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UNITED STATES UNITED IRELAND

Peaceful and Democratic Means

A letter from Ireland

a Chairde,

First of all, apologies; cancelled flights led to missed deadlines and unpublished letters. On the upside, I'm back from my holidays, refreshed and ready for action.

This week marks the twenty-first anniversary of the Irish Republican Army formally ending its armed campaign. On July 25th, 2005, the IRA issued a statement ending its campaigns, directing its volunteers to dump weapons, and to support the cause of unity by solely peaceful and democratic means. It also committed the organisation to fully put its weapons beyond use to further confidence in the peace process.

This initiative followed the 1997 reinstatement of their ceasefire, which facilitated peace talks that led directly to the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.

Up until that point, the IRA had maintained the longest-running armed conflict in Irish history. All other uprisings, rebellions and campaigns had lasted from weeks to a few short years. The IRA campaign was sustained for almost thirty years. Like all conflicts, it was brutal and violent. Thousands died, and many more were injured. These included members of the British Military, loyalist paramilitaries, civilians, and IRA members and supporters. Over ten thousand Irish Republicans lost years of their lives in jail.

The impact of the ceasefires, peace process, and standing down of the IRA on politics cannot be overstated. I was born in Belfast in 1968 as the conflict was starting. It was

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friends, and neighbours. They signed, up knowing that they would either end up killed or jailed. They believed that politics had failed, that democracy had been denied, and that they had to act against the repression witnessed every day.

Others might disagree with that analysis, but it was hard to argue with the experience of nationalism over fifty years of partition, single-party unionist rule, gerrymandering, and discrimination all underwritten by successive British Governments and repression on the streets at the hands of their army and police. There had been those who argued against the use of violence, but they failed, like the old Nationalist party, to end discrimination, partition or promote Irish Unity. They opposed violence but offered no viable alternative to unionists or to British policy.

Without a doubt, the IRA could have maintained its campaign; this was acknowledged by British military leaders, who recognised that a British military victory was not possible. Irish Republicans were also examining an alternative to armed conflict.

Sinn Féin leaders, working with John Hume of the SDLP, the Irish Government, and supporters in North America, began to build a political and democratic alternative to conflict. As this developed, the IRA, through ceasefires, provided the space for negotiations and agreement.

That alternative became the bedrock of the Good Friday Agreement, the commitment to peaceful and democratic means including unity referendums, protections of rights, powersharing, and an end to discrimination.

In their 2006 Statement ending their campaign, the leadership of the IRA said, "...our decisions have been taken to advance our republican and democratic objectives, including our goal of a united Ireland.

"We believe there is now an alternative way to achieve this and to end British rule in our country."

That alternative remains in place. Irish Unity referendums are the outstanding issue from the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. Those dissident groups that use the name of the IRA do not command the support of the people and cannot sustain a campaign. Their actions lead only to jail and injury. Absent any coherent strategy, it is violence for the sake of violence.

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and democratically by securing and winning Unity Referendums. Twenty one years on and Ireland has fundamentally changed. The future is ours to write.

Have a great weekend.

Is mise,

Ciarán

Ciarán Quinn is the Sinn Féin Representative to North America

Irish Unity Webinar: Health & Care in a New & United Ireland with Pat Cullen MP

Join us for a conversation about health & care in a new & united Ireland with Pat Cullen MP on **Sunday, August 2, at 2:00pm ET**. We'll discuss the key questions & topics related to the potential healthcare benefits of a United Ireland! It's free & all are welcome!

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Sadness at passing of revered Mary Doherty

It is with deep sadness that we share the news of the passing of Mary Doherty (née Conroy), of Gortnabrade, Carrigart, Co. Donegal, and formerly of Belmullet, Co. Mayo and Glasgow. Mary was the beloved wife of our friend and former Sinn Féin Vice President Pat Doherty.

Mary was a proud republican and, alongside Pat and their family, dedicated many years to the struggle for Irish freedom and justice. She was held in great affection by comrades across the island and will be remembered for her warmth, kindness and steadfast commitment.

We extend our deepest sympathies to Pat, their children, grandchildren, the extended Doherty and Conroy families, friends and all who mourn Mary's passing.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam dílis.

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AOH re-elects Sean Pender as it pushes for Irish unity vote

Meeting at its biennial convention in Omaha, the Ancient Order of Hibernians set a national agenda spanning Irish unity, Northern Ireland legacy cases, and more.

The Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH), the oldest and largest Irish American Catholic organization in the US, has re-elected President Sean Pender of New Jersey to a second term as National President.

The AOH also adopted a national advocacy agenda focused on Irish unity, legacy justice in Northern Ireland, comprehensive immigration reform, and preservation of the former Bessborough Mother and Baby Home site in Cork.

Irish Unity and Legacy Justice

Pender called for serious planning and public discussion of a referendum on Irish unity as provided for under the Good Friday Agreement.

"The AOH says: let us have this conversation on unity. Let each side put forward its best argument, and let the people decide democratically," Pender said.

"Those who support a referendum have identified 2030 as a target. If, by then, a full 32 years after the Good Friday Agreement, we cannot even have a serious conversation about unity, when will we?

"The time has come for a serious plan for Irish unity."

Pender also reaffirmed the AOH's commitment to families seeking truth and justice in Northern Ireland, including those pursuing accountability in the Sean Brown and Pat Finucane cases.

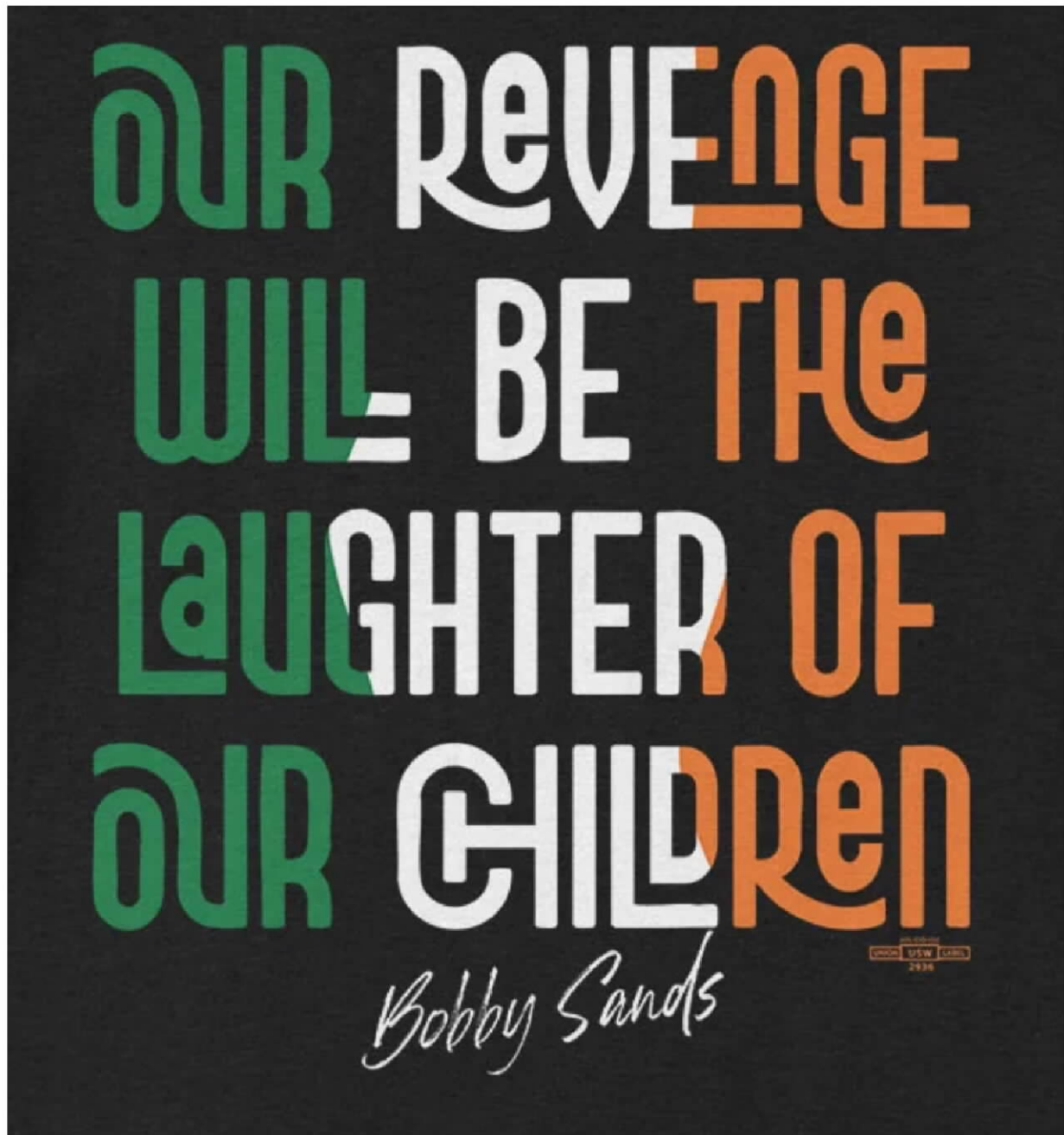
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Anniversary of the Catalpa's return to New York

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[Tickets on sale now.](#)

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A celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the returning of the Catalpa



**Join us for an evening of story and song to remember one of
the most daring prison escapes and rescues in history!**

Wednesday, August 19, 2026

New York Irish Center

7:00pm

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