisations that want to ensure that the next Programme for Government commits to finally addressing a major gap in Irish equality legislation: whereby those who are discriminated against because of their socio-economic status have no protection under the law. The result is that many people continue to suffer from a loss of opportunity and access to goods and services, while on a personal level experience deep indignity. This is a failure that has existed since Ireland first introduced equality legislation in 1998. It is time to act now to right this injustice.

During the 32nd Dáil the Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2017 was brought before the Dáil in June 27th 2017 and later passed second stage to be brought to Committee Stage. The Government issued a money message which blocked the passage of the Bill. Following this the Department of Justice and Equality tendered research “to develop the necessary evidence base on this issue and to “create a more precise definition of any potential new equality ground, one that is easily understood by employers, service providers and businesses alike”. It is expected that this research will be completed by the end of March.

For those impacted by socio-economic discrimination we were deeply disappointed that Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2017 failed to make it through the legislative process during the 32nd Dáil and want to make sure the 33rd Dáil succeeds.

Overwhelming [evidence](#) and [personal testimony](#) already exists which supports the introduction of this legislation.

We are therefore calling on all Parties to ensure that the Programme for Government contains a commitment to amend the Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2015 and the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2015 to include a 10th ground of discrimination on the basis of a person’s socio-economic background and enacts legislation to provide protection for the many people who experience this form of discrimination.

We would appreciate your support on this issue and we are happy to meet with you or provide further information.

Kind regards

- Mark Hogan, All Together in Dignity (ATD) Ireland
- Rachel Doyle, Community Work Ireland
- Paul Ginnell, European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) Ireland
- Brian Killoran, Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI)
- Damien Walsh, Independent Living Movement Ireland (ILMI)
- Brid O’ Brien, Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INOU)
- Bernard Joyce, Irish Traveller Movement (ITM)

- Edel McGinley, Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI)
- Miriam Holt, National Collective of Community Based Women's Centres (NCCWN)
- Maria Joyce, National Traveller Women's Forum (NTWF)
- Orla O'Connor, National Women's Council of Ireland
- Martin Collins, Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre
- Cliona Saidlear, Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI)
- Ann-Marie O'Reilly, Threshold
- Damien Peelo, Treoir