Supporting the Scottish Irish Abortion Rights Campaign (expenditure request)

What we will do:

1. Pay £200 towards the costs of flyers and posters from the Scottish Irish Abortion Rights Campaign, which address the stigma around abortion and alert University of Edinburgh students to the situation in Ireland.
2. In line with the Students’ Association’s pro-choice position, affirm our support for the Repeal movement and the decriminalisation of abortion in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
3. Raise awareness among the University of Edinburgh student population about the abortion referendum in the Republic of Ireland, encouraging University of Edinburgh Irish students to use their vote and ensure they are enfranchised and registered.

Background to this:

1. Student Council has previously passed policy affirming Edinburgh University Students’ Association’s pro-choice position, recognising the impact of this issue on students and outlining our commitment to supporting campaigns which seek to improve access to abortion. This motion was voted on by 126 students and passed with 96.7% votes in favour.
2. In both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, abortion is illegal in almost every circumstance. For citizens of the Republic of Ireland and UK citizens in Northern Ireland, anyone who wants or needs a termination must travel to Great Britain (usually England, as the infrastructure in Scotland means it is extremely difficult to access this service).
3. In the Republic of Ireland, a referendum on the topic is due to be held at the end of May and Irish students living in Scotland are eligible to go home to vote. This is particularly important as no one of a reproductive age in Ireland has had the opportunity to vote on this issue in their lifetime.
4. As of the 2015/16 academic year, there were 265 students from the Republic of Ireland studying at the University of Edinburgh (HESA 2016), highlighting why this is a Students’ Association issue.
5. Approximately 12,000 abortions take place in Scotland every year, however minimal conversation about abortion and perceived stigma and shame around the topic means there is a lack of knowledge among students in Scotland of how to access this healthcare provision and what is actually involved in doing so.
6. Increasing students’ awareness of access to abortion both in Scotland and their home country can have a significantly positive impact on their wellbeing and health if they find themselves in what can be a distressing circumstance, especially for those far from home or unfamiliar with the healthcare system and services in Scotland.
Beliefs and motivating actions:

1. This referendum could mark a critical shift in the reproductive rights of citizens of the Republic of Ireland, and in line with the Students’ Association’s pro-choice stance, it is crucial to support the Repeal movement.
2. It is important to raise awareness of this among the University of Edinburgh student population, encouraging Irish students to use their vote and ensure they are enfranchised and registered.
3. We will ensure that material provided will use LGBT+ inclusive language, highlighting that it is not just women who are able to get pregnant, but also Trans men and non-binary people.
4. The Scottish Irish Abortion Rights Campaign do great work and it is beneficial if we support and collaborate with them on this issue.

Submitted with 20 Student signatures.