

Mary Walsh, pensioner

My working life story

- I started working in the civil service in 1967 in Dublin and worked there until 1972 when I got married and was forced out due to the marriage bar that was in place at that time
- It was impossible for a woman to get employment in Dublin in those days, so myself and my husband moved back to Kerry where it was even more difficult. So time went by and we reared our five children
- From 1982 on, I did some voluntary work with our local credit union and became employed there part time in 1995
- In 2002 I started full time employment in the credit union and worked until 2013 when I became redundant because of the recession
- I was unemployed most of 2013 and 2014 and was lucky to get on a CE scheme in 2015
- I retired in 2016

This is how my working life panned out.

The stamps I put up with the Civil Service were of no use whatsoever to me for pension purposes or any other purpose. The date I started working there was taken into account as the start of my working life so when it came to averaging out my yearly stamps, I was short and penalised again. Those four years should be allowed to me for pension purposes.

Summary

- Forced out of work when I got married, only reason being that I am a woman
- I was not entitled to a gratuity
- I am not entitled to any Civil Service pension
- I am not allowed take the stamps for my years in the civil service employment
- The 2012 changes did not even give a thought to those of us who were on the pension doorstep
- Giving me a full pension only to later to take it from me
- Not allowing me my reckonable credits to be taken into account for pension purposes
- Not allowing me my full pension

While Regina Doherty's decision was welcome (I got €20 a week more but still short €15) it did not go far enough for my age group.

It did not go far enough for many people, men and women who spend most of their lives caring for children, a special needs child or elderly parents, and saved the state millions and are now left without a pension.

I love being Irish and I love my country but boy did our state let me and others of my vintage down. I tell my children never to forget what successive governments have done to their mother and others. And to always make sure that the wrong that were forced on women by the State, right down to the present day, will be written in the employment history of our country and how we were discriminated against and treated with such a lack of respect and fairness. Equality is nowhere to be seen, much talk but little or no action, not a nice place to be in. We have worked hard all our lives, did our best for society and then to be treated so badly.

My recommendations are:

1. People who are caring for more than 20 years should be allowed use their full amount of caring years plus their reckonable credits.
2. Women that worked in the Civil service prior to 1973 (and forced to leave work) should at least be allowed count in those years for pension purposes.
3. That a discussion should take place between the minister for finance and the women of that era and at least grant them the dignity that they deserve. (Pascal Donohue, TD, admitted on TV that what happened to women in the workforce before 1973 was wrong but that it would cost too much to fix it) Why doesn't he try and at least grant them their full weekly pension, back pay is a separate issued and women have never been found to be unreasonable.