

April 9, 2010

Ms Mary White, T.D.,
Minister of State,
Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs,
Dún Aímhírgin,
43-49 Mespil Road,
Dublin 4.

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you in your capacity as Minister with responsibility for Equality and in particular about the long standing position of Congress regarding the repeal of Section 37(1) of the Employment Equality Act. There have been too many motions to mention passed at various trade union conferences over the years in relation to this topic, most recently by the Teachers' unions at their recent conferences.

Congress deplores the continued existence of the exemption related to religious schools and institutions as contained in Section 37(1) of the Employment Equality Acts. This is viewed by many workers as potentially threatening in view of their lifestyle or living circumstances. We have long held the view that there is no necessity or justification for having a double protection for religious institutions as contained in both Sections 16 and 37 of the Acts.

We welcomed the commitment of your predecessor, Minister John Moloney, in responding to a Seanad debate about the Ryan Report to re-examine the exemption clause, especially in light of what has occurred. Unfortunately no proposed changes have emerged from this commitment.

We reiterate our demands for the deletion of Section 37(1) from the Employment Equality Acts and would like to meet with you to discuss further. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



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General Secretary

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