Mitch Behna

Ireland’s status as a pro-life nation is still in jeopardy after a lengthy battle between both sides. In 1992, Ireland’s Supreme Court has ordered the government to enact a [law](http://www.csmonitor.com/World/2013/0429/Ireland-s-coalition-government-riven-by-new-abortion-law) permitting abortion in the case that a mother’s life is at risk, referred to as the “X-case.” It comes in response to a 14 year old girl who became suicidal after being denied an abortion after she was raped.

That ruling has been pending for the past 20 years and as of this week, Ireland’s government is planning to announce a draft of an abortion law which would allow abortions in certain medical grounds, including the threat by the mother to commit suicide. This debate is still being fought between the Fine Gael, the more conservative party and the Labor party being the more left-leaning party.

Additional criticism is taking place after The Sunday Independent newspaper published a report of an undercover sting operation from a pro-life activist. During the video, the activist recorded two Labor politicians claiming that the current law pending is not the final law, but a steppingstone towards abortion on demand.

Additional pro-lifers responded, calling out the Labor party and claimed that the undercover footage was proof of the pro-abortion agenda. Caroline Simons, legal advisor to the Pro Life Campaign, says this will become a surprise to the citizens. She said “it’s not something the government has been highlighting, but in other countries risk to mental health and suicide opened the door to abortion on demand.”

Fine Gael lawmaker Brian Walsh has vowed to oppose any bill that includes being at risk to suicide as justification for abortion.

Ivana Bacik, Labor senator and attorney, claims the divisions between the two parties are overstated. Regarding the pending law Bacik says “clearly it’s not going to lead to abortion on demand. It won’ change the law. It just restates the existing position [of the Supreme Court].

A 2012 poll conducted by research firm Red-C concluded that 85 percent who were surveyed supported this “X-case” legislation, so it time will tell to see if public opinion will have any impact.

Joan O’Connell from Dublin believes public opinion is inspired by personal experiences. “Although this is a deeply emotional issue, many people in Ireland are generally reasonable and understand the nuances of actual cases- once the discussion is taken out of the abstract. The figures on women who travel for abortion necessarily mean that there are many people in Ireland know a woman who has had an abortion, even if they are unaware of it,” said O’Connell.

A leak published last week from The Sunday Times claimed any woman seeking an abortion would be required to submit to an assessment by a panel of six hospital doctors. Ireland’s government denies this claim.

Abortion supporters reject the claim that this bill will lead to abortion on demand, stating that eighth amendment from Ireland’s constitutional ban on abortion forbids abortion by giving an equal right to the mother and child.