

(Second Supplementary Order Paper)

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DÁIL ÉIREANN

*Dé Máirt, 1 Nollaig, 2020
Tuesday, 1st December, 2020*

2 p.m.

GNÓ COMHALTAÍ PRÍOBHÁIDEACHA
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Fógra i dtaobh Leasú ar Thairiscint: Notice of Amendment to Motion

[Please note: there is a change to the text of the Sinn Féin motion highlighted in bold on today's Second Supplementary Order Paper.]

109. “That Dáil Éireann:

notes that:

- in five weeks' time the pension age is due to increase to 67 years of age on 1st January, 2021;
- **legislation needed to stop the pension age increasing to 67 in January has not passed through the House;**
- every worker in the State makes a considerable tax contribution throughout their working life and should have the right to retire at 65;
- some workers want to retire at 65, while others want to remain at work, where they are able and willing to do so;
- numerous employment contracts stipulate an end of employment date in line with when an employee turns 65;
- since the abolition of the State Pension Transition payment, thousands of 65-year olds have had to sign on for a Jobseeker's payment;
- there are now over 4,000 65-year olds in receipt of either Jobseeker's Allowance or Jobseeker's Benefit;
- there is a difference of €45.30 between the Jobseeker payments and the State Pension leading to an annual loss of €2,355.60; and
- the pension age is scheduled in legislation to increase to 67 years in 2021, and 68 years in 2028; and

calls on the Government to:

- restore the State Pension Transition payment for those retiring at 65 years of age;
- abolish mandatory retirement (with exceptions for security-related employment) to give workers the choice to work or retire so long as they are fit to do so;

P.T.O.

- make provision for those who remain at work beyond 65 to have their Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) contributions counted towards their State Pension; and
- immediately introduce legislation to remove the pension age increase to 67 years and the further increases.” — *Louise O'Reilly, Claire Kerrane, Chris Andrews, John Brady, Martin Browne, Pat Buckley, Matt Carthy, Sorca Clarke, Rose Conway-Walsh, Réada Cronin, Seán Crowe, David Cullinane, Pa Daly, Pearse Doherty, Paul Donnelly, Dessie Ellis, Mairéad Farrell, Kathleen Funchion, Thomas Gould, Johnny Guirke, Martin Kenny, Pádraig Mac Lochlainn, Mary Lou McDonald, Denise Mitchell, Imelda Munster, Johnny Mythen, Eoin Ó Broin, Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire, Ruairí Ó Murchú, Darren O'Rourke, Aengus Ó Snodaigh, Maurice Quinlivan, Patricia Ryan, Brian Stanley, Pauline Tully, Mark Ward, Violet-Anne Wynne.*

Leasú:

Amendment:

1. To delete all words after “Dáil Éireann” and substitute the following:

“notes that:

- the Programme for Government ‘Our Shared Future’ has committed to maintaining the State Pension as the bedrock of the Irish pension system;
- this includes a commitment to establish a Commission on Pensions and pending the report of that Commission to maintain the State Pension age at 66;
- the Government has already established this Commission on Pensions;
- the Commission on Pensions has already conducted its first meeting, its second is scheduled for tomorrow the 2nd December, its third is scheduled for later this month and it will meet approximately every fortnight in the new year until it concludes its work;
- the Government has approved the Social Welfare Bill 2020, which in addition to giving legislative effect to a range of social welfare measures announced in Budget 2021 on 13th October, 2020, includes specific provisions to repeal increases in the State Pension age ensuring that it will remain at 66 pending the report of the Commission on Pensions and consideration of that report by Government;
- the Social Welfare Bill 2020 was published on 24th November, 2020;
- as set out in that Bill the Government is also repealing the planned increase from 67 to 68 which is scheduled to happen on 1st January, 2028, thus ensuring that the Commission on Pensions can consider matters in relation to the State Pension age unfettered by any prospective changes;
- the Government has noted the Minister for Social Protection’s proposal to sign regulations to formally remove the requirement for 65-year olds to be actively seeking work and to ‘sign on’, formalising an administrative arrangement which has already been in place for some time;
- persons aged 65 or over who retire and qualify for a Jobseeker’s Benefit payment may retain that payment in full until they reach the State Pension age of 66 assuming they don’t return to work;
- the payment rate of €203 is in fact higher than the rate available for the full State Pension in other jurisdictions such as Northern Ireland where the state pension age has been increased from 65 to 66;
- the Terms of Reference of the Commission on Pensions includes consideration of a range of pensions matters including sustainability, eligibility and cross generational equity issues, and consideration of options for the Government to address issues including qualifying age, contribution rates, total contributions and eligibility

requirements;

- in addition, the Commission on Pensions will consider the issue of retirement ages specified in employment contracts that are below the State Pension age, including where contracts stipulate a retirement age of 65;
- section 34(4) of the Employment Equality Act 1998 (as amended) already provides that an employer has to prove a contractual retirement age that is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary, with recourse for employees to the Workplace Relations Commission in the event of breaches;
- to assist employers and employees in this regard and in respect of retirement ages, the Workplace Relations Commission has produced a Code of Practice on Longer Working, and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission has published guidance material for employers on the use of fixed-term contracts beyond normal retirement age; and
- the rate for the State Pension (Contributory) in Ireland compares very favourably with neighbouring jurisdictions where pension rates are significantly lower.” — *An tAire Coimirce Sóisialaí*.