

Subject: Constituency Commission submission

The removal of parts of South Mayo and up to 10,000 voters in the constituency boundary changes has been a serious issue since the move occurred over five years ago, but more so since the General Election last year. The situation which now pertains means that in the village of Roundfort, Delia Murphy's pub is in the Mayo constituency while Lyon's pub, which is just across road, is in the Galway West constituency and mean many neighbours and villagers are voting in two different areas for completely different candidates.

I am urging you to now return the areas of South Mayo which were in the Galway West constituency back into Mayo. The fact the population of Galway City has increased by nearly 4,000 people while the county has increased by over two percent, gives weight to the argument that Mayo as a whole should be returned to its initial status instead of being a 'fragmented county'.

South Mayo has become a political island. It falls between two stools in Galway West and Mayo. It makes no sense to have Galway people put into Roscommon and Mayo people put into Galway. Now that the census has changed since 2011 where you have 4,000 extra people in Galway city means half of South Mayo is not needed. The people of Mayo in general don't have a problem with the amount of elected representatives but they have a serious problem in relation to the divide. They don't mind four but would prefer five TD's.

Analysis shows rural Ireland is on a steady decline because of the nature of the current 158 TD's versus the previous count of 166.

People are suffering from a lack of representation. The seats that were in these areas before are now becoming urban based.

Boundary changes take place in urban areas but they don't have the same affect as in urban areas. In reality the Claremorris Municipal Area is deprived the opportunity of electing a TD. They are the only area that don't have their full area to vote. The Terms of Reference need to increase the number of TD's again to recoup for those geographical areas.

A Fine Gael branch, Kilcommin/Carras in the South Mayo area had about 30 members. Once the boundaries were changed, up to 14 of the members were in Galway West while the rest were in Mayo. This left the organisation in a very difficult situation as a rural group.

Members of Garrymore GAA club also seriously suffered when the boundaries were changed. Half the membership of the club are in Galway West while the other half remains in Mayo. These changes caused a lot of confusion. It is the same in the Hollymount/Carramore GAA club. The reduction from six districts down to four meant local councillors had a larger area to cover. The Claremorris Municipal District from Shrule to Carracastle is about 60 miles. The whole thing at local and national level is very confusing for people instead of leaving Mayo the way it was.

You have to live on the ground to know the implications. As it was, people in Mayo knew their TD's and candidates but when the people of South Mayo were moved into Galway they are represented by people who are urbanised and by people they don't know.

Most people who are in the Mayo and Galway West constituencies don't agree with taking a small part of one county and putting it into another county just for the sake of making up numbers. I personally haven't met anyone with an interest with politics who agrees with it. The changes made last time around put a very rural area into a mostly urbanised area. Most of Galway West is Galway City and Connemara. The city is continuously growing and their TD's have enough to do in looking after the problems in the city and students while Connemara is a tourist area. South Mayo is small farmers and small businesses.

When the changes were made previously, most people didn't know or understand about the changes and their implications. I am now urging you to seriously consider returning Mayo to a full constituency.

Having met people in South Mayo while canvassing during previous local and general elections, it is clear they are not happy being in Galway West. We now have a fragmented county but yet the entire county is still covered by Mayo County Council.