



Policy Compendium

2017

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Mission Statement

Labour Youth is a membership-led organisation that works together with the valued input of every member.

Labour Youth is a socialist organisation committed to the principles of Equality, Social Justice, Trade Unionism and Feminism.

All members have a role to play in furthering the goals and ideals of the organisation. Labour Youth is an organisation of true education, discussion and activism.

We are an organisation that tolerates many different views and ideas, but never those that support and maintain intolerance.

Section One – Agriculture and Rural Development

Agriculture and Fisheries

1. *Young Farmers Installation Grant*: Labour Youth calls for the creation of an installation grant for young farmers (under 25) of €15,000 (total cost €7 million).

2. *Common Agricultural Policy*: Labour Youth believes the rate paid to farmers under the CAP Pillar One scheme per hectare must not fall below €285. Labour Youth also supports measures to ensure CAP Pillar Two payments are proportional to the DAS classification.

3. *Fur Farms*: Labour Youth supports a ban on fur farming in Ireland.

4. *Fisheries*: Labour Youth condemns the overfishing of the European fishery stocks and the exploitation by European fleets of developing countries, particularly those of West Africa. Labour Youth therefore supports a change to the Common Fisheries policy with a movement towards a catch share system and discard bans.

5. *Vertical Farming*: Labour Youth notes with concern that according to reputable reports including The UN's Report World Population Prospects, the Earth's population is likely to increase to 9.6 billion by the year 2050. This will put greatly increased pressure on the Earth's resources.

Labour Youth believes that securing our natural resources into the future will be key to staving off food poverty, particularly amongst developing nations. Labour Youth calls on the Irish Government to endorse and work towards developing our agricultural sector to the method of Vertical Farming through various means including:

- Giving VAT relief on the cost of building and maintaining the vertical farm for a given period.
- Giving county councils the right to incentivise the use of derelict land for the use of vertical farming.
- Lobbying the European Union for additional funding for vertical farming projects across the EU.

Labour Youth believes that Ireland has the potential to become a leader of the practice within Europe by leading the charge on this issue, and securing the country's resources for future generations.

Rural Development

6. *Rural Development Bodies*: Labour Youth supports the establishment of co-operative inter- and intra-rural development bodies between local authorities, development boards and Local Enterprise Offices.

7. *Rural Development Funding Schemes*: Labour Youth supports the introduction of a cost-benefit analysis of all rural development funding schemes (as is the case with the Micro Finance Fund).

8. *Local Enterprise Offices*: Labour Youth supports ensuring that all Local Enterprise Offices have agricultural training and funding scheme awareness, and supports tying these offices to the Rural Development partnerships.

9. *Management Training*: Labour Youth supports attaching management training courses to all rural development and farming related grants.

10. *LEADER scheme*: Labour Youth supports excluding LEADER scheme boards from 'alignment'.

11. *Labour Presence at National Ploughing Championships*: Labour Youth notes the lack of a Labour Party stand at the 2013 National Ploughing championships; Labour Youth also notes that all political parties with Dáil representation had stands at the championships. Labour Youth calls on the Labour Party to have a stand at all future ploughing championships as it is an excellent opportunity to engage with rural voters.

Section Two – Culture and Sport

Culture

1. *Irish Language*: Labour Youth believes that there is no price on saving the language, culture and heritage of this country and supports the regeneration of the Irish language through cultural promotion. Labour Youth currently notes with concern that there is a lack of provision of traditional Irish music and language classes and clubs in many communities around the country. Labour Youth proposes that each ETB provide community-based facilities in their respective areas to facilitate such classes and clubs, as well as recommending that the Oireachtas and Government provide a free accommodation and transport scheme available to citizens under the age of eighteen who wish to attend the Gaeltacht.

2. *Cultural Diversity*: Labour Youth believes individuals should have the freedom to express their culture and be free from discrimination and prejudice in doing so.

3. *Artists' Tax Exemption*: Labour Youth supports extending the artist exemption to actors.

4. *National Independence Day*: Labour Youth believes that the National Independence Day should be established on the 21st January, the date of the first meeting of the Dáil.

5. *Legacy of First World War*: Labour Youth notes the necessity to remember the impact and involvement that young Irish people had in the First World War, and understands how they have largely been left out of the dominant historical narrative of the country. Labour Youth therefore recognises the necessity to incorporate an alternate view of Irish history into memorialisation and historical record.

6. *Ché Guevara Statue*: Labour youth recognises the importance of the proposed statue of Ché Guevara in Galway City, due to the economic benefits via tourism, its left wing symbolism, and its potential in recognising the Irish Diaspora in which Ché Guevara's parents were included.

Sport

7. League of Ireland: Football is the largest team participation sport in Ireland. Throughout the country the game has an estimated 450,000 people involved on a regular basis, primarily on an amateur and volunteer basis. The League of Ireland comprising the Premier and First divisions along with an Under 19 league sits at the top of the men's participation tree, while the recently commenced Under 17 League is a further addition to the player pathway ladder in Ireland. There are many good things about the League of Ireland – the people, the fans, the passion, the occasions.

Labour Youth commends the achievements of Dundalk FC, Cork City FC and Shamrock Rovers FC on the European stage. The League of Ireland is a good league which can be much better. A brighter future for the League needs to address the breadth of issues which will make the League a long term success.

Labour calls for the creation of a strategic investment plan for Irish domestic soccer to be devised by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport with a view to improving grounds around the country including Derry City, as well as supporting the 2015 Conroy Report on developing the League and encouraging the Football Association of Ireland to implement it.

8. Alcohol Sponsorship in Sport: Labour Youth notes with concern the prevalence of alcohol sponsorship for sporting events and notes the influence this may have on minors and Young Adults. Labour Youth suggests that the state funding of teams that use alcohol sponsorship should be removed.

Section Three – Education

Investment in Education

1. *Education Spending*: Labour Youth condemns the low proportion of money spent on education in Ireland and opposes cutbacks in education spending, including any further:

- Increase in the student-teacher ratio in schools;
- Reduction of the Traveller education budget;
- Cutting of funding for the Leaving Certificate Applied, Transition Year or the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme;
- Reduction of funding for books in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools programme;
- Reduction in the Higher Education Access Route grant.

2. *Fee-Paying Schools*: Labour Youth believes that fee-paying schools should not receive state funding.

3. *Use of Pre-Fabs*: Labour Youth condemns the widespread use of pre-fabs in primary schools and is strongly in favour of a national school building programme.

4. *DIT Campus*: Labour Youth supports the development of Grangegorman as a single campus for the Dublin Institute of Technology student population.

5. *Special Needs Assistants*: Labour Youth recognises the important work of Special Needs Assistants in our education system and is therefore opposed to the capping of SNA numbers at 10,700. Labour Youth further opposes any cuts to funding for schools and projects that specifically cater for children with disabilities. Labour Youth also calls on the Department of Education to provide a uniform set of assessment guidelines for 3rd level institutions and increased funding to ensure the availability of SNAs to those who need them, especially those who may be seen as 'marginal' or 'borderline' cases.

6. *Pupil-teacher ratio*: Labour Youth calls on the government to commit to laying out a schedule to reduce the pupil teacher ratio in primary schools to 20:1 within the lifetime of this government as set out in the Labour Party's 2016 Alternative Budget.

Equality in Education

7. *Secular Schooling*: Labour Youth believes that all schools in receipt of state funding should be required to have a secular and inclusive ethos.

8. *School Patronage*: Labour Youth believes that there should be a transfer of Catholic patronage of schools to other patron bodies under the supervision of the Department of Education and Skills. Labour Youth agrees with Archbishop Diarmuid Martin that the Church being the patron of 92% of our primary schools is a "historical hangover". Labour Youth thus welcomes the Forum on Patronage and Pluralism.

9. *Traveller Inclusivity*: Labour Youth supports the inclusion of Traveller culture and the recognition of the existence of more than one distinct native community in the Irish education syllabus.

10. *Enrolment*: Labour Youth Supports greater inclusivity and equality in determining enrolment in schools. Therefore Labour Youth supports the standardisation of admissions policies across the education system, including the eradication of entrance exams and an end to the outdated practices of preferential admission based on parish lines.

Pre-school Education

11. *Childcare Standards*: Labour Youth calls for more rigorous upholding of child care (pre-school services) regulations of 2006, including if necessary an increase in the number and frequency of inspections.

Second-Level Education

12. *Irish Language*: Labour Youth is in favour of reforming the teaching of Irish to ensure conversational fluency by the end of the Junior Certificate, and having the study of Irish literature be an optional subject in the Leaving Certificate.

13. *Mathematics*: Labour Youth considers “Project Maths” to be an insufficient attempt at reform of the subject and supports a renewed effort at reforming the way Maths is taught so as to improve results and students’ understanding of the subject.

14. *History*: Labour Youth strongly believes should be a core part of every citizen’s education and should remain a mandatory part of the Junior Certificate.

15. *Politics/Philosophy*: Labour Youth strongly believes that Civic, Social and Political Education should be replaced by a combined politics and philosophy course, available throughout the Junior and Leaving Certificates.

16. *First Aid Teaching*: Labour Youth wishes to see First Aid/Life Saving Qualification as a mandatory part of the CSPE Junior Certificate cycle.

17. *Sexual Education*: Labour Youth recognises that current the relationship and sexual health education in school is substandard. Labour Youth therefore calls for the curricula to change to include sex-positive education that discusses the importance of consent, healthy relationships, and marginalised sexual orientations and gender identities. These curricula should also include, but not be limited to, inclusive sexual health, contraception, and crisis pregnancies.

18. *Affiliation with the Irish Second-Level Students’ Union*: Labour Youth believes that a strong national union is required to best represent the views of second-level students. Labour Youth therefore supports affiliation with the Irish Second-Level Students Union by student councils.

19. *Programming and Information Technology*: Labour Youth believes that providing everyone with a basic understanding of how information technology functions is essential going forward in the 21st century. Labour Youth therefore proposes to include a subject at secondary level, compulsory at junior certificate level, and optional for the leaving certificate, that covers the foundations of computer hardware, programming, as well as familiarity with various productivity software applications common in modern workplaces. This is to ensure a technologically literate population.

20. *Voter registration*: Labour Youth proposes that in conjunction with our policy to lower the voting age to 16, that the registration of young people to vote be included as part of the Leaving certificate curriculum.

Higher Education

21. *Fees*: Labour Youth remains fully opposed to the return of third-level fees in any form. We believe in universality of access and we believe there should be no barriers to learning, including at postgraduate level and in part-time higher education.

22. *Registration Fee*: Labour Youth is opposed to any further increases in the registration fee for third-level students.

23. *Grants*: Labour Youth believes that the grants system for third-level students should be reformed and centralised. We believe that the provision of grants should not be linked to either the income of one's parents or one's income from the previous year.

24. *Children of Non-EU Migrants*: Labour Youth supports swift action to tackle the problems faced by children of non-EU migrants attempting to progress to higher education in Ireland due to their susceptibility to international fees, even after attending school in Ireland for many years.

25. *Campus Accommodation*: Labour Youth supports the establishment of a central authority responsible for allocation of student accommodation and a protocol that includes but is not limited to the following criteria: progressive weighting for distance from home address; income assessment independent of parents. Labour

Youth further supports the construction of dedicated student accommodation being the responsibility of local authorities.

26. *Student Assistance Fund*: Labour Youth strongly supports full reinstatement of the existing Student Assistance Fund for the 2013/2014 academic year and beyond.

27. *USI*: Labour Youth believes that a strong national union is required to best represent the views of the students of Ireland. Labour Youth therefore supports affiliation with the Union of Students in Ireland by students' unions. Labour Youth is in favour of a directly-elected president of USI with each individual student having a vote.

Further Education

27. *Subsidising further education*: Labour Youth notes the role that further education plays in developing Ireland's economic, social, political and cultural landscape, especially as we restructure in the aftermath of the collapse of the market economy in recent years. Labour Youth also recognises the often-prohibitive costs of further education to many who wish to pursue higher qualifications. Conference therefore calls on the government to provide comprehensive subsidies to students in further education, which will be able to cover the costs of tuition.

Section Four – Employment and Enterprise

Employment

1. *Collective Bargaining*: Labour Youth strongly supports the rights of workers to organise and to bargain collectively.

2. *Minimum Wage*: Labour Youth believes the Minimum Wage should be increased to €13 an hour.

3. *Joint Labour Committees*: Following the Supreme Court judgment invalidating the JLC process, Labour Youth supports the speedy implementation of a replacement process to protect the rights of those workers previously protected by the JLCs.

4. *Zero Hour Contracts*: Labour Youth opposes the use of Zero Hour Contracts, believing they are unjust, provide little job and income security, and constitute a modern incarnation of worker exploitation. Labour Youth therefore calls for proper implementation of the European Union Working Time Directive.

5. *Flexible Hour Contracts*: Labour Youth proposes a motion to urge the government to find a solution to the current situation of flexible hour contracts, in particular regard to those that affect students and younger workers. It has come to our attention that companies, such as Deliveroo, have drawn out contracts that allow them to avoid paying their workers the minimum wage. They hide under the pretence of paying workers on the basis of their performance instead of by the hour. They have found a loophole where they can hire workers as self-employed; we need to close this loophole.

6. *Workers Cooperatives*: Labour Youth regrets the lack of ambition of the Labour Party in recent years to develop worker's cooperatives while in government.

Labour Youth believes worker's cooperatives are a radical solution to unemployment, but also a new way of producing higher quality jobs as well as goods and services.

7. *State Contracts*: Labour Youth welcomes Labour's achievement of building the new DIT campus in Grangegorman. and the local employment clause which provided local jobs.

Labour Youth welcomes similar initiatives being introduced in the Dublin Docklands redevelopment and believes the experience of these should be used to develop a strong national policy for local employment in state contracts which would include:

- Decent work with union membership and no zero hour contracts.
- Both contractors and sub-contractors should be bound by this policy
- Strong integration with local employment services

Labour Youth calls on the Parliamentary Labour Party to bring a private members bill and run a campaign on this issue.

8. *Plan for Youth Campaign*: Labour Youth notes with concern the high rates of youth unemployment across Europe and welcomes the Party of European Socialists(PES) Plan for Youth campaign and calls on the European Commission and the Irish Government to support it.

Labour Youth hopes this campaign will continue to develop with a youth led approach to the problem of unemployment across Europe and believes that young people must be fully consulted on how they want to gain employment.

9. *Decent Work*: In recognition of the marked rise in precarious work, particularly among low paid workers in Ireland and the recent cuts to many of the chief protections for low paid workers such as the JLC wage agreements, the low income tax regime for the low paid and social protection entitlements and benefits. Labour Youth supports and promotes the Decent Work agenda currently pursued by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and its affiliates.

10. *Sub-minimum Wages*: Labour Youth condemns the sub-minimum wages that can be offered to workers under the age of 18 and to those over 18 in their first two years of employment.

11. *Right to Full-time Hours*: Labour Youth condemns the practice whereby employers reduce the hours of more experienced employees and hire new part-time staff on lower wages, often forcing formerly full-time workers to seek

supplementary income allowance from the state. Labour Youth believes the government should legislate to introduce a right of current employees to first be offered extra or full-time hours where such work is available.

12. *Full Commission Pay*: Labour Youth notes with concern paying employees on a commission-only basis, Labour Youth also notes that this can amount to free labour in certain cases and thus calls for it to be abolished.

13. *Worker Discrimination*: Labour Youth notes with concern the continued discrimination of workers within certain sectors and condemns any comments made by employers suggesting that employability should be impacted by race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity/expression, sexuality, religion etc.

Labour Youth further notes with concern Section 37.1 of the Employment Equality Act 1998 which allows religious, educational and medical institutions to discriminate against those who, as they see it, do not fit their ethos. This particularly affects LGBT employees. Labour Youth is therefore committed to the promotion of workers' rights and equality, and to actively campaign for the removal of Section 37.1 of the aforementioned act.

14. *Right of Access*: Labour Youth calls on the Government to introduce Right of Access legislation to allow trade unions to meet with workers in their place of work to discuss the benefits of joining a union.

15. *Trade Union Recognition*: Labour Youth commends the delivery of a range of policies by Labour in government to strengthen trade union rights. However, Labour Youth notes that the strength of these policies is limited by the fact the Irish constitution does not provide for trade union recognition.

Therefore, Labour Youth calls on the Labour Party to campaign for a constitutional referendum to allow for trade union recognition in the Irish constitution.

16. *Company Law*: Labour Youth was disgusted to see the inhumane treatment of the Clerys Workers by Clerys management in June 2015 and supports the campaign for justice for the Clerys workers.

Labour Youth recommends the Government adopt the proposals from ICTU to ensure more workers are not treated in the way the Clerys workers were. Under these proposals, employers would be required to enter a 30-day period of consultation with workers before redundancies could occur, and if employers failed

to comply, any redundancies would be considered void and the staff would be entitled to wages.

In addition, workers and unions could apply to have directors – or someone acting on their behalf – restricted or disqualified for at least five years.

Enterprise

17. Youth Entrepreneurship Fund: In recognition of Ireland's shockingly high rate of youth unemployment (30.5% in Q4 of 2011), Labour Youth supports the establishment of a permanent Youth Entrepreneurship Fund (YEF) to assist young entrepreneurs aged 18-25 to establish their own businesses and contribute towards creating employment, developing indigenous industries and sustaining long-run economic growth. The YEF would be run by Enterprise Ireland in conjunction with the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation with at least one third of the YEF governing council being either 18-25 themselves or experienced entrepreneurs. In light of the budgetary constraints facing the country, Labour Youth proposes that the YEF be allocated €1.8 million for the first year on a pilot basis pending further review.

18. Universal Design: Labour Youth recognises universal design as a direct way of improving environments, products and Information and Communication technology to make them accessible to people of all abilities and has the potential to improve the reputation of Ireland's manufacturing and technology sector.

Labour Youth therefore calls for all businesses involved in the design and manufacturing of products, environments and ICT to implement universal design principles, as well as empathy testing.

19. Targeted Skills Training: Labour Youth recognises the problems with structural unemployment in the Irish economy, as well as the deficit in certain skills, and therefore calls on the government to target training through Solas for sectors which are currently being targeted by the IDA and Enterprise Ireland.

Section Five – Environment and Energy

Environment

1. *Natural Resources*: Labour Youth affirms ‘the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland’ and thus opposes the selling off the country’s natural resources.
2. *Climate Change*: Labour Youth believes Ireland should lead the way on climate change with swift and decisive action. Labour Youth therefore supports cutting emissions by at least 30% by 2020, and 80% by 2050. We further support the inclusion of sectoral targets within these goals to ensure progress is attained across the economy.
3. *Investment in Green Economy*: Labour Youth wishes to see significantly-increased government investment in renewable energy sources and green technology.
4. *Preservation of Forests*: Labour Youth recognises the importance of our flora and fauna to our national image, our environment and our economy through tourism. Labour Youth believes we should preserve and expand forested areas, both private and public, and replant large sections of land to encourage wildlife.
5. *Restriction of Planning Permission/Rezoning of Environmental Land*: Labour Youth believes in the need to preserve all mountains, lakes, rivers, seas fields and bogs, to allow our plant and animal life to flourish, by restricting planning permission for industry and residential uses. Labour Youth believes it should be extremely difficult to rezone areas of environmental land, to any other form of land use.
6. *Public Ownership of Forests and Bogs*: Given the financial income Ireland’s landscape provides to the State, directly through the tourist industry, Labour Youth condemns any attempts to privatise the nation’s forestry and bogs, believing such privatisations would ultimately see the deterioration of the natural environment in order to sell off assets to increase the economic capital of multinational corporations.

7. *Bike Schemes*: Labour Youth supports extending the bike scheme to every urban and suburban area in Ireland. Additionally, Labour Youth supports improving roads across the country and making them more bike-friendly.

8. *Water Charges*: Labour Youth believes that public utilities such as provision of water should be kept in public hands and opposes their privatisation. Labour Youth notes that provision of water is a basic human right for all citizens. Labour Youth supports a constitutional amendment guaranteeing that provision of water will be run on a public and not-for-profit basis and calls on the Labour Party to support such an amendment. Labour Youth also commits itself to aggressively opposing any attempt to privatise water services in Ireland.

Waste Management

9. *Packaging Levies*: Labour Youth believe that environmental levies should be charged to businesses that use excessive packaging in order to reduce waste at the source.

10. *Bin Charges*: Labour Youth is in favour of a national waiver scheme for low income families to ease the burden of bin charges.

11. *Privatisation of Waste Collection*: Labour Youth is opposed to the privatisation of waste collection services due to the practise of private companies 'cherry-picking' their customers. Labour Youth believes that local authorities need to generate sufficient income from collecting waste so as to be able to afford to collect the waste of those on waivers.

12. *Plastic Bottles*: Labour Youth supports the extension of the provision of bottle banks in urban centres, and the inclusion of plastic bottles and coffee cups for recycling nationally.

13. *Recycling Plant*: Labour Youth supports the establishment of a large-scale British-Irish recycling plant to reduce the large distances which material is usually shipped before being recycled, i.e. to China.

14. *Food Banks*: Labour Youth supports the establishment of food banks, whereby supermarkets and other food retailers are prohibited from destroying unsold food instead forcing them into contracts with food charities.

Energy

15. *Fossil Fuels*: Labour Youth is in favour of reducing Ireland's dependence on fossil fuels for environmental, economic and security reasons. Labour Youth favours the development a diverse range of renewable energy sources. Labour Youth therefore also favours locally based energy projects, such as those developed in Denmark, that see communities and households produce energy.

16. *Nuclear Power*: Labour Youth supports the creation of a state-owned nuclear power plant in Ireland in order to meet our renewable energy targets.

17. *Biogas and Biomass*: Labour Youth supports the development of biogas plants and the production of biomethane, and the use of Biomass both for replacing fossil fuels in conventional power stations and in biomass boilers, providing such activities are not permitted to negatively affect the country's food supply.

18. *Geothermal Energy*: Recognising Ireland's particular suitability for the utilisation of ground source heat pumps, Labour Youth supports the use of geothermal energy where available via direct heating.

Section Six – Finance and Public Expenditure

Taxation

1. *Progressive Income Taxation*: Labour Youth supports the introduction of three income tax bands setting the standard rate of tax at 20%, a new middle rate of 35% and the increase of the top rate of tax at 50%, chargeable to incomes over €125,000.

2. *USC and Inheritance Tax*: Labour Youth believes that cuts to the USC and inheritance tax are unwarranted and regressive particularly at a time when our public services are in need of more funding.

3. *Capital Gains Tax*: Labour Youth support the restoration of capital gains tax to 40%.

4. *Financial Transactions Tax*: Labour Youth supports the European Commission's proposals for a financial transactions tax, recognising that such a tax could raise hundreds of millions of Euro for the Irish Exchequer. Labour Youth further recognises the provisions in the proposal (such as the 'residence principle' and the 'issuance principle') that will minimise the risk of relocation.

5. *Tax Exiles and Loopholes*: Labour Youth condemn Ireland's tax exiles and support the closure of all tax loopholes.

6. *Rebuilding the Tax Base*: Labour Youth supports rebuilding and broadening the tax base and ensuring there is no over reliance on a small number of measures, especially if all are dependent on a certain sector of the economy and its performance. Labour Youth believes any such restructuring must be implemented in a progressive manner as far as is possible given the state's enormous financial difficulties. Labour Youth therefore recommends:

- A slight increase in the betting tax by 0.25%;
- A reduction in tax credits;
- A reduction in property-based tax reliefs;
- A 2.5% increase in corporation tax and the closing-down of existing tax loopholes;

- A fair property site valuation tax with funds to be ring-fenced and allocated towards local authorities;
- An increase in the property tax on second homes;
- Reviewing the tax rate policy on gas and oil explorations;
- An increase in the level of PRSI contributions to bring them more in line with the European average;
- Introduction of taxation by local government;
- Surcharges on profits in the banking sector once the industry has stabilised;
- Standard-rating of tax reliefs on all private pensions.

7. *VAT Reform*: Labour Youth is concerned with the current VAT system; LY believes that vital products such as medical or educational equipment or healthy food like fruit and vegetables should not be taxed at a higher VAT level than non-essentials like racehorses and fast food.

8. *Tax Ombudsman*: Labour Youth supports the establishment of a Tax Ombudsman who would oversee the tax system in Ireland and ensure its fairness and equality and be completely impartial of both Government and corporate influences. This measure will also bring back credibility to Ireland, ensuring we cannot be seen as a tax haven among our European and global partners.

9. *Tax Avoidance by the Wealthy Irish Citizens*: Labour Youth notes the large scale tax avoidance by the wealthiest members of the Irish public through various tax havens, such as the Netherlands. Labour Youth believes this behaviour to be deceitful and immoral, going against the principles of citizenship. Labour Youth calls on the government to revoke the citizenships of individuals who engage in such activities.

10. *Corporation Tax*: Labour Youth notes with concern that while a greater tax burden has been placed on ordinary workers in recent years, highly-profitable corporations continue to enjoy an excessively low rate of corporation tax. Labour Youth also notes that corporations frequently pay far less than the stated rate of corporation tax, by means of entirely legal tax avoidance. Labour Youth supports increasing Corporation Tax by 2.5% and the closure of any existing tax loopholes to ensure that corporations make a greater contribution, along with ordinary workers and pay the official corporate tax rate in all cases.

11. *Inheritance Tax*: Labour Youth condemns Minister Noonan's recent actions in Budget 2017 which have increased the Inheritance Tax threshold and notes that

inheritance tax is an unearned form of income and a means by the wealthy to isolate and transfer income from one generation to the next. Labour Youth proposes that the threshold be decreased.

Banking

12. *Regulation*: Labour Youth support greater scrutiny and regulation of the banking sector.

13. *Banking Guarantee*: Labour Youth opposed the introduction of the 2008 banking guarantee and support the nationalisation of Irish banks as the best method to clean up the sector. Furthermore, Labour Youth supports the following measures:

- The rescinding of the 2008 banking guarantee;
- The cancellation of the promissory note to Anglo Irish Bank;
- Prudent methods to save the financial sector that do not involve writing a blank cheque for banking debts and that secure a return for the Irish exchequer in the event of a recovery in the banking sector;
- Losses to be imposed on bondholders;
- Interventions to protect credit unions which may be exposed to Anglo Irish Bank's debt.

14. *Strategic Investment Bank*: Labour Youth support the creation of a Strategic Investment Bank (SIB) that would lend to small and medium-sized businesses and invest in innovative companies. Such institutions have been created in other countries, including Germany, and the SIB would be broadly similar to the Agricultural Credit Corporation and Industrial Credit Corporation previously operated in Ireland.

15. *Co-operative Based Bank*: Labour Youth supports the establishment of a new co-op based bank with a credit union style of organisation. The bank would be democratic with one member, one vote and would allow business to have accounts but not a vote. The bank would be based as a financial advising firm first and a lending/investing/deposit source second. It would be based on the best financial practice and hold a higher cash reserve ratio than the regulator sets to ensure the protection of members. Its mission would be to provide responsible banking and real competition to the other private and state-owned banks.

16. *Peer to Peer Lending*: Labour Youth notes with concern the complete lack of both regulation and proposed legislation surrounding Peer-to-Peer lending networks in Ireland. This is in contrast to the tight regulations in the UK where strict legislation

has both protected consumers and allowed upwards of £6.4 billion to be lent over the past 10 years at interest rates more favourable to both the lender and the borrower when compared with traditional banks.

Specifically, Labour Youth is calling for the following to be immediately introduced to govern the industry in Ireland:

- Anti-money laundering rules
- Standard client fund protection rules
- Contingency arrangements in case a lender goes bust
- Standard consumer protection laws

NAMA

17. *NAMA*: In relation to the National Asset Management Agency, Labour Youth calls for:

- Maximum transparency in relation to the operations of NAMA on behalf of the Irish state;
- Consistent monitoring and regulation of pay levels for all parties in receipt of compensation for their work or cooperation with NAMA;
- NAMA to be made rigorously pursue the maximum possible return on the full cost of loans transferred to NAMA, thereby minimizing the state's exposure to these loans;
- The use of whatever means available to ensure that NAMA produces a significant social dividend, with particular emphasis on meeting current needs for suitable social housing.

Investment in the Economy

18. Stimulus: Labour Youth supports the use of further stimulus packages in Ireland to generate employment. Labour Youth believe the National Development Plan should be re-drawn, with emphasis placed on:

- Labour-intensive projects;
- Improving the provision of broadband in Ireland;
- The construction and renovation of schools, hospitals and social housing units.

19. *Co-operatives*: Labour Youth supports the commitment to “promote greater appreciation of the cooperative model” in the current Programme for Government and therefore calls on the government to set aside funds for the incentivising of cooperatives.

20. *Debt to GDP Ratio*: Labour Youth notes with concern the announcement in Budget 2017 that the Fine Gael government will seek to reduce Ireland's debt-to-GDP ratio to 45% – a full 15 percentage points lower than the target outlined in European fiscal rules.

Labour Youth notes the prevailing opinion amongst macroeconomic scholars is that the debt-to-GDP ratio is a poor measure of a country's financial well-being, and represents a narrow-minded and economically illiterate view of fiscal policy. Thus, Labour Youth is forced to conclude that this policy represents an ideological commitment to austerity rather than anything approaching a best-practice model.

Labour Youth calls for the immediate abandonment of this arbitrary 45% debt-to-GDP ratio target, for further action at European level to remove the 60% debt-to-GDP ratio target outlined in current fiscal rules, and for the Government to shift its emphasis away from simplistic debt management to a strategy of sensible taxation and sustainable public investment

State Assets

21. *Public Ownership*: Labour Youth is staunchly opposed to any further privatisation of public services due to the relatively small size of the Irish market.

Wages and Employment

22. *Teachers' Pay*: Labour Youth condemns the decrease in payment for newly-qualified primary school teachers and supports a reversal of these unjust pay cuts.

23. *Special Advisor Pay*: Labour Youth opposes the breaching of the public sector pay cap by numerous members of the Cabinet with regard to their ministerial advisors. Labour Youth calls for these advisors to have their public salary adjusted to within permitted levels and for future appointments to take greater note of the public sector pay rules.

24. *Public Sector Moratorium*: Labour Youth recognises the negative effects of the moratorium on those entering the jobs market, the users of public service, and the wider economy. Labour Youth therefore calls on the government to rescind the public sector hiring moratorium.

25. *Comparative Earnings Limit*: Labour Youth calls for a Comparative Earnings Limit to be implemented across Europe and promoted in trade discussions with the United States of America; under such a limit, the lowest-earning employee of a company cannot be paid less than one-fifth of the wage of the highest earning employee, as a measure to abate the exponential increase in wealth disparity that continues to be fuelled by the almost-exponential increase in income disparity.

26. *Salary Transparency*: Labour Youth believes that no company can enjoy any level of success without the hard work and contribution of its employees, and that these employees should be able to expect a fair share of the success that they have helped to create.

Labour Youth calls for an addition to be made to the annual returns that are furnished to the Companies Registration Office, whereby: In addition to all existing criteria, companies shall provide the Companies Registration Office with a Gini coefficient for the salaries paid by those companies to all their employees, in order to determine the income distribution of employees in each individual company.

Labour Youth also calls for the Companies Registration Office to publish a publicly available annual report that analyses the Gini coefficient data at national level, and by geographical region, by sector of the economy, and by industry or discipline

State Appointments

27. *Appointments to State boards*: Labour Youth calls for all appointments to public sector boards to be conducted by an independent authority and to be based on merit alone.

Section Seven – Foreign Affairs, Trade and Defence

European Union

1. *European Project*: Labour Youth is committed to the European project, but opposes the current liberal agenda to privatise public services in the EU.

2. *European Fiscal Union*: Labour Youth recognises the need for a genuinely integrated European social policy to correct the current neoliberal tendencies of the European Union. Labour Youth further recognises that such a social policy requires some degree of fiscal union. Labour Youth therefore calls for the establishment of a European fiscal union, to include:

- A European Finance Ministry;
- Some form of mutualisation of member states' debts;
- A much more extensive federal European budget, directly financed and capable of finding significant stimulus packages and other forms of assistance at member-state level;
- Coordination and moves towards the harmonisation of certain areas of taxation at member-state level.

3. *European Political Union*: Labour Youth further recognises that any fiscal union that did not include further measure towards greater political union would be repugnant to the principles of democracy without significant expansion of direct accountability and representation at an EU-wide level. Labour Youth therefore calls for:

- The President of the European Commission to be directly elected by the people of Europe;
- The rest of the Commission to be chosen by, fully answerable to and subject to the majority approval of the European Parliament in the same manner as governments in national parliamentary democracies;
- The European Parliament to have the power to propose legislation;
- The expanded EU budget to be agreed on an annual basis through consultation between the European Commission and the European Parliament.

4. *European Union Secession States*: Labour Youth calls on the European Union to fast track the membership of any independent state seceding from a European Union member state.

International Affiliations

5. *Socialist International*: Labour Youth condemns the manner in which the Neo-Destour Party of Tunisia and the National Democratic Party of Egypt were allowed to remain as members of the Socialist International until their dictatorial regimes were overthrown by their own people at significant human cost. Labour Youth views this as endemic of the current inadequacy of the organisation and welcomes the work of the International Union of Socialist Youth (IUSY) in campaigning for its reform. Labour Youth calls for:

- Changes in the structure and procedures of the Socialist International to allow far greater participation in the organisation by ordinary activists in member parties and encourage greater coordination and dialogue among member parties;
- Implementation of far more demanding democracy and anti-corruption standards as a requirement for membership of the Socialist International, and penalisation and ultimately expulsion of parties who do not meet such standards;
- Immediate expulsion of the MPLA of Angola and the Israeli Labor Party;
- Engagement with leading socialist and social democratic parties who are not currently members of the Socialist International, particularly in Latin America.

6. *“Rise Up” Campaign*: Labour Youth is a participant in the Rise Up campaign being conducted by Socialist and Social Democratic youth movements across Europe. Labour Youth is committed to increasing awareness and participation of its own membership and young Irish people in general in this campaign.

7. *Affiliations*: Labour Youth values remaining an active member of international socialist organisations and endorses continuing to foster meaningful bilateral links with other left-wing youth parties.

8. *CERN Membership*: Labour Youth notes with Concern that Ireland is the only country in Western Europe that is not a member of the “Conseil Européen pour la

Recherche Nucléaire” (CERN). Last December the Taoiseach and then Minister for Jobs Richard Bruton launched Innovation 2020 – a 5 year science strategy, one of the key promises of which was to open negotiations with CERN with a view to joining. However, since then there has been no mention of how negotiations are going or whether they’ve even been opened yet.

Labour Youth calls on the government to immediately clarify the position of negotiations & if they still have yet to start, to open negotiations immediately

Human Rights

9. *Human Rights Violations*: Labour Youth condemns human right violations, no matter where they occur, and rejects the notion that trade policy should not be linked to the development and improvement of human rights.

10. *Self-determination*: Labour Youth believes in the principle of self-determination for all peoples of the world.

11. *North Korea*: Labour Youth condemns the brutal acts of murder and oppression committed by the North Korean government, particularly recent reports of children with disabilities being killed.

12. *Belarus*: Labour Youth condemns the ongoing dictatorship of President Alexander Lukashenko in the Republic of Belarus and strongly supports the work of MSD-MH in opposition to this authoritarian regime. Labour Youth calls on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade to support the pro-democracy movement in Belarus.

13. *Syria*: Labour Youth condemns the heavy-handed attacks on civilians carried out in the Syrian Civil War, largely by the Assad regime. Labour Youth also condemns Russian, Chinese, North Korean and Iranian support for the regime. Labour Youth:

- believes that the Assad dictatorship must be replaced by a transitional government which will oversee a transition to full multi-party democracy and free, fair elections;

- notes the finding of UN panel leader of the December 2012 United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry that “this is a war where no military victory is possible”;
- further notes the enormity of the death toll which may be as high as 60,000;
- believes that all possible means must be used to end the conflict peacefully, rather than by risking further bloodshed and regional war by the United Nations or Western governments going to war with Assad, particularly in light of the increased willingness of opposition forces to talk about considering a negotiated settlement, which should be strongly supported.

14. *Apple/Foxconn*: Labour Youth condemns the treatment of workers at the Foxconn factories in China and Mexico. In Particular Labour Youth condemns the high incidences of suicide among Foxconn workers, their abuse of child labour laws and their forcing of workers to work without remuneration. Labour Youth therefore calls for a boycott of all Foxconn products, such as those of Apple.

15. *Saudi Arabia*: Labour Youth condemns the atrocious human rights record of the state of Saudi Arabia and it’s oppressive and often barbaric treatment of women, LGBTQ+ people, religious minorities, atheists and others. Labour Youth further condemns Saudi Arabia’s current military campaign against Yemen.

16. *Turkey / CHP Youth*: Labour Youth condemns the recent authoritarian crackdowns in Turkey, where activists, teachers, lecturers, journalists and judges have been arrested on false charges of being involved in the recent coup attempt.

Labour Youth recognises that from the start, opposition parties opposed the coup attempt. Labour Youth extends our solidarity to CHP Youth and all those fighting for democracy, free society and peace in Turkey.

Israel/Palestine

17. *The State of Palestine*: Labour Youth recognises, as a full member of the International Community, the State of Palestine. Labour Youth recognises the right of the Palestinian people to govern over the entire territory contained within the pre-1967 borders (The West Bank including East Jerusalem, and Gaza), and further recognises the State of Palestine as the appropriate medium through which to exercise this right, until such a time as the Palestinian people choose otherwise.

Labour Youth recognises and laments the continued hurdles to peace, political stability, socioeconomic stability, hope, and liberation for the Palestinian People, including:

- The frequent military assaults and slaughter in Gaza by the State of Israel;
- The blockade of the Gazan people by the State of Israel;
- The military occupation of the West Bank by the State of Israel;
- The redevelopment of the urban and rural landscapes of the West Bank and East Jerusalem to facilitate and promote apartheid, intended to be irreversible, by the State of Israel;
- The inaction of the international community, most disappointingly the European Union and its member states, and most detrimentally the United States of America;
- The commercial and military support the State of Israel receives for its destructive efforts, again most detrimentally from the United States of America;
- The undermining of Palestinian democracy by the European Union, the United States of America, the State of Israel, and many other states in the International Community;
- The illiberal restrictions placed on the Palestinian people with regard to movement, housing, trade, food consumption, provisions for basic services, political activity and education, by both the State of Israel and the Arab Republic of Egypt, and, in some instances, the State of Palestine.

Labour Youth calls on the Irish Government and the rest of the International Community – including the State of Israel – to recognise the sovereignty of the Palestinian People and the results of any future fair election in the State of Palestine, regardless of the will of the Palestinian people as stated in the outcome of that election.

14. *EU Sanctions*: Labour Youth believe that the European Union should impose sanctions on Israel for Israel's violations of international law.

15. *BDS Campaign*: Labour Youth recognises Israel as an apartheid state. Labour Youth therefore supports calls for the boycott, divestment and sanctioning of Israeli goods and services and supports the international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign.

The Vatican

16. *Child Abuse*: Labour Youth condemns the Vatican's obstruction of investigations into child abuse.

17. *Papal Nuncio*: Labour Youth calls on the government to expel the Papal Nuncio from Ireland until such a time as the Roman Catholic Church takes appropriate action to deal with the illegal actions committed by its clergy and co-operates with state authorities.

United States

18. *US Funding of Candidates in Other Countries*: Labour Youth condemns the US-led funding of candidates for election in Iraq, Afghanistan and Venezuela and calls on the Minister for Foreign Affairs to lobby the US to discontinue this practice.

19. *Whistleblowers/Spying*: Labour Youth condemns the designation by the US of WikiLeaks as an enemy of the state as well as US attempts to extradite people accused of copyright and hacking crimes committed outside its borders. Labour Youth further notes the contempt with which US treats non-US citizens by spying on them and the purge of whistle-blowers like Chelsea Manning.

20. *Blockade of Cuba*: Labour Youth condemns the United States blockade of Cuba and is concerned by the adverse economic and social effects the blockade has on the Cuban people. Labour Youth supports the immediate lifting of the blockade on Cuba, in line with United Nations recommendations.

Western Intervention

21. *Arab Spring*: Labour Youth recognises the key role played by Western intervention in assisting the rebels to overthrow various regimes, especially that of Libya, throughout the Arab Spring. However, Labour Youth condemns any further Western intervention and believes there should be an immediate withdrawal of Western forces from new democracies in North Africa and the Middle East.

22. *Syria, Iraq, and the so-called 'Islamic State'*: Labour Youth acknowledges and condemns the policy of NATO and various western allies in the Middle East in the early 21st century, the results of which have clearly included the destabilisation of the region and the catalysing of ethnic rivalry and armed conflicts along ethnic grounds. However, Labour Youth supports Western intervention, with the exclusion of 'boots on the ground', to combat the so-called 'Islamic State'.

Trade

22. *Human Rights*: Labour Youth rejects the notion that trade policy should not be linked to the development and improvement of human rights.

23. *Free Trade*: Labour Youth opposes the negative effects of Free Trade agreements as tools to spread neoliberal ideology and prevent state intervention.

24. *Trade Agreements*: Labour Youth notes with concern the expanding complexity of trade agreements, and their increasing tendency to involve radical changes to legislation based on secret negotiations. Labour Youth opposes the use of trade agreements as a way to radically alter laws.

25. *Investment Protection Programmes*: Labour Youth condemns investment protection programmes as anti-democratic assaults on the ability of future governments to implement left-wing policies.

26. *ACTA*: Labour Youth welcomes the democratic decision of the European Parliament to vote against the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA).

27. *Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership*: Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership: Labour Youth notes with concern the on-going negotiations between the European Union and the United States in relation to the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). Labour Youth notes with concern the impact TTIP will have on a number of areas including:

- the lowering of EU standards in regards to the environment, food safety, animal welfare, workers' rights, financial regulation and GMOs, as well as copyright, including the limitation of free speech and access to HIV drugs.
- under TTIP the US would be allowed to export shale gas to Europe, thus increasing fracking in the US and allowing US companies to challenge fracking bans in Europe under Investor-State Dispute Settlement.

While Labour Youth supports the EU's efforts in job creation, we believe that TTIP jeopardises the health and wellbeing of those living in the EU and therefore call on the EU to use these negotiations to encourage the US to raise its standards, rather than lowering its own. Labour Youth affirms that while it does not oppose free trade in principle, TTIP does not amount to a traditional free trade agreement, but rather threatens to constitute an historic infringement upon democratic governance. Labour Youth therefore calls for the TTIP to be rejected and mandates its International Officer to campaign against TTIP and to engage with sister organisations on the possibility of joint campaigns on the issue.

Defence

28. *US Military in Irish Airports*: Labour Youth condemns the continued use of Shannon Airport by the United States military and call for this practise to be brought to an end.

29. *Reserve Defence Forces*: Labour Youth supports giving employment protection to those in the Reserve Defence Forces in recognition of their important role in service to the State. Labour Youth feels that the responsibilities of the RDF should be increased to performing roles such as cash-in-transit protection.

Self-Determination

30. *Scotland*: Labour Youth calls on the British Government to deliver on promises of further devolution made in the final days of the recent Scottish Independence Referendum.

31. *Catalonia*: Labour Youth condemns any attempt by the Spanish Government to block a Catalonian Independence Referendum.

Section Eight – Health

Universal Healthcare

1. *Healthcare as Human Right*: Labour Youth affirm that healthcare is a human right and endorses the concept of universal healthcare.

2. *Private Hospital Subsidy*: Labour Youth oppose the spending of public money on subsidising the building and maintenance of private hospitals, believing that this money should be spent on public healthcare.

3. *Provision of Healthcare*: Labour Youth believe that healthcare should be provided based on clinical needs, rather than on the ability to pay.

4. *NTPF*: Labour Youth do not support the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) as it undermines the concept of universal healthcare and commits public money and patients to the private sector. Labour Youth therefore supports the phasing out of the NTPF.

Contraception, Abortion and Sexual Health

5. *Morning-after Pill*: Labour Youth believes that the morning-after pill should be available over the counter, without the need for a prescription. A standard price of €10 should be set for accessing the morning-after pill. It should be available ‘over-the-counter’ and without permission for pharmacists to refuse to dispense it on grounds of ‘conscientious objection’.

6. *Crisis Pregnancy Agencies*: Labour Youth condemns and campaigns against rogue crisis pregnancy agencies that offer false information to women.

7. *Abortion*: Labour Youth believes that abortion should be legal in Ireland, in order to:

- Put an end to unsafe abortions being performed in Ireland;
- Put an end to the economic discrimination that prohibits women who cannot afford to travel to the UK from having an abortion;

- Give women control over their own fertility;
- Ensure no woman is ever forced to risk her life due to complications resulting from continuing a pregnancy.

8. *Reproductive Rights Campaigning and Gender Identity*: Labour Youth notes that it is not only those who identify as women who require full reproductive autonomy, but all those who are female assigned at birth. Labour Youth shall ensure this is acknowledged in campaigning for abortion rights.

9. *Contraception*: Labour Youth believe that value added tax should not be charged on contraception.

10. *STI Screening*: Labour Youth call for the expansion of STI screening and treatment facilities in Ireland, particularly in rural areas.

Mental Health

11. *Mental Health Services*: Labour Youth believes that free mental health services must be easily available and accessible to everyone, as per the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which has been ratified by Ireland. The Labour Youth Campaigns Officer shall petition the Department of Health to provide greater resources for mental health services, as necessary.

12. *Combating Stigma*: Labour Youth notes with concern the rise in people suffering from Mental Health issues in Ireland. Labour Youth further notes the continuing stigma surrounding Mental Health and the lack of education and awareness highlighting the even the most common Mental Health issues. Labour Youth supports correct education as the best means of combating this stigma. The Labour Youth Campaigns Officer and Equality Co-Ordinator shall run an education and awareness-raising campaign on this issue, building links with organisations and youth groups that share this goal.

13. *Suicide Support Services*: Labour Youth recognises that Ireland has high rates of suicides, particularly amongst young people, and therefore calls for an increase in the support services made available in Ireland.

14. *Mental Health Investment*: Labour Youth calls for the following policies to be adopted in the area of mental health:

- Increasing Child and Mental Health Service (CAMHS) staffing levels to no less than that recommended in the government's Vision for Change policy document
- Extending the Counselling in Primary Care service to non-medical card holders and extending the maximum age of eligibility to at least 26
- The provision of 24/7 crisis mental health services in at least all major towns and cities in Ireland.
- Future state mental health policy to be mindful of the need not to abandon people availing of mental health services once they age out of the system.

Scientific Research

15. *Stem Cell Research*: Labour Youth supports the funding of embryonic stem cell research through the Science Foundation of Ireland.

16. *Commoditization of Scientific Advances*: Labour Youth condemn the commoditisation of scientific advances in the health sector, believing that this is incompatible with achieving the widest possible distribution of medication.

Blood / Organ Donation and Vaccines

17. *Organ Donation*: Labour Youth supports the changing of Ireland's organ donation system from an "opt-in" to "opt-out" model.

18. *HPV Vaccines*: Labour Youth applauds the HPV-Gardasil vaccination programme for girls of school going age, and supports its extension to also include boys of school going age in light of recent research.

19. *MSM Blood Donation*: Labour Youth recognises the lifting of the total ban on Men who have Sex with Men (MSM) donating blood as a positive step in the right direction. However, we believe that the new system is still discriminatory. As it stands gay and bisexual men will have to wait one year before being able to donate blood after last engaging in anal or oral sex.

Labour Youth's position is to reject any blood ban or deferral by the Irish Blood Transfusion Service against MSM.

Drugs and Alcohol

20. *Drug Treatment Services*: Labour Youth calls for greater provision of drug treatment services in Ireland.

21. *Heroin Addiction*: Labour Youth supports the introduction of a progressive heroin treatment programme including confidential needle exchanges to help heroin users to combat their addiction

22. *Alcohol Sponsorship*: Labour Youth supports the phasing out of alcohol advertising.

23. *Alcohol Pricing*: Labour Youth opposes the setting of a minimum price for alcohol and instead calls for greater objective education of young people on the subject, as well as stronger supports for those who suffer from alcohol addiction.

24. *Cannabis*: Labour Youth supports the legalisation of cannabis use and its regulated cultivation for personal or commercial purposes. Labour Youth further supports allowing for businesses to obtain "Cannabis Coffee Shop" licenses, but does not support cannabis being made available to minors or being advertised at sporting events or through other media targeting solely or partially at children.

Student Nurses and Midwives

25. *Fair Pay*: Labour Youth notes with concern the hourly pay of €6.49 for student nurses and midwives during their final year placements while working the same hours and being expected to complete the same work as staff nurses and midwives. This is less than the minimum wage. Labour Youth therefore calls on the Government to reinstate the minimum wage for nurses and midwives on their placement.

Section Nine – Housing

Housing

1. *Social Housing*: Labour Youth considers housing to be a right and not a privilege. Therefore, Labour Youth supports a social housing programme that would see the stock of social housing in Ireland increased.

2. *Housing Policy for 2016*: Labour Youth calls on the Government to implement its Housing Policy Statement by the stated deadline of 2016:

“The Government’s Housing Policy Statement has an overall objective to enable all house-holds access good quality housing appropriate to their circumstances and in their particular community of choice. It acknowledges that delivering better outcomes for vulnerable and disadvantaged households is a key priority for the Government. In this context, a continued focus on tackling the root causes of homelessness and maintaining an integrated and efficient approach to service delivery is required.”

3. *Deposit Protection Scheme*: Labour Youth supports the implementation of a Deposit Protection Scheme. Labour Youth believes that a deposit protection scheme, where deposits are held by an independent third party like the PRTB (Private Residential Tenancies Board) or private provider and not by the landlord would lead to the prompt return of deposits and protect tenants and landlords alike.

4. *Rent Allowance*: Labour Youth believes the current Rent Allowance Scheme has become inefficient and needs to be reformed so as to meet the challenges of today. Many People on Rent Allowance are facing homelessness due to landlords increasing their rent and making it impossible for them to continue living there. Furthermore, Labour Youth supports the removal of restrictions that allow for tenants benefitting from rent allowance to be denied housing on that ground.

5. *Housing Law Review*: Labour Youth condemns the actions of many negligent developers during the so called ‘property bubble’ and calls for a root and branch review of all law in the building and development sector.

6. *Kenny Report*: Labour Youth supports the implementation of the 1973 Kenny Report, particularly in the belief that its recommendations could be an effective safeguard against future unchecked explosions in property prices.

7. *Homelessness*: Labour Youth calls on the government to initiate on the below proposals before the end of the life-time of this government. :

- Pledge commitment to homeless services that no further cuts shall be made to their funding, as they are already struggling to deal with the increasing figures who seek their assistance.
- Call a referendum on the insertion of economic and social rights into the Constitution.
- Develop tax treatments that would create a social dividend for landlords and companies that make their accommodation available specifically to help end long-term homelessness.
- Increase Rent Supplement to better reflect the reality of rent levels and measures to address the problems faced by young people who may find themselves homeless.
- Instigate annual reviews of rent supplement rates. Immediately review current rates, set in line with market average rates and introduce the change on Budget Day.
- Initiate a Social Housing Programme that would see 40,000 new social housing units constructed by 2018, fulfilling 50% of minimum demand for housing generally.
- Initiate publicly-funded regeneration schemes in those social housing complexes that are substandard and segregated.
- Increase the 20% requirement for social housing construction under Part V of the Planning and Development Act to 33%, while closing the loopholes currently open to developers.

8. *Addressing the Housing Crisis*: Labour Youth condemns the failure to include an exhaustive social housing package in Budget 2017, and condemns the inclusion a combination of measures relating to tax rebates for property purchases and tax exemptions for single-room letting, that will further exacerbate demand and price levels in the housing market without increasing supply.

Labour Youth therefore calls for an emergency €1bn package of investment to address the country's housing crisis, according to the same conditions laid out in the Irish Congress of Trade Unions' pre-Budget 2017 submission

9. *Property Levy*: Labour Youth calls for a 3% annual levy on all property that does not serve as a person or family's principal residence.

In practice this would mean that all empty properties (i.e. Vacant Houses/ apartments, derelict sights, 2nd, 3rd and 4th homes etc.) would be charged a rate of

3% in accordance with the value of the property. The levy would not be paid by people in the process of building, attempting to rent or sell the property, nor would it come into effect regarding inherited houses.

Section Ten – Justice and Equality

Justice and Equality

1. *Commitment to Equality*: Labour Youth strive for a more equal and fair society in all regards. Labour Youth rejects all forms of discrimination regardless of sex, social class, race, ethnicity, religious or political beliefs, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, family or marital status, ability or disability.
2. *Human Rights*: Labour Youth believes in both the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights. Labour Youth further believes that human rights should be enshrined into the Irish Constitution. Labour Youth firmly believes that LGBT rights are human rights.
3. *Persons with Disabilities*: Labour Youth believes in full accessibility for people with disabilities. Labour Youth calls on the Irish Government to provide more awareness through education.
4. *Race Relations Act and Commission*: Labour Youth notes with concern the lack of legislation on discrimination on the basis of race, outside of employment. Labour Youth calls on the government to introduce a Race Relations Act that will outlaw discrimination on the basis of race, colour, nationality and national origin in the fields of employment, the provision of goods and services, education and public functions. Labour Youth also calls on the government to set up a Commission to review existing legislation and hear appeals.
5. *Religious Discrimination*: Labour Youth proposes that the state endeavour to ensure that no school or hospital worker has to fear workplace discrimination due to their own religious convictions, or lack of.
6. *Stardust Tragedy Inquiry*: Labour Youth remembers with sorrow the events in the Stardust nightclub on February 14 1981 which resulted in the loss of 48 young lives and 215 injuries. Labour Youth welcomes the Coffey report which clears probable arson as the cause of this fire. Labour Youth further notes that are in public record that some fire exits were locked and many more were blocked off. Labour Youth believes that justice has still to be done and calls on the government to set up a new inquiry into the Stardust nightclub fire.

7. *Funding for victims of sexual violence*: Labour Youth condemns recent cuts in public funding for services that helps victims of sexual violence and calls for an immediate increase in public funding for these services

8. *Domestic Violence Act 1996*: Labour Youth calls for the government to amend to improve the Domestic Violence Act 1996 to include instances of emotional domestic abuse.

9. *Animal Cruelty*: Labour Youth notes the low incarceration rate and/or paltry fines imposed on those charged with animal cruelty. Labour Youth calls for higher fines and longer prison sentences imposed on those who commit such heinous acts and calls for an update on the Protection of Animals Act 1911 to reflect this.

10. *Prison Reform*: Labour Youth notes with concern the problems in our prison system such as poor literacy levels, poor mental health, addiction, overcrowding and homelessness following release. Illegal drugs are widespread and there is wide awareness of rising levels of inter-prisoner violence.

Labour Youth therefore calls on the government to meet the demands made by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) and the United Nations Human Rights Committee in relation to our prison system.

Women's Issues

11. *Woman's Right to Choose*: Labour Youth believes in a woman's right to choose. Labour Youth therefore supports ridding the Irish Constitution of Article 40.3.3. Labour Youth supports the work of the Abortion Rights Campaign.

12. *Coalition to Repeal the 8th*: Labour Youth recognizes the importance of organising and campaigning with likeminded groups to ensure a referendum is achieved and passed and hence is a member of the Coalition to Repeal the 8th Amendment.

13. *Women in Politics*: Labour Youth notes with concern the lack of women in the Irish Oireachtas and throughout Irish politics. Labour Youth supports a constitutional amendment to introduce a mechanism to improve gender representation in both houses of the Oireachtas. Such a mechanism would require an equal number of

men and women in positions of representation, where possible, and where not possible, for the bias to be in favour of women. This mechanism can be removed by the Oireachtas only after it has been utilised in four general elections.

Traveller Community

14. *Traveller Community*: Labour Youth notes with concern both the level of discrimination experienced by the Irish Traveller Community, and the disproportionate budgetary cuts to the this group. Labour Youth calls on the Irish Government to provide Irish Travellers with adequate resources for education, accommodation and employment.

15. *Irish Traveller Ethnicity Recognition*: Labour Youth believe that Irish Travellers are an ethnic minority and calls on the Minister for Justice to officially recognise this fact.

Family and Children

16. *Fathers' Rights*: Labour Youth supports the abolition of all forms of legal discrimination against single fathers, and believes full guardianship rights should be awarded to any father on the birth certificate or natural father, who although not named as a parent on the birth certificate, has been acting in loco parentis for a period of at least four months. Furthermore the current system where both parents need to be present at the Registration Office to sign a declaration recognising both parents on the birth certificate should be replaced with a system where a father's name, instead, can be automatically registered to the birth cert by the mother. This recognises that in the cases of rape, abuse, violence or sperm donations that fathers should not be automatically registered to the birth cert nor automatically receive full guardianship.

17. *Child Beauty Pageants*: Labour Youth believes children are not emotionally equipped to deal with the consequences of being participants in beauty pageants. Labour Youth calls for a ban of all beauty pageants involving participants under the age of sixteen years old.

18. *Adoption and Fostering Legislation*: Labour Youth notes with concern that the current legislation regarding adoption and fostering is largely ineffective. At present

there are a high number of people applying to adopt, and there are a large number of children who need to be adopted, these two facts should cancel each other out. Labour Youth calls for investigation into the current process and for necessary amendments to be implemented to improve the effectiveness of current legislation.

Sex Work, Human Trafficking and Asylum

19. Sex Work: Labour Youth calls for the decriminalisation of sex work to allow for the regulation of the industry. Labour Youth proposes that:

- All sex workers, as well as brothels which employ a limited number of workers, be decriminalised.
- Sex workers have the right to organise, are facilitated to form unions and are integrated into existing industrial relations structures and processes such as Joint Labour Committees.
- The Health Service is trained on the issues sex workers face in regard to sexually transmitted infection and mental health services.

20. Human Trafficking: Labour Youth believes human trafficking to be abhorrent and the supports for human trafficking prevention to be grossly insufficient. Labour Youth therefore believes that:

- A special unit of An Gardaí Síochána should be established to combat human trafficking;
- Victims of human trafficking should be entitled to the right to seek asylum, housing and work;
- Victims of human trafficking should be entitled to immunity from crimes such as entering the country illegally;
- The Irish Government should provide more funding for organisations such as Ruhama which provide counselling and support to victims of human trafficking.

21. Asylum Seekers: Labour Youth notes with extreme concern the treatment of asylum seekers in Ireland. Labour Youth calls on the Irish Government to:

- Replace the Office of the Refugee Application Commission with an independent human rights body which shall ensure individuals are assessed on grounds of international human rights law, which have been ratified by Ireland;
- Ensure asylum seekers are able to access work in Ireland while they are going through the asylum seeking process, which is standard practice all of Europe and in line with the Council of Europe's recommendations to Ireland;

- Ensure asylum seekers are entitled to more than the measly sum of €19.10 per week;
- Take action to speed up and amend the application to ensure a higher rate of acceptance for asylum seekers.

22. *Direct Provision*: Labour Youth notes the continuing plight of those seeking refuge in Ireland under the 'Direct Provision' system. Labour Youth calls on the Minister of Justice to immediately cease the continuing detention of those within this system, and for an alternative and humane system to be introduced to process those seeking refuge in Ireland.

LGBT Issues

23. *LGBT Discrimination*: Labour Youth notes with extreme concern the discrimination and prejudice experienced by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans* community. Labour Youth reject all forms of discrimination against people for reasons of sexual orientation in all forms.

24. *Equality in Employment*: Labour Youth supports the Equality Employment Bill which criminalises discrimination against members of the LGBT community in areas of employment.

25. *Marriage Equality*: Labour Youth supports full marriage equality for LGBT couples.

26. *Transphobia*: Labour Youth rejects all forms of Transphobia.

27. *Gender recognition*: Labour Youth commends the introduction of gender recognition legislation in Argentina based on the 'declaration model', which allows citizens to change their legal gender through an application process that requires only a solemn declaration of the person's intent to live in their identified gender. Labour Youth notes that our EU neighbour Denmark also introduced legislation in September 2014, based on the Argentina model. Labour Youth believes this type of legislation is fully respectful of human rights, in a way that legislation requiring medical or psychiatric diagnoses of ill health can never be.

Labour Youth notes the statement by Minister for Social Protection Joan Burton TD that the long-awaited Irish gender recognition legislation will be introduced before the end of the year. Labour Youth regrets that the Gender Recognition Advisory Group (GRAG), set up by the Fianna Fáil-led government in 2010, was provided with inadequate terms of reference, and further regrets that the GRAG based its recommendations on the UK Gender Recognition Act, despite the legitimate concerns that the trans* community has with that law and the incompatibilities between that law and existing Irish legislation, e.g. divorce law. Labour Youth calls for the Gender Recognition Bill 2014 to be based on Argentina's gender recognition law, with all of the rights and protocols assumed in that law.

Constitutional Reform

28. *Constitutional Amendments:* Labour Youth proposes a number of amendments to the Constitution, to:

- Replace the current Preamble, removing all religious references;
- Ensure that the article guaranteeing religious freedom and religious rights is free of bias or religious invocation;
- Ensure that non-religious institutions, particularly in education, are given an equal footing in the constitution to religious institutions;
- Replace blasphemy as an offence with hate speech;
- Remove all references to public morality, except in reference to the state's conduct in international affairs;
- Remove religious references from the rest of the document, including oaths of office, while noting the right of office holders to append a religious invocation to their oath;
- Reverse the clause on the women's place in the home, replacing it with a clause seeking to promote the place of women in public and economic life should that be their choice;
- Make the Constitution gender-neutral in its description of officers.

29. *Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Amendment:* Labour Youth supports the Labour Party's role in ensuring that the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was signed by the government on 23rd of March, 2012. Labour Youth calls on the government to ensure full recognition of Economic, Social and Cultural rights through constitutional amendment.

Criminal Assets

30. *Returning criminal profits to affected communities:* Labour Youth recognises the role that good community faculties have to play in preventing young people from falling into anti-social behaviour and crime. Labour Youth notes that any money or assets seized by the Criminal Assets Bureau are currently returned directly to the central exchequer. Labour Youth therefore calls for a scheme whereby the money seized by the CAB is used to fund youth focused community facilities through local authorities so that the profits of crime should be returned to the communities from which they were stolen.

Section Eleven – Northern Ireland

Constitutional Status of Northern Ireland

1. *United Ireland*: Labour Youth supports the concept of a United Ireland based around the principle of consent outlined in the Good Friday Agreement.

Government of the Republic of Ireland

2. *Minister of State for Cross-Border Cooperation*: Labour Youth believes that in order to increase cross-border cooperation in all aspects of the functions of government, the creation of a Minister of State for Cross Border Cooperation is needed. The Minister would have the responsibility to engage with the Northern Irish Executive and seek to expand cooperation in all areas and report back to cabinet so as to increase the level of forward-planning outside of the already existing inter-parliamentary bodies.

Northern Irish Labour Party

3. *Joint Irish-British Labour Operation*: In order to offer voters in Northern Ireland a choice beyond the old politics of Orange and Green, Labour Youth call on the Irish Labour Party and the British Labour Party to jointly organise in Northern Ireland by forming the Northern Irish Labour Party. Members resident in Northern Ireland who join the Northern Irish Labour Party will automatically be members of both the Irish Labour Party and the British Labour Party, with all rights afforded to individual members as set by the two respective parties.

The Northern Irish Labour Party will run candidates at Local, Northern Ireland Assembly, Westminster and European Parliament elections and will sit as Labour Party members in all institutions. The Northern Irish Labour Party will, as a regional structure of both mother parties, hold an annual conference at which members will elect a leader, a deputy leader and members of the executive of the Northern Irish Labour Party.

Once the Northern Irish Labour Party is established and is successful electorally in the Northern Irish Assembly, rules should be changed to ensure that the party leader is an MLA and will become the lead voice of progressive, non-sectarian, left wing politics in the Northern Irish Assembly.

Northern Irish Assembly

4. *Northern Irish Assembly*: Labour Youth believes that while power-sharing and the power sharing arrangements in the Northern Irish Assembly are key parts of the Peace Process in Northern Ireland, the assembly as a form of parliamentary representation is dysfunctional.

5. *Designations*: Labour Youth calls for the removal of the official designation in the Assembly as “Nationalist, Unionist and Other” as it serves only to further divide politics in Northern Ireland into Orange and Green.

6. *Official Opposition*: Labour Youth further feels that the failure of the Assembly to deliver for the people of Northern Ireland and the drop of in the participation in election is linked to the lack of opposition within the Assembly. Therefore Labour Youth calls for the retention of the power sharing arrangement, while the official designation procedure is still in operation, but featuring some form of opposition so as to hold the Northern Irish Executive to account.

Flags and Emblems

7. *Flags and Emblems*: Labour Youth supports the decision of Belfast City Council to only fly the Union Jack on seventeen designated days a year. Labour Youth condemns the failure of mainstream unionism to address the concerns of the flag protests, who feel they are marginalised in society. However, Labour Youth believes true progress can only occur when we discard symbols and regalia that are offensive to each other and move towards building a classless society.

8. *Haas Talks*: Labour Youth support the Haas Talks and are hopefully of an outcome that will help society progress in a way that tackles sectarianism and improves community relations.

Economics, Transport and Health

9. *Economic Benefit of Unification*: Labour Youth believes the economic interests of all the people of the island of Ireland are served by unification.

10. *Combatting Poverty*: Labour Youth notes with concern the failure of the Assembly to bring about a meaningful reduction in the level of poverty and deprivation in Northern Ireland. Labour Youth is particularly concerned at the level of child poverty experience in Northern Ireland, with the Nevin Economic Research Institute finding that one in four children grow up in poverty. In response, Labour Youth calls on the British and Irish Governments, in conjunction with the Northern Irish Executive, to strategically invest in poverty black spots with schemes like the Youth Guarantee to reduce long term unemployment and social deprivation in these areas.

11. *Austerity Measures*: Labour Youth opposes the austerity agenda being inflicted on the citizens living in Northern Ireland by the Conservative-led government in Westminster and facilitated by the parties in the Assembly. In particular Labour Youth condemns any cuts to social welfare which is already insufficient to maintain a decent standard of living.

In particular, Labour Youth is firmly opposed to the Bedroom Tax and the benefit cap, which seek to punish the most vulnerable in society, such as carers, the unemployed and those in receipt of disability allowance. Labour Youth further condemns the actions of pay day loans in charging extortionate interest rates.

12. *Cross-Border Economic Development Plan*: Labour Youth supports the Cross-Border Economic Development Plan for the area of Ulster, West Connaught and North Leinster.

13. *Cross-Border Train Routes*: Labour Youth asks that the Minister for Transport engage with his counterpart in Northern Ireland to investigate the possibility of reopening the Derry to Dublin train, alongside the development of a Derry to Sligo route as part of an overall development plan for the northwest of the island of Ireland.

14. *Free Transport for Students*: Labour Youth recognises the high cost of living and financial burden faced by students. Labour Youth therefore calls on the Government to open the Free Travel Scheme to students to alleviate this pressure.

15. *A5 Constriction Project*: Labour Youth fully supports the A5 construction project between Derry and Aghnacloy. As part of the main route between Derry and Dublin, Labour Youth believes that further road improvement to the highest of

standards is needed to ensure economic investment occurs in the northwest of the island of Ireland.

16. *Cooperation in Healthcare*: Labour Youth feels that expanding cross-border cooperation in the area of healthcare provision is desirable. In particular, it would cut down on the level of stress experienced by those in the Border Mid-West region who would otherwise have to travel to Dublin to avail of tertiary services such as cancer treatment and the treatment of Cystic Fibrosis.

Culture and Sport

17. *IFA-FAI Merger*: Recognising the power of sport to bring communities together and create reconciliation, Labour Youth believes that a merger of the Irish Football Association and Football Association of Ireland is necessary to further normalisation on this island, looking to the examples of the All-Ireland rugby and cricket teams in fostering cross-community spirit.

18. *GAA*: Labour Youth recognises the role played by the Gaelic Athletic Association in the struggle for the revival of Irish culture. However, Labour Youth feels there is an endemic problem when it comes to the alienation of the Unionist community in Northern Ireland, as highlighted by a survey in 2013 which stated that only 1% of people describing themselves as Protestant/Unionist had attended a GAA match. Labour Youth feels that in order to continue its programme of community outreach in Northern Ireland, the GAA should discontinue using flags, songs and symbols that are offensive to the Unionist community in Northern Ireland.

19. *De-politicisation of Sport*: Labour Youth feels in the interest of reconciliation the GAA and other sporting bodies should adopt the approach of the International Olympic Committee and oppose the use of any sport or athlete for political purposes and free of political message or an agenda.

Education and Social Affairs

20. *CAO/UCAS*: In the interest of facilitating cross border study, Labour Youth believes that applications to Third Level institutions in Northern Ireland should be facilitated through the Central Applications Office. Similarly, it is felt that students within Northern Ireland should be able to apply to Third Level institutions within the Republic of Ireland using the UCAS System.

21. *Student Supports*: Labour Youth calls for the maintenance grant and similar supports for students to be extended to those studying in Northern Ireland beyond the current tax that can be claimed back on tuition fees.

22. *Secular Education*: Labour Youth supports the abolition of the 11 plus and the secularisation of education in Northern Ireland. Labour Youth feels that one of the most important means of desegregating and integrating society is through the coeducation of children in a manner than is respectful to both constitutional traditions.

23. *Abortion*: Labour Youth acknowledges that the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929 allows for an abortion to take place where there is a serious risk to long term physical or mental health of the mother. However, Labour Youth notes that this does not grant the right to a termination in the case of Fatal Foetal Abnormalities. In line with long standing Labour Youth principles, Labour Youth supports the extension of the Abortion Act of 1967 to Northern Ireland.

24. *Marriage Equality*: Labour Youth supports the principle of Marriage Equality and fully believes that legislation should be introduced in the Assembly in order to extend the right to marriage to Northern Ireland.

Justice and Policing

25. *Justice System*: Labour Youth full endorses and supports the Police Service of Northern Ireland, as well as the courts and judicial system of Northern Ireland.

26. *Unarmed Police Force*: Though Labour Youth recognises that PSNI officers require firearms in the current climate due to extreme threats to their safety, Labour Youth strongly supports, at such a point that the terrorist risk is downgraded, the PSNI engaging in a transition towards being an unarmed police force.

27. *Communities and the PSNI*: Labour Youth supports the attempts to reach a 50:50 membership of the Police Service of Northern Ireland as this can only serve to increase the legitimacy of them as a police force. Labour Youth applauds the attempts by the PSNI to identify with both communities with an example being the use of symbols which resonates with both communities in the new insignia of the force.

28. *Terrorist Attacks*: Labour Youth condemns in the strongest possible terms attacks on the state forces of Northern Ireland by terrorist organisations of any affiliation.

29. *Parades Commission*: Labour Youth supports the Parades Commission and believes that its rulings are in the interest of allowing the marching season to pass off peacefully.

30. *Orange Order*: Labour Youth condemns the Orange Order for its role in precipitating and facilitating public disorder in its reaction to the ruling of the Parades Commission and for its defiance of the rule of law.

31. *Paramilitary Decommissioning of Arms*: Labour Youth calls on all remaining paramilitary groups to decommission and put their arms beyond use, and to attempt to achieve their goals within the peace process and the political and constitutional status of Northern Ireland.

32. *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*: Labour Youth calls for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in order to establish the truth and facts about the Troubles in a fair, impartial and non-punitive manner, in the vein of the South African model.

33. *Paramilitary Disclosure of Information re Victims*: Labour Youth calls on all paramilitary groups to come forward to disclose the information surrounding those victims of conflict whose families are still seeking answers surrounding their deaths.

34. *Inquiries into State Collusion with Paramilitaries*: Labour Youth calls for a full inquiry into all accusations of collusion and collaboration between British Security Forces, the Royal Ulster Constabulary and Loyalist paramilitaries including the murder of Rosemary Nelson and the accusation that senior members of the Thatcher government were aware that there was a systematic problem with collusion at the time of the death of Pat Finucane and failed to act.

35. *Inquiry into Alleged “Shoot to Kill” Policy*: Labour Youth calls for a full inquiry into the allegations of the operation of a “shoot to kill” policy by the British Security Forces.

Section Twelve – Political Reform

Local Government

1. *City and County Managers*: Labour Youth supports the devolution of the powers of city and county managers back to democratically-elected local representatives.

2. *Councillors' Powers*: Labour Youth supports giving councillors' legal powers to seek reports from all providers of public services in their area.

3. *Strategic Planning Guidelines*: Labour Youth supports replacing strategic planning guidelines with a democratically-decided regional or city plan.

4. *County Boundaries*: Labour Youth calls for consideration to be made for the redrawing of currently-existing local government jurisdictions to move past county identity as the primary basis for local government structures.

5. *Greater Dublin Authority*: Labour Youth calls for the establishment of a Greater Dublin Authority with responsibility over Transport, Planning, Environment, Climate Change and Waste Management, Education, Policing and Crime Strategy, Fire and Emergency Services, Tourism, Water Provision and other functions seen fit to devolve from central government departments and quangos in the City of Dublin and Counties of Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal and South Dublin.

Labour Youth further calls for the Authority to be governed by a directly elected Mayor supervised by a directly elected "Dublin Assembly". Labour Youth opposes any attempt to take powers away from the existing local authorities in the Dublin Region but believes that the Government, Authority and local councils examine the possibility of shared services being provided by the Greater Dublin Authority on behalf of local councils.

6. *Directly-elected Mayors*: Labour Youth supports the setting up of directly-elected mayoral positions, and regional authorities, similar to those outlined above, for the rest of the country in addition to the Dublin area.

Gender and Politics

7. *Internal Gender Quotas*: Labour Youth supports and welcomes the Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Act 2012, and continues to support its aim of increasing the number of women being proposed by political parties for General Elections, though our policy goes further. Any reform of the Dáil, Seanad or local electoral systems should consider the accessibility of those institutions to all citizens. Labour Youth supports the continuation of Labour Party internal gender quotas for the selection of candidates.

8. *Gender Quotas*: Labour Youth notes with concern the lack of women in the Irish Oireachtas and throughout Irish politics. Labour Youth supports a constitutional amendment to introduce a mechanism to improve gender representation in both houses of the Oireachtas. Such a mechanism would require an equal number of men and women in positions of representation, where possible, and where not possible, for the bias to be in favour of women. This mechanism can be removed by the Oireachtas only after it has been utilised in four general elections.

Voting Rights

9. *Voter Registration*: Labour Youth Notes the procedural difficulties that can occur when registering to vote, and the negative effect this has on the democratic process. Labour Youth further notes a general apathy towards registering to vote among young people. Labour Youth recognizes the success automatic voter registration has brought to many democracies by making voting more accessible. Labour Youth calls on the government to introduce an automatic voter registration process via the Personal Public Service Number system.

10. *Voting Rights for Emigrants*: Labour Youth notes that Ireland unlike the vast majority of democratic countries, does not facilitate Irish people living abroad to vote in Irish national elections. The OECD considers that extending the franchise to citizens living abroad improves the well-being of emigrants and helps countries to remain connected with their emigrant populations.

Labour Youth also acknowledges that the European Commission views Ireland's current position as undermining the concept of free movement within the EU. Labour Youth therefore calls for the franchise for national election to be extended to Irish citizens living in Northern Ireland and abroad. For elections to Dáil Éireann this should be implemented through a system of reserved constituencies.

11. *Votes at 16*: Labour Youth supports lowering the voting age to sixteen. We believe that young people are qualified to their part in making the decisions that will usually affect them more in the longer term than older citizens.

12. *Compulsory Voting*: Labour Youth believes that voting is a civic responsibility, as well as a right, and therefore supports compulsory voting as a measure to dissuade people from apathy, and ensure that all people in Ireland are compelled to influence public policy with their opinion and interests. In cases where citizens and non-citizen residents are overseas or can't attend their polling station for whatever reason, Labour Youth calls on the Government to allow postal votes to be granted. Labour Youth does, however, believe in a person's right to spoil their ballot.

The President

13. *Presidential Term*: Labour Youth sees no reason to decrease the length of Presidential terms.

14. *Presidential Age Requirement*: Labour Youth supports amending the constitution to reduce the minimum age requirement for the Presidency, so that it is equal to the minimum age requirement for TDs and Senators.

15. *Nomination of the President*: Labour Youth supports replacing the current methods of nomination with a requirement that prospective candidates receive the signatures of 1-2% of registered electors, with the precise number being set by the relevant authority before a Presidential Election.

16. *Power to Convene Parliamentary Meetings*: Labour Youth proposes amending the Constitution to allow the President to convene a meeting of all parliamentary leaders from Dáil Éireann in two situations: firstly, to seek their advice on a request from the Taoiseach for a General Election; secondly, to host a discussion on possible government coalitions should Dáil Éireann fail to nominate a Taoiseach following a General Election.

17. *The President and Ordinary Referendum*: Labour Youth believes that the Ordinary Referendum should be utilised by the President on occasion, and its use encouraged by a major reform of Seanad Éireann to allow a non-governmental majority to form around an issue in that house. We do not propose to scrap or amend the process for holding such a referendum.

18. *Council of State*: Labour Youth supports amending the Constitution so that the membership of the Council of State is changed by:

- The addition of the Leaders of parliamentary groupings in Dáil Éireann (including the Technical Group but excluding the party/parties from which the Taoiseach and Tánaiste are drawn);
- The addition of four Senators, elected by Seanad Éireann, at the beginning of each new Seanad and Presidential term;
- The removal of the Ceann Comhairle and the Cathaoirleach.

Pay and Pensions

19. *Pay and Pensions*: Labour Youth seeks the introduction of a single Oireachtas and Government pay and pension scheme, under which a person's pension increases with their length of service to the Oireachtas or the government, regardless of the office they serve in, and under which a person cannot claim their pension before the state retirement age, or while they are still serving in the Oireachtas or the Government.

Dáil Éireann

20. *Whip System*: Labour Youth calls on the major parties' backbench TDs to unite in opposing the absolutist whip system, working together through collective action to bring it down. Labour Youth calls on the Parliamentary Labour Party to reform its current whip system and the wording of the party pledge.

21. *Parliamentary Questions*: Labour Youth proposes an extension of the parliamentary question system, so that it shall be a statutory duty of any body established by or under statute, or with a majority ownership or funding by the State, to submit to the same parliamentary questions regime as applies to Government Departments.

22. *Length of Dáil*: Labour Youth supports amending the constitution to reduce the maximum term of a Dáil from seven years to five.

23. *Size of Dáil:* Labour Youth proposes amending the constitution, such that the number of deputies elected to Dáil Éireann is equal to the rounded cubed root of the population, as recorded in the most recent census.

24. *Ministers and the Oireachtas:* Labour Youth proposes amending the constitution, such that for the duration of their period in office, Ministers are replaced by alternates for their regular position in the Oireachtas.

Seanad Éireann

25. *Seanad Reform:* Labour Youth is committed to the reform of Seanad Éireann, particularly following the rejection by the people of its proposed abolition. Labour Youth further believes that any reform of the Seanad must be constitutional in nature, removing some of the inherent inequalities in its makeup and inadequacies of its role. Labour Youth supports reforming the Seanad along the principles that:

- Every citizen must have an equal vote in Seanad Elections;
- The Taoiseach cannot continue to appoint Senators;
- The Seanad cannot be allowed to present a partisan rival to the Dáil;
- The Seanad must be an alternative house of the Oireachtas, not a backup, for candidates;
- The Seanad may have more powers conferred upon it, but cannot be allowed to hold the Government collectively to account, as that must remain solely the job of Dáil Éireann.
- An Irish Diaspora panel be established to be contested and elected by Irish citizens permanently non-resident on the Island of Ireland.
- A Foreign-Born Resident Panel be established to be contested by and elected by permanent residents of Ireland who were not born on the Island of Ireland. The candidates and electors may, or may not be, citizens of Ireland.

Electoral Reform

24. *Electoral Commission:* Labour Youth supports giving constitutional footing to a neutral Electoral Commission. Labour Youth further supports bringing voter registration under the control of the Electoral Commission.

25. *Partial List System:* Labour Youth supports introducing a list element to Dáil elections, without regional or national thresholds.

26. *Ballot Reform*: Labour Youth supports following the Australian model for ballots, whereby the candidates and parties are listed differently on most ballots, according to an algorithm guaranteeing that the ballot sheets do not offer any one party an advantage. Labour Youth also supports grouping party colleagues together on the ballot paper.

27. *Polling Dates*: Labour Youth calls for legislation to be passed ensuring that local and general election as well as referendum and Presidential election polling days occur on the weekend to ensure that students and those normally working during the week have the chance to vote. If this is not feasible, Labour Youth calls for measures to be put in place to ensure the same outcome.

Money and Politics

28. *Political Donations*: Labour Youth supports completely banning corporate donations to political parties and candidates, and to severely limit the maximum amount an individual can donate to a party. Labour Youth proposes allowing NGOs or representative organisations, such as trade unions, to operate outside of such a ban.

29. *Financing of Political Parties*: Labour Youth believes political parties should be funded mostly through accountable public financing.

Freedom of Information and Whistleblowers

30. *Freedom of Information*: Labour Youth supports restoring the Freedom of Information Act to its original form, and to extend its scope to all semi-state and state-owned bodies.

31. *Whistleblowers*: Labour Youth supports the introduction of effective whistleblowers' legislation.

Federalisation

32. *The Federal Republic*: Labour Youth calls for a new constitution and a new republic for a new century. Labour Youth advocates the establishment of a

democratic socialist, federal republic, which can provide democratic engagement for participants in Irish society at the most regional and subsidiary levels.

Labour Youth advocates the establishment of a federal republic in Ireland, including the establishment of a central government in Dublin, for the administration of basic laws and national affairs; along with regional parliaments in the four historic provinces, which will administer federal matters, including education, transport, health and ecological affairs.

Labour Party Reform

33. *Special Delegate Conferences:* Labour Youth notes the flaws with the Special Delegate Conferences which the party uses as a mechanism to choose whether the Labour Party should enter government e.g the Programme for Government being distributed to the delegates less than one hour before voting.

Labour Youth proposes a new mechanism whereby all members, fully paid up for no less than 6 months before a general election, be given a vote on entering government. Such a mechanism would be modelled after the mechanism used by the Social Democratic Party of Germany which is done using a postal ballot.

Section Thirteen - Social Protection

Short-term Social Protection Policies

1. *Training and Employment Guarantees*: Labour Youth supports the Youth Guarantee proposed by the Party of European Socialists and now endorsed by the European Parliament and European Commission. However, we also believe that while the unemployment crisis is particularly severe among young people, it is not solely a youth issue.

The government should therefore introduce schemes to guarantee paid employment, training, apprenticeship or education for young people (ages 18-30) who are unemployed or are no longer in education (replacing the current JobBridge programme), but also for the long-term unemployed of all ages.

The government should also establish of programmes targeted towards supporting at those with low skill or experience levels.

The government should also target training through Solas for sectors which are currently being targeted by the IDA and Enterprise Ireland. Such employment, education and training guarantees should be paid for out of the European Social Fund and using the money currently dedicated towards JobBridge.

2. *Maintenance of Current Welfare Rates*: There should be no further cuts in either primary or secondary social protection rates. Further, the cut to Jobseeker's Allowance for under-26s should be reversed and a professional and funded evaluation to establish the impact of the cut should take place. Incremental increases to social welfare rates should be made to account for higher costs of living in different areas of the country.

3. *Jobseekers Allowance Bands*: labour Youth calls for the Labour Party to adopt a policy of resetting the JA bands to their pre-Budget 2014 status, irrespective of any change made to the weekly rates paid to those bands.

Further, Labour Youth calls for the Government to reset the JA bands to their pre-Budget 2014 status as part of the next Social Welfare Bill.

4. *No Further Targeting of Social Welfare Provision*: Attempts to save money should also not undermine in any way the principle of universalism in welfare

provision. In particular, Labour Youth opposes any attempts to introduce either means-testing or taxation for child benefit payments.

5. Increase in Self-Employed and Employers' PRSI Rates: Labour Youth believes there should be an immediate increase in the rate of Pay Related Social Insurance paid by the self-employed. The Jobs Initiative that cut the lower rate of employers' PRSI in half, set to end in 2014, should not be extended and there should initially immediately be some moderate initial increases in the rates of Employers' PRSI.

6. More Flexible Welfare Rules: Labour Youth believes people may be incentivised to take jobs by reducing the rigidity in the requirements for means-tested payments, allowing people to move more easily into employment and training and out again in short spaces of time.

7. New Universal State Pensions System: To deal with the inequality of Ireland's current pension system, Labour Youth believes a number of reforms should be introduced:

- Standard-rating of tax reliefs for all private pension funds.
- A new universal state pension for all those over 65 at the same level as the contributory state pension.
- A secondary income-linked mandatory social insurance retirement fund.

Longer-term Social Protection Policies

8. Steady Further Increase in Social Insurance: Labour Youth believes that, building on immediate increases in the rate of PRSI paid by employers and the self-employed, the Irish government should work towards a steady increase in all forms of PRSI once the economy begins to recover – bringing us into line with EU norms for levels of social insurance. The revenue from this increase in social insurance should be to pay for substantial increases in rates of social insurance as a proportion of GDP.

9. Basic Income Guarantee: Labour Youth believes Ireland should move towards the abolition of all current means-tested payment and their replacement with a basic income guarantee above the income threshold unconditionally paid to all citizens over eighteen.

Internships

10. *JobBridge*: Labour Youth condemns certain employers for the misuse of the JobBridge website in the placement of "internships" which are nothing more than transparent attempts to gain cheap labour. Labour Youth therefore supports better regulation of the scheme to ensure participants are gaining useful experience rather than being exploited.

We believe that JobBridge applicants should not be subject to tasks or working hours that could otherwise be undertaken by paid staff, and that there should be a demonstrable prospect of employment with the participating firms upon completion of the internship period.

Lone Parents and VEC Schemes

11. *Lone Parent Payment*: Labour Youth supports reinstating the Lone Parent Payment to its pre-2012 level, reversing the abhorrent reduction to seven years as the upper age limit for a child whose parent is in receipt of the LPP.

12. *Cuts to VEC Schemes*: Labour Youth opposes cuts to Vocational Education Committee programmes, particularly in light of their disproportionate effects on lone parents. Labour Youth notes that, given the 9-5 running times of most training courses, VEC schemes allow lone parents much more flexibility in attending classes, training opportunities, and numerous other services as recognised by the One Parent Exchange Network and One Family. Labour Youth therefore also supports reversing existing spending cuts to these essential services.

Carers

13. *Carers*: Labour Youth commends the dedication and compassion of family carers across Ireland and recognises that they save the state billions every year through their thankless work. Labour Youth therefore believes that carers should be financially protected and supported in their care of vulnerable people and never penalised for the difficult job they undertake.

Childcare

14. *New Childcare Model*: Labour Youth supports the basic model that:

- All families, regardless of income will be entitled to a 50% subsidisation of childcare costs;
- Those families who pay income in the 20% tax band will be entitled to 75% subsidisation of costs; and
- Parents whose income is set at the minimum wage will receive full subsidisation of childcare costs.

The universal element of the Model for children 3 and 4 years will be free for all children. An income test will apply for the remaining features of the model.

One Government department designated with the responsibility for childcare policy should manage the subsidisation programme. Local administration and co-ordination of the programme could be managed on a countywide basis, perhaps using County Childcare Committees.

Labour Youth further calls on the senior party to commit to previous general election manifestos and promises on their position and implementation of a state subsidised childcare model.

15. *Extension of Free Childcare Scheme*: Labour Youth notes with concern the increasing difficulty that families are facing regarding childcare costs. Labour Youth proposes the extension of the free childcare scheme from one year to two years.

16. *Parental Leave*: Labour Youth believes that greater flexibility is needed surrounding the allocation of parental leave after the birth of a child and in early childhood, in order to allow parents greater freedom to share the financial implications of child raising responsibility in whatever way suits them. Upon the agreement of both parents, it should be an option for the couple to distribute the 26 weeks of paid maternity leave equally between them, or in any ratio they see fit.

Labour Youth further believes that adoptive and same sex parents must not be ignored in the discussion or in legislating for this flexibility.

Section Fourteen – Transport and Communications

Transport

1. *Public Transport:* Labour Youth supports the development of a reliable and affordable public transport system in Ireland. Labour Youth accepts the necessity of maintaining an efficient public transport system within Ireland, one which is efficient, cost effective both for the supplier and the consumer, and economically viable to sustain, as well as providing a social function, rather than just an economic one. Labour Youth condemns any attempts to privatise Dublin Bus or Bus Éireann routes.

2. *Rail networks:* Labour Youth calls for a review of the current Irish rail transport system, financially, to provide a more competitive and reliable service, as well as examining the reopening of closed lines, such as those in the 1950s. Labour Youth affirms its support for state control of the nation's railways and calls on the Government to renew the contract with Irish Rail in 2019.

Labour Youth further calls on the possibility of expanding the rail network to run directly from Dublin Airport to the West and North-West to ensure increased access, due to the poor condition of the roads, and the lack of investment in their infrastructure thereof.

Labour Youth calls on the Government to proceed with the planned DART Interconnector tunnel and additional lines to Maynooth and Celbridge, and also the Dublin Metro North line from Saint Stephen's Green to Swords via Dublin Airport.

Labour Youth further calls on the Government to examine the feasibility of revisiting the suspended Dublin Metro West line linking the west Dublin suburbs with each other and the Metro North line.

3. *Light Rail/Trams:* Labour Youth believes that all of Ireland's major cities should be serviced by a light rail / tram system. Labour Youth proposes additional Luas lines from the City Centre to both Lucan and Rathfarnham.

4. *Accessibility:* Labour Youth believes that all public transport should be accessible to people with disabilities.

5. *Regional Infrastructure*: Labour Youth supports significant and sustained investment in regional infrastructure designed to tie into national networks, including:

- Development of the Western Rail Corridor
- Investment in regional airports as tourist hubs
- Improvements in the secondary road network

6. *Strategic investment*: Labour Youth calls for the strategic investment in our transport infrastructure to correct the regional imbalance on the island and address the economic difficulties confronting communities on the island.

7. *'Super Councils' and Town Councils*: Labour Youth condemns the creation of 'super councils' in the Dublin area and the abolition of town councils elsewhere as these actions deepen the democratic deficit in local government. Labour Youth opposes the creation of further 'super councils' as has been suggested for Cork, and calls for the restoration of town councils. Furthermore, Labour Youth calls for a review of the Councils in the Dublin area, with a view to restructuring these councils into more effective and geographically-representative bodies.

8. *Footpaths and Road Maintenance & Safety*: Labour Youth notes with concern the deterioration of footpath and road maintenance, which affects those with mobility or sight issues. Labour Youth calls on the Department of Local Government to provide extra funding for local authorities and other agencies to maintain their highways, so that those with disabilities may use them safely.

9. *Cyclist Safety and Driver Regulations*: Labour Youth recognises the significantly greater vulnerability of cyclists in comparison to drivers of motorised vehicles on our roads. Labour Youth therefore calls for the introduction of legislation that requires drivers of motorised vehicles to leave a 1-metre gap when overtaking cyclists on the road.

Labour Youth urges that segregated road space be given for cyclists across Dublin to improve the accessibility of the city and boost local business.

10. *Dublin Transport Authority*: Labour Youth calls for the establishment of a Dublin Transport Authority such as the one proposed in 2008 to oversee the implementation of projects and operation of services in the Greater Dublin Area.

11. *Pedestrianisation of Dublin City Centre*: Labour Youth urges that College Green, Westmoreland Street, and surrounding areas be pedestrianized.

12. *Royal Canal Greenway*: Labour Youth welcomes Labour's work in government to fund the greenway project on the Royal Canal and condemns the minister for transport for his failure to continue to fund the greenway project.

Labour Youth believes areas such as Broombridge in Cabra would benefit from this project and calls on the minister to fund this important work. We believe the Royal Canal is an important amenity and should be invested in.

13. *Tax Saver Scheme*: Labour Youth notes that as a result of the Tax Saver programme workers can avail of public transport tickets which are, depending on the service, between 25 and 39 percent cheaper than student tickets and from 29.5 to 52 percent cheaper than standard fares. While this scheme is a positive step towards encouraging workers to use public transport thus reducing congestion on our roads and damage to the environment it unfairly fails to include students while being open to high earners. Students, who are in the main more reliant on public transport and have less disposable income are thus left out in the cold, paying much higher transport costs than their working counterparts.

Labour Youth calls on the government to expand the Tax Saver programme to students or to reduce student ticket prices to a level in line with, or preferably below, the prices workers can avail of under the Tax Saver scheme.

Communications

14. *Equality in Media*: Labour Youth believes it is important that media represents all parts of society fairly. All media should be equality-proofed and all programmes that demonise particular groups of people should be discouraged.

15. *RTE Leaders Debate*: Labour Youth notes with concern the decision by RTE to exclude of the Green party from Leaders debates in the last election despite the

Party despite receiving more votes in the previous election and having been in existence 30 years longer than Renua or the Social Democrats.

Labour Youth proposes that the organization of Leaders debates be brought under the remit of an independent commission such as the promised electoral commission included in the government's list of proposed legislation as of September 2016.

16. *Mobile Connections*: Labour Youth welcomes the European Commission's decision to introduce a common market in mobile phones across Europe. However, Ireland's mobile market is the costliest in Europe. Labour Youth believes some sort of price controls should be introduced.

17. *Postal Service*: Labour Youth believes the postal system is important and should not be privatised. Labour Youth condemns the EU's attempts to introduce competition in the postal market.

18. *Open Source*: Labour Youth supports the Open Source movement and encourages all government departments to use Open Source software where possible. Labour Youth believes all government departments and other state bodies should publish data in an open and transparent format. Data should be public by default unless keeping it private is absolutely necessary.

The Internet

19. *Internet Access*: Labour Youth believes access to the internet is a basic requirement for each and every citizen of this state and ultimately allows for fundamental rights to be exercised, such as the rights to freedom of expression and opinion.

20. *Wi-Fi*: Labour Youth believes that free Wi-Fi spots should be rolled out right across the country.

21. *Cyber Bullying*: Labour Youth supports the creation of a mechanism that will deal with cyber bullying and see it viewed in the same light as classic forms of bullying.

22. *Rural Access*: Labour Youth believes access to high-speed internet is very important for rural development. Labour Youth therefore supports the provisioning of high quality broadband to all rural communities in Ireland.

23. *ICANN*: Labour Youth believes the Internet Corporation of Assigned Names and Numbers, which decides on and allocates domain names online, should be under the control of an independent international body such as UNESCO.

24. *Net Neutrality*: Labour Youth supports the European Commission's proposal to introduce Net Neutrality across Europe.

25. *Three Strikes Regulation*: Labour Youth believes the system of “Three Strikes” regulation, which allows households to be prevented from accessing the internet based on unsubstantiated allegations of piracy, should be illegal.

26. *Content Filters*: Labour Youth recognises the ineffectiveness of content filters due to the internet being too big to classify manually and the tendency of automatic filters to block innocent websites.

27. *DRM (Digital Rights Management)*: Labour Youth believes that Digital Rights Management should be banned and that everyone should have the right to break DRM.

28. *Combating a Digital Divide*: Labour Youth believes that the upcoming “digital divide” can be mitigated by providing refurbished second-hand computers to people who do not already have one. Labour Youth also supports the teaching of computer repair and social enterprises through Community Employment schemes.