

1. APPOINTMENT OF REJECTED POLITICAL CANDIDATES

People should not be appointed to the Senate as a consolation prize for losing an election. It is an attack on democracy to give political power to someone the electorate has just rejected. Nobody should sit in the Oireachtas against the express will of the people, and for the Senate to countenance this is wrong.

A reasonable quarantine period can be discussed. Certainly an unsuccessful Dáil candidate should not sit in the Senate in the lifetime of that Dáil. That is the period for which people voted to exclude them from public representation, and it should be respected.

2. PENSIONS

It is perfectly reasonable that former Senators should be protected from penury and allowed to live with dignity. This can be achieved with pensions which are:

- A. modest;
- B. not payable until retirement age; and
- C. means-tested.

Pensions should not be paid to people who do not need them, either because they are still working, because they are independently wealthy, or for any other reason. It feels odd that this even needs to be said.

3. ATTENDANCE

There should be a high minimum attendance requirement in the Senate. It is not a sinecure. If it is to be a vital part of the state, Senators must turn up.

I understand that people have other commitments, but if their other commitments prevent them from doing the work of the Senate they should be made to yield that place to someone who can give it the attention it deserves.

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Kevin McGee