



AN BILLE TOGHCHÁIN (LEASÚ) 2005
ELECTORAL (AMENDMENT) BILL 2005

EXPLANATORY AND FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM

The main purpose of this Bill is to revise the Dáil constituencies in the light of the 2002 Census of Population and, in this context, to implement the recommendations contained in the Constituency Commission's Report on Dáil Constituencies 2004 (Prn. 1554). The Commission was established under Part II of the Electoral Act 1997 (No. 25 of 1997) to report on the constituencies for the election of members to Dáil Éireann and the European Parliament; its 2003 report related to European Parliament constituencies. The Bill also addresses an issue that has arisen in relation to the definition of election expenses for the purposes of the Electoral Act 1997.

Section 1 of the Bill defines "Minister" as the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government for the purposes of the Bill and provides for interpretation of the *Schedule* to the Bill.

Section 2 provides that the number of members of Dáil Éireann, after the next dissolution, will be 166. This is the same number as at present and is the number recommended by the Commission.

Section 3 provides that, after the next dissolution, the members of Dáil Éireann will represent the 43 constituencies specified in the *Schedule* (see below) as recommended by the Commission. This represents a net increase of one in the number of constituencies, compared to the existing constituency formation.

Section 4 provides that the number of members for each constituency will be as set out in the third column of the *Schedule*.

Section 5 provides for the repeal of the Electoral (Amendment) (No. 2) Act 1998 which specifies the existing Dáil constituencies. The repeal will come into operation on the next dissolution of Dáil Éireann.

Section 6 addresses an issue raised by the Standards in Public Office Commission in relation to the definition of election expenses for the purposes of the Electoral Act 1997. It amends the Schedule to the Act (inserted by section 50(v) of the Electoral (Amendment) Act 2001) by inserting a subparagraph clarifying that the following items are not to be regarded as election expenses at presidential, Dáil and European elections: free postage provided for candidates; a service provided free by an individual or provided by an employee of a political party; normal media coverage; and the transmission on radio or television of a broadcast on behalf of a candidate/political party.

Section 7 contains the short title, collective citation and construction provisions.

The *Schedule* to the Bill contains the formal definition of the 43 constituencies. The Table attached sets out, for each proposed constituency, the number of seats, the total 2002 population, the population per TD and the percentage variance from national average representation. The Bill provides for a new constituency configuration in the North Connacht-North Leinster area, involving the formation of 5 new constituencies, viz. Longford-Westmeath (4 seats) and Meath East, Meath West, Roscommon-South Leitrim and Sligo-North Leitrim (all 3-seaters). Fifteen of the proposed constituencies are identical in name, area and representation to an existing constituency. A further 23 retain the name of an existing constituency but differ from it, to a greater or lesser degree, in area, and, in the case of Cork North-Central, Dublin Mid-West, Dublin North-Central and Kildare North, in the number of seats assigned. Overall, twelve 5-seat constituencies, thirteen 4-seat constituencies and eighteen 3-seat constituencies are proposed. Further details on the constituencies are in the Constituency Commission's Report on Dáil Constituencies 2004.

There are no significant financial implications arising from implementation of the proposals contained in the Bill.

TABLE

Proposed Constituencies, Number of Seats, Total 2002 Population, Population per TD and Variance from National Average Representation.

Constituency	No. of seats	2002 Population	Population per TD	% variance from national average representation of 23,598
Carlow-Kilkenny	5	122,720	24,544	+4.01%
Cavan-Monaghan	5	109,139	21,828	-7.50%
Clare	4	98,339	24,585	+4.18%
Cork East	4	90,845	22,711	-3.76%
Cork North-Central	4	89,648	22,412	-5.03%
Cork North-West	3	72,408	24,136	+2.28%
Cork South-Central	5	123,824	24,765	+4.94%
Cork South-West	3	71,104	23,701	+0.44%
Donegal North-East	3	68,575	22,858	-3.13%
Donegal South-West	3	69,000	23,000	-2.53%
Dublin Central	4	99,054	24,764	+4.94%
Dublin Mid-West	4	93,793	23,448	-0.63%
Dublin North	4	98,863	24,716	+4.74%
Dublin North-Central	3	73,501	24,500	+3.82%
Dublin North-East	3	72,873	24,291	+2.94%
Dublin North-West	3	68,502	22,834	-3.24%
Dublin South	5	115,279	23,056	-2.30%
Dublin South-Central	5	118,975	23,795	+0.83%
Dublin South-East	4	97,096	24,274	+2.86%
Dublin South-West	4	95,413	23,853	+1.08%
Dublin West	3	73,186	24,395	+3.38%
Dún Laoghaire	5	116,286	23,257	-1.44%
Galway East	4	90,707	22,677	-3.90%
Galway West	5	118,370	23,674	+0.32%
Kerry North	3	66,393	22,131	-6.22%
Kerry South	3	66,134	22,045	-6.58%
Kildare North	4	95,027	23,757	+0.67%
Kildare South	3	68,917	22,972	-2.65%
Laois-Offaly	5	122,437	24,487	+3.77%
Limerick East	5	112,449	22,490	-4.70%
Limerick West	3	67,793	22,598	-4.24%
Longford-Westmeath	4	96,453	24,113	+2.18%
Louth	4	101,821	25,455	+7.87%
Mayo	5	117,446	23,489	-0.46%
Meath East	3	70,241	23,414	-0.78%
Meath West	3	70,237	23,412	-0.79%
Roscommon-South Leitrim	3	70,892	23,631	+0.14%
Sligo-North Leitrim	3	66,881	22,294	-5.53%
Tipperary North	3	70,427	23,476	-0.52%
Tipperary South	3	71,125	23,708	+0.47%
Waterford	4	100,125	25,031	+6.07%
Wexford	5	116,596	23,319	-1.18%
Wicklow	5	118,309	23,662	+0.27%
Total: 43	166	3,917,203	23,598	

An Roinn Comhshaoil, Oidhreacht agus Rialtais Áitiúil, Márta 2005.