

Sub 16/183

From: Billy Timmins ·

Date: Mon 9 Jan 2017 at 12:12

Subject: Submission re Constituency Boundary Commission.

To: constituency.commission@housing.gov.ie <constituency.commission@housing.gov.ie>

Dear Sir,

I wish to make the following observations with respect to the constituencies of Wicklow and Carlow/Kilkenny. I am acutely aware of the importance of the recognition and allegiance by people to their county. When I was a member of the Oireachtas I sought to reflect this by seeking an official name of Wicklow/East Carlow for the Wicklow constituency however this was not successful. If the constituency remains the same the name should be changed to include Carlow.

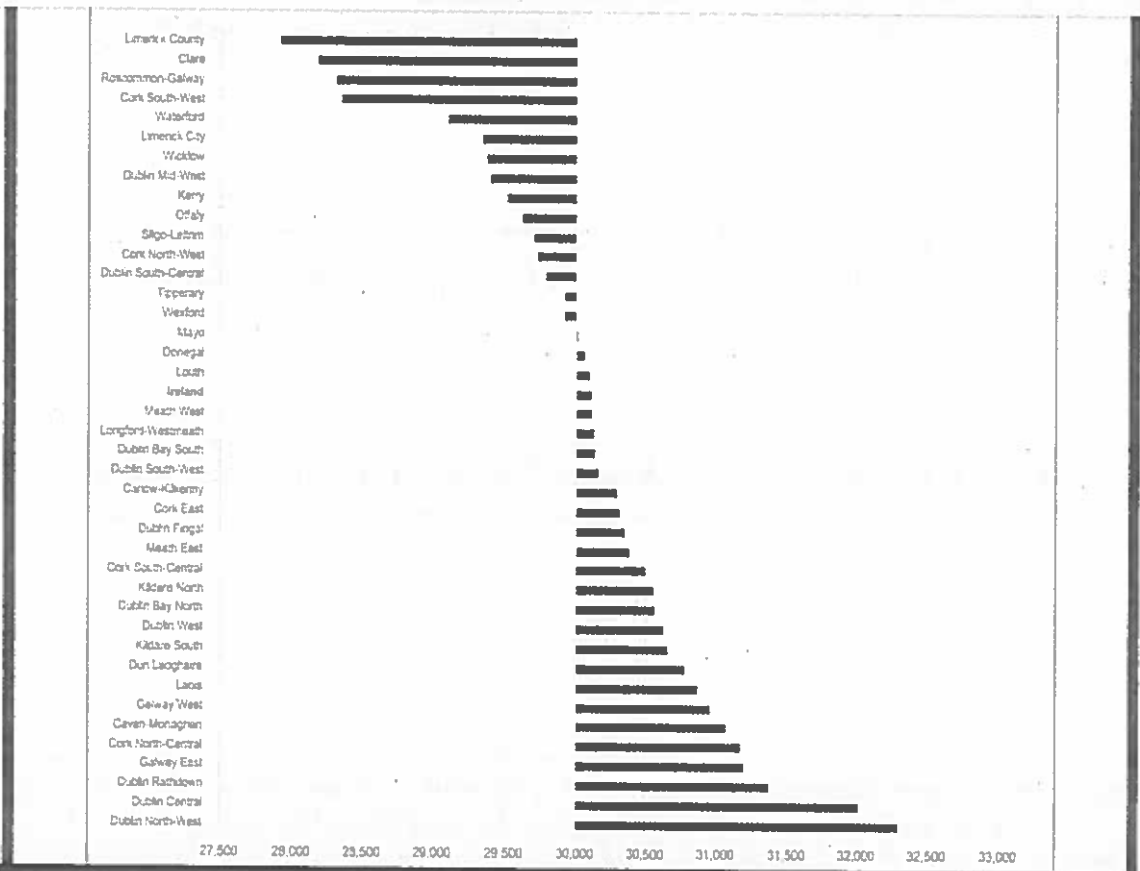
In the past I made submissions outlining how that portion of Carlow currently in the Wicklow constituency has strong geographical, parish and school ties with Wicklow. In practical terms the county boundary is seamless as residents cross over for schooling and day to day activities. Each area in the Carlow section forms a parish with similar areas in Wicklow. The same case could be made that large areas of Wicklow have a deep interconnection with County Carlow. Some of the submissions made to date make reference to the divide between Carlow and Wicklow, equally of course these could be made with respect to County Wicklow due to the presence of the mountains. This is applicable to many counties across the country.

The chart that I have attached below outlines where the Wicklow constituency stands after the preliminary census results. With respect to population per TD it comes in at 34/40 relative to Carlow/Kilkenny of 18/40. To remove some area from Wicklow would increase this inequity and further penalise Wicklow.

Reference has been made to turnout at GE 2016. I am aware that a local breakdown is dependent on tallies which may not paint the full picture. Variation can occur for a number of reasons, accuracy of tally, accuracy of register (in rural areas families are more inclined to leave members on although they maybe abroad), concentration of candidates and so on.

It is pointed out that East Carlow (representing 3,401 voters) had a turnout of 56% relative to a Wicklow County one of 72%. Yet a check of a similar area in Carlow/Kilkenny, adjoining Wicklow (Ardattin,Clonegal, Rathoe by 2 and Tullow Mon by 2, representing 3,190 voters) had only a turnout of 54.2%. Box 1 in Ballyconnell, Co Wicklow (adjoining County Carlow) had a turnout of 53.1%. Bray and Greystones, which had a high concentration of candidates had a turnout of about 70%. I make these points only to demonstrate that many factors can influence turnout and ask what conclusion can one draw from the turnouts in Carlow of 56% and 54.2%?

With respect to representation and funding, to the best of my memory, every organisation and club that sought Lottery funding in Wicklow /East Carlow from 2011 to 2016, and had its application in order, was successful. During my time in the Oireachtas I was very aware of the perception of geographic isolation and always sought to address it. I don't believe that I was unique in this, indeed East Carlow was nearer to me than 90% of Wicklow. I do however understand the desire of people to have certain areas remain intact, notwithstanding that I am of the view that maintaining the status quo in Wicklow and Carlow will have the least disruptive impact on the countrywide changes as a whole.



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