

**Sub 16/233**

Co. Carlow

Dear Secretary,

I wish to make the following submission to The Constituency Commission in relation to the formation of constituencies for the election of members to Dail Eireann. My submission relates specifically to the Dáil constituency of Carlow Kilkenny.

I am writing on a number of levels. That as a resident in East Carlow, who has been forced to vote in an area that I am extremely unhappy about. A primary teacher in my local school who finds it hard to instil a grá for the Irish voting system in the children I am teaching as I personally feel deflated by my voting situation, and finally a person who feels that my rights as an Irish citizen are not being met as I am unable to vote to put people into government that I truly believe will do the best job for me and my local community.

To make my situation a little cleared I will explain why I am so irate about this voting situation. A member of Dáil Éireann lives just a 4 minute drive from my home. This is a person who I would consider myself friendly with and who I am proud to have in Dáil Éireann as I believe they are a more than capable person. They would be my first point of contact should the need arise. However, I could not vote for this candidate in the most recent election as they were standing in the Carlow/Kilkenny constituency. In short, I was unable to vote for my local candidate.

I am a proud Carlow person. I live in Carlow, work in Carlow and support Carlow and my local community at every turn. In the run up to the election much literature came through my door and I read each piece with interest to inform myself. However, I was reduced to tears and found myself writing to TDs when a letter, addressed to me, a proud Carlow woman, began with 'Dear Wicklow resident'. I have never been a Wicklow resident and it proved to me that there were no real candidates with an interest in our area 'East Carlow'. We are clearly a box ticking exercise and a few extra votes that won't really make a difference to the Wicklow candidate who we are forced to vote for.

Based on the last election, if I wanted to see an elected candidate who was on my polling card in person I would have to drive for 40 minutes at least to their local office. If I want to see a candidate from the Carlow/Kilkenny constituency in person I could be at two offices within a 25 minute drive. How can this be right?

I know and understand how hard people fought for our civil rights and our independence but to be very honest, during the last election and how voting made me feel I questioned what it really meant for me to be Irish at a time when I should have been celebrating out nationality in 2016. I felt, disheartened, let down and like my vote didn't really matter. This is something I never expected my country to make me feel and something I never wish to feel again.

I have discussed this issue with family, friends, colleagues and local people of Rathvilly and I can assure you that we are all on the same page. Fair is fair, allow us the honour to vote for our local people in our own county and feel like we are equal citizens of Ireland too.

I trust this issue will be given your prompt attention and will have a satisfactory outcome for the people of Rathvilly.

Regards

Eithne Molloy