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PRESS RELEASE

The forthcoming referendum on children's rights will mean that, if passed, for the first time there will be a clear statement of children's rights in the Irish Constitution. Treoir completely supports this.

These rights have been interpreted to include, among others, the right to be fed, cared for, educated and nurtured.

Treoir believes that also inherent in these rights are a child's right to identity and to a relationship with both parents. Currently children of unmarried parents do not have an automatic right -

- to have their fathers' names on their birth certificates
- to have their fathers as their guardians

These rights are available to children of married parents. This referendum, if passed, will therefore improve not only children's rights but the rights of unmarried fathers. It will provide fathers with a platform to claim their rights.

Minister for Children Frances Fitzgerald and some eminent legal experts also believe this.

If the referendum is passed the courts will have to take into account the views of the child, subject to the child's age and level of maturity. This would be very welcome as too often where there are warring parents the voice of the child is left unheard.

Forty four per cent of first births are outside marriage. We in Treoir believe that it is untenable that these children are not treated equally with children born within marriage.

This amendment will not answer all these inequities but it is a good first step in the right direction.

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About Treoir

Treoir is a membership organisation which promotes the rights of unmarried parents and their children in Ireland.

Treoir operates a National Specialist Information Service for unmarried expectant parents, unmarried parents, their families and those involved with them.

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Treoir is the Irish word for direction and guidance.