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# UNITED STATES UNITED IRELAND

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## Voting Rights for Citizens

### A Letter from Ireland

a Chara,

Later this year, I will be able to vote for a new Irish President. My brother in Belfast can stand to become President, but cannot vote in the election. My daughters, who lived most of their lives, were educated, attended university, and worked in Dublin, but recently moved abroad also cannot vote in the election. Yet we are all Irish Citizens and described in the Constitution as part of the Irish nation.

US and Canadian citizens living in Ireland can vote in their respective domestic elections. A right denied to Irish citizens living in the north of Ireland or abroad.

This is not a new revelation. The denial of rights was written into Bunreacht na hÉireann (the Irish Constitution) in 1937. This was 15 years after the imposition of partition. The constitution provided for citizenship to all born on the island, but not the means to play a valued role in the political life of the nation. It was written with the full knowledge of the extent of immigration, a deliberate exclusion of a section of our nation and citizens.

For the parties in Dublin; Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, and Labour, which did not organise in the North, the denial of voting rights was self-serving.

Platitudes could be paid to Irish citizens in the North, but God (or rather De Valera) forbid that they would ever be given a voice in the life of the nation. It has always struck me that Irish Citizens in the North and our exiled children across the globe laid waste to the myth of a successful nation state. We were a reminder of a nation

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In November 2013, the Convention on the Constitution recommended that citizens resident outside the State should have the right to vote in Presidential elections. It looked like this historic injustice would be addressed. Enda Kenny, the then Fine Gael Taoiseach, speaking in Philadelphia, promised a referendum to bring the Constitution into line with the recommendation of the Convention. This was too late for the 2018 Presidential Election, but it was promised that it would be in effect for the 2025 election. And then...nothing.

Earlier this year, Sinn Féin brought a motion to the Stormont Assembly (the parliament in the North of Ireland) to support the extension of voting rights in the Irish Presidential election to Irish Citizens living in that jurisdiction. The motion was passed by the Assembly.

This week in the Dáil (Irish Parliament), Sinn Féin leader Mary Lou McDonald pushed for moving the relevant legislation on voting rights to the next stage of Committee scrutiny and proposed a motion calling for the implementation of the 2013 proposals. The Government of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael did not oppose either proposal. However, there is a difference between not opposing and actively progressing.

The dead hand of Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil cannot be allowed to continue to undermine the voting rights of Irish Citizens in the North or living abroad. Rights that are extended to citizens of other nations.

Have a great weekend.

Is mise,

Ciarán

**Ciarán Quinn is the Sinn Féin Representative to North America**

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## **November must be the last Presidential election that excludes citizens in the North and the diaspora – Mary Lou McDonald TD**

Sinn Féin Leader Mary Lou McDonald today said that November's election must be the last Presidential election that excludes citizens in the North, and citizens living

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She said: “It’s a matter of some injustice, a violation of democracy, that Irish citizens in the six counties and those living aboard are denied the right to vote for their Uachtarán.

“Every seven years, when the Presidential Election rolls around, Irish citizens from the North and living overseas are told by the political establishment that they are less Irish, forced to accept second-class status, alienated from the nation to which they belong.

“You can also be a candidate for the office of President, but if you reside in Derry, as did Martin McGuinness, you’re not allowed a vote. You can even win the election and become President of Ireland, but because you’re from Belfast, as was Mary McAleese, you’re barred from voting for yourself.”

Ms. McDonald was speaking in the Dáil as she moved a Sinn Féin motion calling for voting rights in Presidential elections to be extended to all Irish citizens on the island of Ireland and the diaspora.

Highlighting that it is now 11 years since Sinn Féin legislation providing for the extension of Presidential voting rights passed Second Stage in the Dáil, she added: “For more than a decade, both Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael have promised to extend Presidential voting rights. But nothing has happened. The commitment has even been dropped from the current Programme for Government.

“Delay is no longer acceptable; delay was never acceptable. What we need now, finally, is a clear timeline from the government and a date for the holding of a referendum.

“November’s election must be the last Presidential election that excludes citizens in the North and those living abroad who so deeply love their country.”

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## June Video Update

News, analysis, & updates in the latest video update, featuring Sinn Féin's Representative to North America Ciarán Quinn & Friends of Sinn Féin Director Greg O'Loughlin. In 37 minutes you'll be caught up on the politics and planning for a United Ireland & more!



## A World-class Health and Care Service for a New Ireland

Uachtarán Shinn Féin Mary Lou McDonald TD has today launched a discussion document on 'The Case for an Irish National Health & Care Service'.

The Sinn Féin paper is a significant contribution to the growing discussion taking place around the issue of a new Ireland – a united Ireland – and in particular the provision of health and care services.

Uachtarán Shinn Féin Mary Lou McDonald said, "The future shape of an all-island health service is for many people a priority. Both health services on the island of

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“Sinn Féin is publishing this contribution to the conversation. It promotes the objective of a world-class healthcare service in a new and united Ireland. It offers a vision of a publicly funded, universal service which can deliver better working conditions for healthcare staff, and greater investment in vital services – including mental health care and disability services.

“Citizens and patients will be much better served by a health and care service that is planned, managed and delivered based on the needs of the national population.

“An Irish National Health and Care Service is a common sense and achievable proposition. There are already many areas of cooperation across the two health systems. These need to be supported by the full integration of health provision across the island of Ireland and a national health strategy.”

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## Michelle O'Neill addresses Sinn Féin's annual Wolfe Tone Commemoration at Bodenstown

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## Tone Commemoration at Bodenstown, County Kildare.

The First Minister's address in full:

A chairde,

Is mór an onóir dom bheith libh anseo inniu agus muid ag déanamh comóradh ar Laoch na hÉireann agus Laoch an Phoblachtánachais -Theobald Wolfe Tone.

As always, it is a great honour to join you here today in this sacred place – the final resting place of Theobald Wolfe Tone.

We gather to honour the father of Irish republicanism and to recommit ourselves to the unfinished work of building a united, sovereign Irish Republic.

Wolfe Tone's vision was very clear – Irish independence, unity, and equality.

A Republic of equals, built on solidarity between Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter. His vision was revolutionary then – and remains so today.

His courage and his optimism continue to inspire us in everything we do and say as Irish republicans.

So, we gather here not simply to remember the past, but, most importantly, to shape the future.

Irish unity is our primary objective and it is a tangible and urgent political project, not just for us as Irish republicans, but, increasingly, across all sections of the Irish people.

- The debate is underway.
- The momentum is real.
- The responsibility to prepare belongs to us all – and most particularly for the Irish Government.

Unity is a huge opportunity.

- A new beginning.
- It cannot be approached with wishful thinking.
- It requires planning.

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Sinn Féin is actively and urgently addressing this important work. The party's Commission on the Future of Ireland is doing sterling work in facilitating a structured and national conversation on the future of our island.

- We are lobbying governments across Europe and beyond to promote the benefits of and support for Irish unity.
- We are engaged in active outreach with the Irish diaspora in Britain, the United States, Canada and Australia.
- Most importantly, of course, we are working to ensure there are unity referendums on the island of Ireland in this decade of opportunity.

In Sinn Féin, we are laser focused on Irish unity. It is who we are, and it is what we do, day and daily.




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