



An Comhchoiste um Fhorfheidhmiú Chomhaontú Aoine an Chéasta

Tuarascáil Taistil – Tuarascáil taistil – South Carolina,
Pennsylvania agus Washington DC

Márta 2026

Joint Committee on Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

Travel report – South Carolina, Pennsylvania and
Washington DC

March 2026

Contents

Related Information	4
Committee Membership.....	5
1. Background to the visit.....	7
2. South Carolina	7
3. Philadelphia	11
4. Washington DC	12

Related Information

Publications

All publications for this committee are available on the [Oireachtas website](#).

Committee videos

Footage of Committee proceedings can be found on the [Committee videos page](#).

Committee debates

Transcripts of Committee debates can be found on the [Committee debates page](#).

Contact details

The contact details for the Committee can be found on the [Committee page](#).

Orders of reference

Read the [Orders of reference](#) for the Committee.

Committee Membership

Cathaoirleach

[Cormac Devlin TD](#), Fianna Fáil

Leas-Chathaoirleach

[David Maxwell TD](#), Fine Gael

Members

[Rose Conway-Walsh TD](#), Sinn Féin

[Seán Crowe TD](#), Sinn Féin

[Sinéad Gibney TD](#), Social Democrats

[Noel McCarthy TD](#), Fine Gael

[Erin McGreehan TD](#), Fianna Fáil

[Shane Moynihan TD](#), Fianna Fáil

[Peadar Tóibín TD](#), Aontú

[Senator Frances Black](#), Independent

[Senator Niall Blaney](#), Fianna Fáil

[Senator Alison Comyn](#), Fianna Fáil

[Senator Garret Kelleher](#), Fine Gael

[Senator Rónán Mullen](#), Independent

[Senator Conor Murphy](#), Sinn Féin

[Senator Patricia Stephenson](#), Social Democrats

Associate Committee Members:

[Orflaith Begley MP, Sinn Féin](#)

[Pat Cullen MP, Sinn Féin](#)

[Colum Eastwood MP, SDLP](#)

[Sorcha Eastwood MP, Alliance](#)

[John Finucane MP, Sinn Féin](#)

[Claire Hanna MP, SDLP](#)

[Daire Hughes MP, Sinn Féin](#)

[Cathal Mallaghan MP, Sinn Féin](#)

[Paul Maskey MP Sinn Féin](#)

1. Background to the visit

1. The Cathaoirleach of the Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, Cormac Devlin TD, received two invitations to visit the United States in March 2026.
2. Representative Brendan F. Boyle invited him to brief Members of the United States Congress on the latest status of the peace process in Northern Ireland in Washington DC on 16-17 March with a view to helping Members of Congress to better understand current developments, ongoing challenges and the ways in which the United States can continue to offer meaningful support for the full and faithful implementation of the Good Friday Agreement.
3. A separate invitation was received from Harry M. Lightsey III, Secretary of Commerce for the State of South Carolina who invited the Chair to participate in a programme in that State in the context of the 28th anniversary of Good Friday Agreement.
4. On foot of these invitations, the Joint Committee on Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement agreed that a delegation from the Committee would visit the United States with the Cathaoireach travelling from to South Carolina, Philadelphia and Washington DC from 7-10 March. Leas-Chathaoirleach David Maxwell TD and the Policy Advisor to the Committee, Barry Tumelty, participated in the Washington DC leg of the programme from 15-17 March with the delegation returning to Ireland on the morning of 18 March.

2. South Carolina

5. The programme in South Carolina began with a working breakfast meeting with the Head of the South Carolina - Ireland Trade Commission, Mark Duffy, with a focus on trade relations between Ireland and South Carolina which are valued at between \$400-500m annually. Having met with Commerce Secretary Harry Lightsey and his

officials, we discussed the need for greater economic engagement between Ireland and South Carolina - one of the fastest-growing states in the United States. We focused on the area of tourism, trade and the need for direct flights between our respective jurisdictions.

6. The Cathaoirleach also met that morning with the President of the South Carolina State Senate, Thomas Alexander and was then formally welcomed into the State Legislature and introduced by State Senators; Mike Rechenbach & Sean Bennett. This was followed by a lunch hosted by the University of South Carolina Darla Moore School of Business (DMSB).



7. A programme of afternoon engagements in the South Carolina State House included engagements with State Senators Mike Rechenbach, and Sean Bennett as well as retired State Senator Nikki Setzler. Discussions focused on peace on the island of Ireland, the work of the Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and South Carolina's desire for greater engagement with Ireland, given the similarity of our economies. The Cathaoirleach also visited and met with the Attorney General of the State of South Carolina, Alan Wilson, and discussed the trans-national fight against crime and drugs, as well as human trafficking and the need for greater online safety for children.



8. The evening programme had a commercial focus including a meeting with Crisina Paredes, Jon Baggett and Monica Suber-Duffy to understand the work of SC NEXUS, which is one of 31 Regional Technology and Innovation Hubs across the United States. SC NEXUS is focused on developing advanced resilient energy by

developing, testing and deploying exportable electricity technology tools. This was followed by a dinner with business personnel.



9. Engagements on 12 March included a meeting with Dr. Joe Kelly, the Director of Irish and Irish American Studies at the College of Charleston together with students and members of the local Irish community, including Ireland's Honorary Consul General in South Carolina, Brian Duffy, Mike Molony and others allowing for in-depth discussions on the Good Friday Agreement, diaspora issues and trade. The Cathaoirleach also met with Dubliner Kieran Beggan, CEO of Fexillon South Carolina, the Irish software company which provides digital asset management solutions for the infrastructure and real estate sectors which entered the US market in 2024 through the opening of its Charleston office.



10. This was followed by a meeting with the Mayor of Charleston, South Carolina which focused on housing, the expansion and economic growth of the city Charleston.

These are similar issues that we are facing in Ireland, along with the potential for further economic co-operation between Ireland and South Carolina.



11. Friday 13 March included meetings with the State Attorney General, Alan Wilson and with US Representative Joe Wilson. These meetings focused on the relationship between Ireland and South Carolina, the work of the Joint Committee on Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement and the current situation in Northern Ireland. The Cathaoirleach also visited Nephron Pharmaceuticals with its owner and CEO Lou Kennedy, who is President of the South Carolina-Ireland Trade Commission and with Judge Irvin Condon who founded and leads the James Hoban Society in Charleston, South Carolina. James Hoban designed the Court House in Charleston, South Carolina.





3. Philadelphia

12. The Cathaoirleach participated in key elements of the St. Patrick's Day promotional programme in Philadelphia organised by the Irish Consulate General in New York. This included attendance at the gala hosted by the Friendly Sons & Daughters of St Patrick on the evening of 14 March which had the Taoiseach as guest of honour. The Cathaoirleach also attended the 256th Philadelphia St. Patrick's Day Commemorative Mass and participation in the Philadelphia St. Patrick's Day Parade which was also attended by the Taoiseach and Congressman Brendan Boyle.



4. Washington DC

13. The Washington DC programme began with attendance by the Cathaoirleach at the annual St. Patrick's Day reception hosted at the residence of the Irish Ambassador to the United States, Geraldine Byrne Nason, on the evening of 15 March. On the morning of 16 March, Enterprise Ireland partnered with Amazon to co-host an event bringing together senior Irish and American business leaders. The Cathaoirleach attended alongside the Taoiseach, Ambassador Byrne Nason and the US Ambassador to Ireland, Edward S. Walsh. He also represented the Committee at the IDA leaders luncheon which highlighted the strength and scale of the Ireland-United States economic partnership.

14. Engagements at Congress included meetings with Representatives Richard Neal and Timothy M. Kennedy providing an opportunity for the delegation to brief the Representatives on the work of the Committee, on its efforts to engage with unionism and its work with Northern Ireland Affairs Committee. Legacy issues were a particular focus with the delegation briefing the Representatives on the Troubles Bill. The importance of continued engagement by Members of the Oireachtas on the ground in Washington was emphasised by the Congressmen.

15. The delegation were able to engage at a number of Northern Ireland focused events as part of the visit. These included the fourth Washington Forum on Northern Ireland hosted by the Georgetown University Global Irish Studies Programme. The Forum



involved three panel discussions centered on navigating divided societies, the multifaceted role of migrants from the island of Ireland in American history, and commemoration in divided societies and was addressed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Hilary Benn MP and the deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland, Emma Little-Pengelly, MLA.

16. The delegation attended the Northern Ireland Bureau Breakfast hosted by the deputy First Minister and addressed by a number of Ministers in the Northern Ireland Executive. The event was an opportunity for Members to engage with a range of stakeholders from politics, business, academia and the cultural sector. Attendance at these events provided the delegation with the opportunity to engage informally with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and with a number of Ministers from the Northern Ireland Executive, including the Deputy First Minister.
17. The final engagement in the delegation's programme was attendance at the annual shamrock ceremony hosted at the White House where the Taoiseach presented President Trump with the traditional crystal bowl filled with shamrocks.

