

Submission to the Electoral Commission Constituency Review

People Before Profit is a 32 county ecosocialist political party with elected representatives across the country as follows;

- Four members of Dail Éireann
- One member of the Northern Ireland Local Assembly
- Eleven local authority Councillors across the country, north and south.

The current profile of constituencies

The current position for general elections is that there are 9 three-seat constituencies, 17 four-seaters and 13 five-seat constituencies for Dáil Éireann. Of the 11 Dublin constituencies, just 3 are five-seaters.

Constituency Size					
	# National	%		# Dublin	%
5 seaters	13	33%		3	27%
4 seaters	17	44%		6	55%
3 seaters	9	23%		2	18%
Total	39	100%		11	100%

Proportionality

The terms of reference for this Electoral Commission Constituency Review requires that each Dáil constituency shall return three, four or five members. It is widely recognised that three-seat constituencies produce electoral outcomes that are the least proportional, while five-seat constituencies produce the most proportional outcomes [1].

In recognition of this, the Constituency Commission Report 2017 recommended that;

- the number of three-seat constituencies be reduced from 13 to 9
- the number of four-seater constituencies be increased from 16 to 17
- The number of five-seater constituencies be increased from 11 to 13.

[2]

Constituency Size				
	# Pre 2017	%	# Post 2017	%
5 seaters	11	27%	13	33%
4 seaters	16	40%	17	44%
3 seaters	13	33%	9	23%
Total	40	100%	39	100%

The 2017 report recommendations represented an important enhancement in the proportionality of Dáil election outcomes. It is important that the current review continues this increase in proportionality. We therefore recommend that the commission takes the opportunity to reduce the number of three-seat constituencies and further increase the number of five-seaters, with a target of half of constituencies being five-seaters.

We also recommend that the additional seats allocated to Dublin are used to ensure that Dublin is composed exclusively of four and five-seater constituencies, and that at least half of Dublin constituencies are five-seaters.

Respecting local community identities

It is important that electoral boundaries of contiguous communities are drawn in a manner that appear natural to the electorate and take into account local community identities. The commission should ensure that boundaries in urban areas do not breach such communities.

Six-seat Constituencies

It is regrettable that the Commission is not in a position to recommend the establishment of six-seat constituencies, as they would add further to the proportionality of general election outcomes. We therefore recommend an amendment to the Electoral Reform Act 2022 to change the terms of reference for the Electoral Commission to allow them to use six-seat constituencies in future review. This would further increase proportionality of Dáil representation, as well as allowing the Commission more flexibility in trying to ensure electoral boundaries of contiguous communities do not breach communities with common identities, or county boundaries.

Recommendations

We call on the Commission to recommend;

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1. A further reduction in the number of three-seat constituencies
 2. A substantial increase in the number of five-seat constituencies, with a target of half of constituencies being five-seaters.
 3. That Dublin is composed exclusively of four and five-seat constituencies, and that at least half of Dublin constituencies are five-seaters.
 4. That electoral boundaries of contiguous communities are drawn in a manner that appear natural to the electorate and do not breach local community identities.
 5. An amendment to the Electoral Reform Act 2022 to change the terms of reference for the Electoral Commission to allow them to recommend six-seat constituencies
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10th May 2023

References

- [1] Irish Elections: Geography, Facts and Analyses - Adrian Kavanagh, 4 July 2022 [Irish Elections: Geography, Facts and Analyses | Elections in the Republic of Ireland \(and occasionally other elections!\) from a geographical perspective: maps, election boundaries, party vote patterns, turnout levels \(adriankavanaghelections.org\)](https://adriankavanaghelections.org/)
- [2] Constituency Commission Report 2017 [Constituency Commission Report 2017.pdf \(constituency-commission.ie\)](https://www.constituency-commission.ie/constituencies/2017/)