Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to submit to the consultation.

I am extremely passionate about something known as the "urinary leash". This references the fact that women's freedom is impacted by our lack of access to bathrooms. In every single building I have ever been in, there's an equal number of square footage allotted to men's bathrooms as there is women's. This seems fair, right? But let's ask how many urinals you can fit in that space versus how many full cubicles you can fit? The answer is many more urinals meaning many more men can go to the bathroom at any given time compared to the number of women. Ever wonder why the women's bathroom queue is so much longer EVERYWHERE?

Furthermore, it takes a lot more time to open and close a cubicle door, to take off your bag/jacket, fix your clothes/layers, remove/insert new tampon/pad/cup, ensure your child also goes to the toilet, ensure your elderly mother/father also goes to the toilet, wipe your vulva, look after yourself if you have a UTI (which women are more likely to have) etc. This all takes time which we already don't have because there's a queue out the door because there are less bathrooms. Women are also more likely to take more time at the mirror which adds to the congestion which adds to the time.

Very often women watch what they drink on a night out so that they won't even have to go to the bathroom. If you have a medical condition where you need to go to the bathroom often, you might purposely not go to a concert or work conference event for fear of there not being enough facilities. This is the "leash" aspect; our freedoms are literally restricted. Or at the very least, our experiences are hindered by having to spend so long queueing, especially if we're with a male partner and they're out in two seconds and then waiting for us.

This is a very complicated problem with a very simple solution - give women more toilets. Easy. In 2015, Hong Kong introduced a change in building regulations which specifies there must be 1.6 female toilets for every one male toilet in public places. I think something like this in Ireland would be EXTREMELY beneficial and welcome.

Thank you for taking the time to read my suggestion. I am happy to stay involved in this process if there are any opportunities there.

Best wishes,

Lauren