

9th January, 2016

The Secretary,
Constituency Commission,
Room 1.65
Custom House
Dublin 1
D01W6XO

RE: Submission to Reunite the Constituency of Cavan-Monaghan

Dear Sir, Madam,

I wish to make the following submission for your consideration when making recommendations regarding the alteration of constituency boundaries for electoral purposes. This submission is concerned with the constituency of Cavan and Monaghan and calls for the reunification of the constituency to its former state. The rationale for this submission is outlined as below.

- 1) Prior to the 2016 General Election and indeed since 1977, the full geographic area of county Cavan and the full geographic area of county Monaghan were one constituency. In 2012 legislation was passed to change the geographic boundaries for electoral areas. This resulted in a huge loss of 36 Electoral Divisions from the county of Cavan. It is my view, and that of my colleagues in Cavan County Council that migrating 36 Electoral Divisions of County Cavan to the Sligo-Leitrim constituency has been detrimental to the county as a whole in terms of social and economic development, social inclusion and community identity and social cohesion. The lack of familiarity between constituents and their representatives was evident during the 2016 General Election and had a knock on effect on the voter turnout in the affected area. Confusion and frustration were widespread throughout the election campaign with a severe sense of isolation felt by those in West Cavan.
- 2) As a result of the increasing population and the constitutional requirement that the population per TD ratio nationally must not exceed 30,000 there is much need for change in the electoral boundaries. The preliminary results of the 2016 Census have shown an increase in population in both Cavan and Monaghan. The population of

Cavan has increased from 73,183 in 2011 to 76,092 in 2016. Similarly the population of Monaghan grew from 60,483 in 2011 to 61,273 in 2016. The border region population is, according to the CSO, set to increase in the coming years. This affords ample opportunity to the Commission to seriously examine the implications of the divided county Cavan.

- 3) The terms of reference of the Commission, upon which you will base your deliberations state:
- The breaching of county boundaries shall be avoided as far as practicable
 - Each constituency shall be composed of contiguous areas
 - There shall be regard to geographic considerations including significant physical features and the extent of and the density of population in each constituency
 - The Commission shall endeavour to maintain continuity in relation to the arrangement of constituencies.

Taking each of these into account it is therefore difficult to understand the concoction that is West Cavan, Sligo, Leitrim and South Donegal. Areas such as Ballintra in Co. Donegal or Inishcrone in Co. Sligo can hardly be considered 'contiguous' with Belturbet or Crossdoney in Co. Cavan. The physical terrain, which varies greatly, includes lakes and mountain ranges and this, coupled with a network of minor roads inhibits accessibility. The lack of public transport or proper road infrastructure only adds to the segregation of the communities of West Cavan. I believe that there should be positive discrimination towards rural Ireland and that county boundaries should not be breached.

I thank you for taking the time to consider this submission and very much hope that it will help to inform a positive decision, thus ensuring the reunification of county Cavan and the Cavan Monaghan constituency.

Yours sincerely,



Senator Diarmuid Wilson