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Statement from President of Ireland following his signature of the Health (Preservation and Protection and other Emergency Measures in the Public Interest) Bill 2020

Following his consideration and signing of the Health (Preservation and Protection and other Emergency Measures in the Public Interest) Bill 2020, President Michael D. Higgins has released the following statement:

“As President, I am urging all citizens, given the emergency of our situation in relation to the grave challenge to our public health, to respond in a generous way to the Health Service Executive’s advice on measures to alleviate the spread of Covid19.

These new health and social measures may be difficult for many but they affect us all and we are at a point now when a person’s actions have consequences not only for themselves but for all in society. Irresponsible individual action puts all at risk. We must draw on our strengths now.

Intergenerational solidarity has been one of the greatest resources of contemporary Irish society. Future generations, it is my belief, will look back at this critical time and I hope that they will be proud of how we as a society rose to the challenges together, with different generations taking account of one another.

As President, I have such appreciation for, and deeply value the connection I have experienced with, young people around the country. I appeal to these young people to spread the word among their friends of the importance of that which we have been asked to do.

In every generation there will be exceptions to what is being sought in the public interest. Let us hope that we have seen the end of such behaviour which puts all of us at risk.

Many of the older people, of whose generation Sabina and I are a part, and to whom I have spoken, have been very appreciative of the large numbers of young people who are helping them, and that such assistance is offered in such a caring way that addresses issues of our older citizens that go far beyond the delivery of necessary groceries or food.

Those older people who have been helped have felt a connection within society, a sense of a bond that is being strengthened rather than weakened. Older people as well as being grateful for how they have been helped have spoken of how they have welcomed the sight of young people who have given them such hope for the Ireland that is to come.”

ENDS

Note to Editor: Today, 20 March 2020, the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, having considered the Health (Preservation and Protection and other Emergency Measures in the Public Interest) Bill 2020, has signed the Bill and it has accordingly become law.