



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Statement from the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, Inc. on the Irish Government Dissolving the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes**

ALBANY, NEW YORK – February 17, 2021 – Below is a statement by the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians (LAOH) Inc., the largest Irish Catholic women's organization in the world, on the Irish government's decision to dissolve the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes.

“The Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, Inc. (LAOH) demands justice and accountability for all survivors of the Irish Mother and Baby Homes here in America, in Ireland and around the world. We have written to the Irish Government after the release of the Commission of Investigation (Mother and Baby Homes and Certain Related Matters) Records Act 2020, demanding such justice and implore other survivors who may be reading this letter to join in the fight,” said Karen Keane, President of the LAOH.

“Members of the LAOH are survivors, both as mothers and babies, and have reported that the Irish Government's Tulsa and the FOI departments, who are supposed to be there to help survivors, have failed these women on all levels. We view being able to review timely and accurate information about birth certificates and health issues as a basic human right,” said Keane.

“Further, the assertions made in the reports that there was no evidence of maltreatment of mothers and babies is an insult to all who have gone before us and are still living as survivors. There are several ongoing scandals regarding thousands of illegal adoptions, but these matters have been willfully excluded from the current report. The Commission is planning on dissolving on February 28, 2021. This cannot be allowed to happen. The Commission has revealed that the transcripts and tapes collected in the course of the investigation have been destroyed. We view this as further evidence that the Commission's report, while horrifying, is covering up important facts that may help survivors process the post-traumatic effects of their experiences in the mother and babies Homes,” she added.

“In addition, the Commission acknowledges the deaths of over 9,000 children, which accounts for about 15 percent of the children who passed through the home. However, our member survivors believe the number of deaths is much higher.”

Taoiseach Micheál Martin delivered an apology in the Dail Eireann stating, ‘The final Mother and Baby Homes report describes a dark, shameful chapter of recent Irish history. The survivors showed great bravery in sharing their stories. The Government is now focused on a comprehensive implementation of the recommendations in this report.’

“The LAOH finds these words empty, especially in the fact that the government admits a vast majority of children were sent to America, but we are unable to receive any information, until it is redacted completely,” said Keane.

“The LAOH demands that the Irish Government stop this rush to end the Commission and in contrast work to secure the rights of all survivors here in America, especially in their quest to receive information,” said Keane.

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For more information, contact:

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**About the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians (LAOH) Inc.**

The Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians (LAOH) Inc. is a 501(c) 3 charity. The LAOH membership is confined exclusively to practicing Roman Catholics, and Irish by birth or descent, legally adopted, the wife or mother of a Hibernian, the mother of a Junior Hibernian or a member of a religious order. The intent and purpose of the LAOH is to promote friendship, unity and Christian charity, to foster and sustain loyalty to the Roman Catholic Church and to the United States of America among its members, to aid and advance by all legitimate means the aspirations and endeavors of the Irish people for complete and absolute independence, and to foster the ideals and perpetuate the history and traditions of the Irish people and to promote Irish culture.