

Rónán Ó Dálaigh

14/01/2015 20:09

To seanadreformwg@taoiseach.gov.i  
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cc

Subject Seanad Reform

Dr Manning, a chara,

As a citizen of the republic I consider myself an 'interested party' in potential reform of the Seanad.

My submission to the Working Group on Seanad Reform is as follows:

"The purpose of Seanad Éireann should be to strengthen and enhance our democratic and legislative system. It is a great pity that the group's terms of references limit your scope to changes that lie within the existing constitutional framework. The basic starting points of reform should be constitutional amendments that remove the highly undemocratic process that gives An Taoiseach the right to appoint 11 members: all 60 members should be elected. Furthermore, the election should be a general election and open to all Irish citizens (at home and abroad, but that's another story).

I hope that the Working Group will find the courage to point out the severe and undemocratic restrictions it is under in not being able to review Bunreacht na hÉireann and propose a commission or further working group to examine constitutional changes.

Regarding changes that are within the existing constitutional framework the Working Group should propose the abolition of the party whip system in Seanad Éireann in order to increase its legislative influence and democratic functioning.

The franchise for the university seats should be expanded to include all graduates of all third level institutions. Specifically, the Group should examine the potential of including colleges of further education within this change and if feasible propose that such a change be made and that graduates of colleges of further education be included in the electorate. If this change is made the seats and structure should be based on proportional representation."

The best of luck in your continued work.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

Rónán Ó Dálaigh

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Cuirfear fáilte mhór roimh chomhfhreagras i nGaeilge.