

Address at Launch of YPD's "Big Myth" campaign

9th April 2005

LAUNCH OF YPD's 'THE BIG MYTH CAMPAIGN'

Saturday 9th April 2005

Liz O'Donnell T.D.

First off, I too would like to welcome and offer my support to this campaign and leaflet. I think it is important to debunk this myth that persists about the Progressive Democrats and their policies. Far from being a Party that ignores inequality, no other Party has introduced such effective policies as the Progressive Democrats to generate the prosperity to truly tackle inequality.

I am familiar with the tired old characterisation of our Party as championing uncaring, right wing, middle class values. Such rubbish! There are political parties, particularly those on the left, that claim a monopoly on social justice and helping the vulnerable. Well the facts reveal a different picture.

The Progressive Democrats belief is that the best way of tackling inequality and poverty is to generate a prosperous economy. Only then will the State have the money to ensure that the vulnerable get the services and facilities they need and deserve. We reject out of hand the failed policies of the past, and the ones trotted out by those claiming ownership of social justice. Policies of high tax, high spend. They didn't work in the past, and re introducing them, would only ensure a return to the bad old days.

If, and I believe it is, if social justice is about helping the vulnerable then the best eradicator of poverty is having a job. But you don't have to take my word for it. Our record speaks for itself.

Our policies have worked.

- The days of high unemployment. Gone.
- Mass emigration. Gone.
- Spiralling inflation. Gone

The story goes that the Progressive Democrats are the Party of the selfish. Look at some of our selfish policies.

It was the PDs that brought the radical proposals on increasing Overseas Development Aid to Cabinet.

It was the PDs that introduced policies on the rights of refugees.

While in Foreign Affairs I worked to ensure that costs of Kosovar's repatriation were met.

These are just some examples of the Progressive Democrats selfish, uncaring, Godless and rightwing policies!

We don't claim ownership of social justice. We leave that to those wedded to the knuckle headed policies of the past. We just work hard to implement the policies that generate growth and prosperity. We commit the fruits of that growth and prosperity to helping the vulnerable, tackling inequality and keeping this country thriving.

That is what we have consistently done for the last twenty years.

And that is what we will continue to do.