



An Bille um Thoirmeasc ar Rásaíocht Sulcaithe, 2026
Prohibition of Sulky-Racing Bill 2026

Meabhrán Miniúcháin
Explanatory Memorandum



**AN BILLE UM THOIRMEASC AR RÁSAÍOCHT SULCAITHE,
2026
PROHIBITION OF SULKY-RACING BILL 2026**

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Purpose of Bill

The purpose of this Bill is to prohibit sulky-racing conducted on public roads where no lawful permission has been granted.

Background

The Bill is motivated by serious and escalating concerns regarding public safety, road safety, and animal health and welfare. These concerns extend not only to members of the public, but also to the horses, passengers, and motorists who may be exposed to risk because of sulky road racing.

Sulky road racing is frequently undertaken on busy regional and national primary roads. In many cases, children are involved in hitching horses or ponies to lightweight carts and racing them on public roads shared with moving traffic. This constitutes an extremely dangerous activity and poses an immediate risk of serious injury or loss of life.

In addition, participants frequently operate without permits or insurance and horses injured during such races are unlikely to receive appropriate veterinary treatment and may be euthanised at the scene or left to suffer unnecessarily.

The presence of moving vehicles on the road at the same time as sulky-racing places motorists, pedestrians, sulky riders, and animals in grave danger.

This Bill therefore seeks to address deficiencies in the existing legal framework by introducing a clear, national, and cohesive statutory approach to the prohibition and enforcement of unlawful sulky road racing.

Provisions of Bill

Section 1 of the Bill, sets out the remit or meaning of sulky-racing under this Bill, to be “the racing of a horse-drawn vehicle on any road under local authority jurisdiction”.

Section 2 of the Bill, provides that a person shall not organise or cause or permit to take place any performance involving—

- (a) sulky-racing,
- (b) riding or attempting to ride an animal which, by the use of any appliance, horse drawn carriage, is or has been stimulated with the intention of making it race, or

- (c) any other activity that may cause unnecessary suffering to an animal and is prohibited by animal health and welfare regulations.

Section 3 of the Bill sets out the responsibilities of local authorities. The Bill grants local authorities all the powers necessary to enforce this law,

Section 4 of the Bill provides for offences or penalties under for non-compliance. Those found in breach of the law could face a potential maximum fine, up to and including, €5,000 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding six years.

Section 5 of the Bill, outlines the administrative steps to be followed around proceedings and sanctions, including the provision of fixed penalty notices.

Mattie McGrath, TD,
Meitheamh, 2026