

Subject: FW: New submission from Research Form

From: The Electoral Commission <noreply@electoralcommission.eu>

Sent: Wednesday 6 December 2023 15:24

To: ELC Research <research@electoralcommission.ie>

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4. Are there any other comments or observations that you wish to make regarding An Coimisiún's research programme?

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To the Chair of the Electoral Commission .

Dear Madam,

In response to the request for members of the public to give their thoughts on how arrangements for elections to the Dáil might need to be changed I set out my opinions below. I don't know whether your commission has been asked to prepare a similar report on Seanad elections or whether it will be in the future. I think it logical that it should and I have taken the opportunity to put forward my opinions on this matter too. I have included some thoughts on elections to the presidency, the third branch of the legislature.

I have long thought that elections to the Seanad have been too much influenced by political insiders whereas I think all the elected members should be chosen solely by vote of the general public and not by the present restricted electorate each one of which has a multiple vote. The suggestions I have put forward are aimed to achieve this.

I hope my suggestions will be carefully considered by your Commission and given due weight. I know that some of them will need constitutional amendment. I am prepared to explain or elucidate any point if necessary.

Yours faithfully,
Patrick Corish,

[REDACTED]

AN DÁIL

1. The voting age should stay at 18. It is doubtful if the majority of people under that age would have enough knowledge and appreciation of public affairs to form a mature judgment. Anyone below that age is treated as a child in the legal system and is subject to many restrictions that do not apply to anyone over 18.
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2. The link between the number of deputies and population should be broken. The number should be fixed at somewhere about that proposed for the next Dáil. Say between 170 and 175. Otherwise the number of deputies is likely to increase over time. The suggested number should be more than adequate to carry out the business of the Dáil.
3. The tolerance allowed in the variance between the number of deputies to population in each constituency should be increased to reduce the number of breaches of county boundaries required in defining the boundaries of constituencies.
4. With the number of deputies fixed there will be no longer any need to vary their number following the publication of each census report but it may be necessary to adjust constituency boundaries from time to time to maintain balance between them in accordance with the relaxed allowed variance. This should not be done after each census but should be done at regular intervals of say 10 or 12 years to take account of the latest census numbers at the time.

5. It has been suggested that by-elections should be eliminated. On no account should this be contemplated. Filling vacancies without an election would require the installation of one or more unelected people in the principal legislative chamber.

An Seanad.

1. Membership of the Seanad should consist of 60 members. It must be open to all citizens and all citizens must have a single vote in its election in a panel of their choice.
2. Nominations should only be by approved nominating bodies in vocational panels as at present. The possible introduction of new panels to cater for additional interests such as charities should be considered. There should be no other nominating bodies.
3. The Seanad election should take place on the same day as the Dáil election. This would ensure that members were dedicated to service in that chamber and not using it as a stepping stone or holding ground while waiting for an opportunity to go for election to the Dáil.
4. Voters should be entitled to a postal vote if requested. All citizens no matter where they are located should be entitled to stand for election and to vote
5. The panel election should return 45 members to the Seanad. The number returned from each panel to be guided by the number votes cast in that panel. But no panel should be left totally unrepresented. The present arrangement of predetermined number of seats on each panel should be abandoned. It is too inflexible and does not allow for any change in the range of interests in the electorate.
6. Twelve members should be nominated by the incoming Taoiseach and the remaining three by the opposition members of the Dáil defined as those who voted against the successful nomination. A method such as d'Hondt could be used to distribute these

nominations among those in the opposition. This would be for the purpose of keeping the present arrangement whereby the Government is allowed to nominate 11 members to give it a cushion against the possibility of a measure being voted down and to nominate people with special expertise or distinction. The opposition should be allowed a similar arrangement for a similar purpose but on a much smaller scale.

AN tUACHTARÁN

1. The Presidential term should be limited to one seven year period. This is to avoid the unseemly indignity of a sitting president having to campaign against other contenders and being campaigned against.
2. The proposers of a candidate for the presidency should be required to guarantee to reimburse their candidate if he or she has to forfeit his or her deposit. This would discourage the nomination of frivolous or no hope candidates.

Name

Patrick Corish

Email

[REDACTED]

Are you replying as an Individual or representing an Organisation?

I am responding as an Individual