From: Friends of Sinn Fein <ciaranquinnireland@gmail.com>
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To: [redacted]
Subject: Sinn Féin to re-enter the power sharing institutions at Stormont

Sinn Féin to enter new Executive
- Mary Lou McDonald
Sinn Féin President Mary Lou McDonald announced this afternoon:

Lá stairiúil atá ann. Ghlac Ard Chomhairle Shinn Féin cinneadh chun dul isteach sa Tionól agus sa rialtas.

"The Sinn Féin Ard Chomhairle met today and has taken the decision to re-enter the power sharing institutions and to nominate ministers to the power sharing Executive.

We believe that the changes which have been achieved in the negotiations over the last year, build on what was agreed in February 2018, and involve some very significant advances including:

- An Acht Gaeilge – with official, legal recognition of the Irish language for the first time, an Irish language Commissioner and increased Irish language funding. And I commend all the Irish language organisations and activists involved in the campaign with a special commendation to the young people of An Dream Dearg.

- Legislation on the Stormont House Agreement to be brought forward within 100 days.
· Reform of the Petition of Concern to try and end its misuse as a veto by one party.

· Key measures to ensure transparency and accountability to prevent corruption and bad practice and to implement the recommendations arising from the RHI Inquiry.

· Strategies to tackle poverty, sectarians. *And plan to put objective need at the heart of the Program for Government,*

· Finance to start to repair the damage of Tory austerity and help deal with the crisis in our health service including a commitment to settle the health service strike, an action plan on waiting lists, implementing the Bengoa recommendations on health and social care and a mental health action plan within two months and the medical school at Magee.

· There are also a range of proposals to support our teachers and improve education provision, welfare mitigations to be extended beyond March 2020, proposals on workers’ rights and climate change, investment in stadia including Casement Park and ending regional imbalance.

There has also been progress on other issues in recent times including reproductive rights and marriage equality, as a result of mass mobilisations on the streets. It was a key demand that citizens in this jurisdiction enjoy the same rights as citizens elsewhere on these islands.

I reject in the strongest possible terms the British government commitments to the DUP on flags and other issues. These are not part of this agreement. Indeed they fly in the face of the Good Friday Agreement and are bad faith. It is disappointing that the Irish government acquiesced to these measures.

We have a basis to restore power sharing, we are up for that. There is no doubt there are serious challenges ahead – the impact of Brexit, austerity and a range of other issues.

The biggest and most significant challenge will be ensuring that we have genuine power sharing based on equality, respect and integrity.

I believe that the power sharing government can work. That requires everyone to step up. Sinn Féin’s commitment is to do all in our power to make this happen.

At these historic times we will also continue to work for Irish re-unification and ensuring that the criteria for the triggering of an Irish Unity poll are set out and that the planning for unity is stepped up, including the convening of a national forum to discuss and plan the future.
Three years ago Martin McGuinness set down a challenge to all of us to get it right and to deliver for all.

We now need to get to work."