



Committee for Commemoration of Irish Famine Victims

53 Raheen Close,  
Tallaght, Dublin 24  
Mobile: 087 9040888  
Email: ccifv2008@gmail.com

## **CCIFV PRESENTATION TO JOINT OIREACHTAS COMMITTEE**

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> November 2018

**RE: NATIONAL FAMINE COMMEMORATION DAY BILL 2017**

Dear Chairman, Committee, Minister, Oireachtas Members, Irishmen and Irishwoman home and abroad and the Children of Ireland.

The Committee for the Commemoration of Irish Famine Victims (CCIFV) have over many years campaigned for and created a National Famine Memorial Day.

CCIFV are a family community based group who over the years have links and close partnerships and friendships throughout the Island, neighbouring Island and globally. The Bill being discussed today at Committee Stage is another piece of the jigsaw in the gigantic picture that is An Gorta Mor.

The Bill will give stability, certainty an equal footing and recognition with Easter and July remembrance days, who have fixed days.

The Irish people home and abroad will know when the NFMD will take place when the Bill is passed.

It will also solve the annual headache for the Minister and the Committee.

Like on Saint Patricks Day Ireland and the world turns Green, as it will on the Third Sunday in May, when the NFMD beds in and gets more known, the Bill will have a major part to play in this.

Ireland is unique we are the only country in the world with a 'Famine Day' in its National Calendar that other countries would cherish to have without the pain and loss, they will follow in support, solidarity and spirit with Ireland on 'Famine Day.'

As Famine and Hunger is still a blight and constant foe on humanity today in a world of plenty.

The International overseas National Famine Memorial Day can and should be held on the same day the 3rd Sunday in May, wherever the Green is worn, like Saint Patricks Day the 17th one day.



The Bill allows the Taoiseach to select the location for the NFMD as can be done for the International Day.

There is not a blade of grass, a sod of soil, a village, town or city that has escaped the scars and wounds of An Gorta Mor selecting a location will not be problem. Likewise for the International day the Irish Famine Global Family has left a large footprint and casts a long shadow on the planet, with over a 100 Famine Memorials remembering these dark times, days and years in Irish history.

With Brexit confusion reigning, the unifying cement of the NFMD is an all Island event crossing the border as in 2015 in Newry.

CCIFV were the harbingers for this happening in 2014 when we placed a Marker in a paupers and Famine mass grave at the old Newry Workhouse today the Daisy Hill Hospital. The mass grave as do numerous other mass graves on Workhouse sites or very close by them, around the country hold the bodies of Catholic, Protestant, Dissenter and Non -believers, one mass of humanity sleeping peacefully side by side this is the universality of The Great Hunger.

The 2014 Newry commemoration was multi denominational and cross community the Mayor of Newry officiated at the ceremony.

Now people home and abroad are aware of the NFMD and like Saint Patricks Day communities are holding An Gorta Mor events all over the Island and overseas, London and other UK locations have held commemorations for a number of years, as do America, Canada, Australia and other places that we are not aware of.

The core of the NFMD is remembrance of over a million innocent victims and another two million forced into exile the nuclear like fallout is still felt today more than 170 years on. Ireland is the only country in the world that our population has not grown since the 19th century, not a statistic any country would wish to hold.

The positives are the 70 million Irish Famine Global Family, are proud to be Irish. If a small percentage wishing to trace their Irish family ancestry, heritage and history, which is very popular now, come to Ireland the tourism potential if harnessed and promoted is potentially limitless revenue for the country, plus forging closer links with their adopted countries.

There are eight Departments and NGOs who sit on the National Famine Commemoration Committee who can all contribute to planting the seed for future growth and promotion of the NFMD home and abroad.

The tourism, heritage, history and education on the Famine which is only optionally taught in schools although on the curriculum it is not compulsory.

The CCIFV have the Lumper Schools Project which is on the Departments Scoilnet website this year for the first time, but the project is running for five years.

The LSP is sponsored by The Glens of Antrim Potato's and is an all Island program. The Lumper is a Living Artefact Famine History Teacher.

When tourists or indeed Irish people especially schoolchildren call into the National Museum of Ireland their is not a plaque on a wall to recognise or honour the loss of so many on this important part of our history that changed Ireland and the world forever.

An Gorta Mor gave the Nation our National Flag through the Young Ireland 1848 Famine Rebellion led by William Smith O'Brian at Ballingarry the Warhouse now a National Monument.

The first time the Tricolour flew in battle. It was the birth and creation of the IRB and the catalyst for the 1867 and 1916 Rebellions that gave us our Independence.

An Gorta Mor buried like the victims in omission, silence and denial in the NMI, since the States foundation coming up to the 100th birthday.

The above CCIFV vision and opinions are lengthy but need to be considered. The below comments are condensed proposals for Amendments to the NFCD 2017 Bill.

(1) The rotation protocol around the four provinces to be sacrosanct.

Not to be broken as was done for this years 2018 when the NFMD Commemoration was kept in Munster two years in succession at the expense of all the four Provinces, to accommodate a cabinet meeting, a first for a university to hold one and to launch a book on line, the NFCD. Is bigger than both.

(2) The International NFCD to be held on the third Sunday in May.

To bring the Irish Global Famine Family into unity and inclusion.

In remembrance of the victims and in celebration of the exiles and survivors on the same day. Third Sunday in May.

On Saint Patricks Day home and abroad the Irish global family united as one on the same day.

The doubt and uncertainty attached to both the home and International day's timing, since inauguration in 2008 is finally consigned to history.

The Bill will bring clarity, certainty and stability for the Irish people and communities home and abroad who hold commemorations and the Taoiseach, Minister and the National Famine Commemoration Committee can now plan years in advance.

The Bill is an important part of the holistic story and history of An Gorta Mor.

With all sincerity and the warmest of heart,

Michael CCIFV.



Committee for Commemoration of Irish Famine Victims

53 Raheen Close,  
Tallaght, Dublin 24  
Mobile: 087 9040888  
Email: ccifv2008@gmail.com

## NATIONAL FAMINE COMMEMORATION DAY BILL 2017

Date: Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018 at 1.30pm pm  
Location: Committee Room 4, LH2000 Leinster House

### IN ATTENDANCE

Michael, Blanch, Dublin.  
Chairman Committee for the Commemoration of Irish Famine Victims  
(CCIFV) Witness.

Olivia Blanch, Dublin  
Secretary (CCIFV) Dublin. Witness.

Observers.

Pete St John, Dublin  
Director, CCIFV and Writer of The Fields of Athenry.  
(The Famine Anthem)

Michael Og Blanch, Dublin  
PR & IT CCIFV.

Billy Byrne, Caroline Byrne. Dublin.  
Photographer CCIFV.

Anthony Russell, Newry.  
Historian, CCIFV.

Kieran Tuohy. Galway.  
Famine Artist, in Irish Bog Oak. 5,000 Years of Irish History, Heritage, Art & Culture.

Bernard McCarthy Dublin  
CCIFV Committee Member

Joan Kelly,  
Dublin CCIFV Committee Member

Patrick (Padge) Kelly (this gentleman is in a wheelchair)  
Dublin CCIFV Committee Member

