



Maureen O'Sullivan TD  
*Dublin Central*

15<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

Dear Ceann Comhairle, / *Seán*.

I have seen some interesting and very worthwhile suggestions in relation to Dáil reform and I would like to add some others.

The first is in relation to the Dáil programme for the forthcoming year and is based on my experience of co-ordinating the priority questions for the Technical Group.

I think it very inefficient that even though there are certain weeks agreed for recess, usually after a Bank Holiday weekend, nevertheless private members, priority and oral questions, legislation will appear on the paper. They are allocated even though everyone knows the Dail will not be sitting. When it is agreed, usually the Thursday before, as we know it will, it then means a re-organisation of questions, private members and legislation. With priority questions it can mean changing from one to two questions or vice versa. My suggestion is we agree, at even the beginning of each term, on the weeks of recess that no business is scheduled which would save all the re-organising.

My other suggestion relates to Leaders' Questions; I think there should be rotation so that Independents are not always last. I also believe that stricter time frames should be in operation. There have been times when I, and others from the Technical Group as we come last, have waited 30-40 minutes for our slot.

I believe the Ceann Comhairle must use all his powers to ensure that the question being asked is answered or, at the very last, to curtail the rambling answers that have been heard.

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I would like to see a relaxation of the Whip system with more free votes on those issues which will not bring down a government.

Taoiseach's questions need to be open to members – even a certain number, chosen randomly, as with Oral questions.

Committees need to be more focused on specific aspects of the work with fewer numbers to ensure more participation.

Finally the immediate establishment of the Electoral Commission.

Very best wishes in the 32<sup>nd</sup> Dáil;

Maureen O'Sullivan 

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