

## SUBMISSION BY FINE GAEL RE DÁIL CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES

Fine Gael welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to the Commission.

In considering the basis for our submission, we are mindful of the Commission's Terms of Reference, in particular:

- the total number of members shall be not less than 153 and not more than 160
- the breaching of county boundaries should be avoided as far as practicable
- there shall be regard to geographic considerations
- maintaining continuity in relation to the arrangement of constituencies

In light of the preliminary results of Census 2016, and the increase in national population since 2011 (c.170k, +3.7%), the Commission is limited in terms of the options available to it, given that the seat range 153-158 is not feasible, as all options in that range would fail to meet the requirements of Article 16.2.2 of the Constitution.

The average population per TD in the current 158-seat Dáil stands at 30,114 – which exceeds the 30,000 provided for in the Constitution.

- A Dáil with 159 seats will yield an average of 29,924
- A Dáil with 160 seats results in an average of 29,737

The final Census results in 2011 showed an increase of just under 7,000 compared to the preliminary findings, equivalent to 0.15%; in the event that a similar adjustment arises in relation to Census 2016, the average population per TD would rise to 29,969 for 159 seats, and 29,782 for 160 seats. (In the event that the adjustment exceed 12,000 (0.25%) – the possibility of a 159-seat option may not be tenable)

So, the principal question for the Commission is whether to opt for 159 or 160 seats.

It is clear that the actual increase in population, and also the rate of increase, is greatest in Dublin. In terms of seats allocated to each province/region, there is a clear case for an additional seat in Dublin, in the event of a 159 seat Dáil, based on the average population per TD.

In the event of a 160-seat arrangement, Leinster appears to have a marginally stronger case, when compared to Connacht/Ulster. By comparison, Munster is already somewhat over-represented, and has no case for an extra seat.

Region	Population		Change in population		Current Seats	Seats/pop.	
	2011	2016	Actual	%		159	160
Connacht/Ulster	837,350	846,862	9,512	1.14%	<b>28</b>	28.30	28.48
Dublin	1,273,069	1,345,402	72,333	5.68%	<b>44</b>	44.96	45.24
Leinster	1,242,698	1,296,166	53,468	4.30%	<b>43</b>	43.31	43.59
Munster	1,235,135	1,269,546	34,411	2.79%	<b>43</b>	42.43	42.69
	<b>4,588,252</b>	<b>4,757,976</b>	<b>169,724</b>	<b>3.70%</b>	<b>158</b>		

## DUBLIN

An analysis of Dublin constituencies, using the river Liffey as a natural north/south boundary, shows that the additional seat in Dublin should go to the north side. The existing five constituencies share twenty seats between them, but their combined population warrants twenty-one, in either a 159 or 160 seat scenario.

Constituency	Population		Change in pop.		Current Seats	Seats/pop.	
	2011	2016	Actual	%		159	160
Dublin Bay North	146,512	152,830	6,318	4.31%	5	5.11	5.14
Dublin Central	89,030	96,048	7,018	7.88%	3	3.21	3.23
Dublin Fingal	141,162	151,758	10,596	7.51%	5	5.07	5.10
Dublin North West	90,534	96,898	6,364	7.03%	3	3.24	3.26
Dublin West	113,179	122,507	9,328	8.24%	4	4.09	4.12
	<b>580,417</b>	<b>620,041</b>	<b>39,624</b>	<b>6.83%</b>	<b>20</b>	20.72	20.85

Constituency	Population		Change in pop.		Current Seats	Seats/pop.	
	2011	2016	Actual	%		2011	2016
Dublin Bay South	116,396	120,562	4,166	3.58%	4	4.03	4.05
Dublin Mid West	110,427	117,588	7,161	6.48%	4	3.93	3.95
Dublin Rathdown	87,470	94,125	6,655	7.61%	3	3.15	3.17
Dublin South Central	114,660	119,121	4,461	3.89%	4	3.98	4.01
Dublin South West	144,908	150,816	5,908	4.08%	5	5.04	5.07
Dun Laoghaire	118,791	123,149	4,358	3.67%	4	4.12	4.14
	<b>692,652</b>	<b>725,361</b>	<b>32,709</b>	<b>4.72%</b>	<b>24</b>	24.24	24.39

<b>DUBLIN</b>	<b>1,273,069</b>	<b>1,345,402</b>	<b>72,333</b>	<b>5.68%</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>44.96</b>	<b>45.24</b>
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## IMPORTANCE OF COUNTY BOUNDARIES

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The Commission's Terms of Reference properly identify the need to avoid breaching county boundaries, where possible.

The last Commission recommended a number of new breaches, which have had the effect of creating some quite incongruous constituencies, some of which have been the subject of other submissions already made:

- West Cavan in Sligo Leitrim
- South Donegal in Sligo Leitrim
- South Mayo in Galway West
- South Kildare in Laois
- North Tipperary in Offaly

These more recent changes are in addition to others, which have been in place for some time.

In general terms, a number of the submissions already made, reflect the extent to which the public feel isolated, marginalised and disenfranchised when they end up as an 'add-on' to a neighbouring constituency, but in a different county, and in one case, in a different province and European constituency.

The Commission must decide which factors are more important in arriving at a recommendation. We respectfully suggest that the Commission recognise the strong resistance, and resultant lack of engagement in the political process, which is evident in areas where county boundaries have been breached significantly.

We suggest that breaching of county boundaries should, ideally, be avoided altogether and in any event, that natural geographic boundaries and local association are more important to the achievement of fair and equal representation through out the country, than trying to stay within a narrow band of variation in the ratio of population to TD.

This is of particular relevance at this time, given that the Commission is relatively limited in terms of the scope to vary the total number of seats.

Whilst there is no legislative limit on the extent to which average population per TD in constituencies may vary from the national average, we would encourage the Commission to adopt a more flexible approach towards the range of variances accepted, in the context of seeking to restore county boundaries.

In some cases, reverting to county boundaries will result in higher variations than those which have been accepted in the past; in other cases, it may not be possible to restore all county boundaries; in these cases, we would urge the Commission to consider a partial reversal of previous decisions.

The feeling of displacement as mentioned above is borne out by some data on turnout at the recent General Election. There is evidence to show that turnout/voter participation is adversely affected, when areas are added on to neighbouring constituencies, and county boundaries are breached.

## BREACHES OF COUNTY BOUNDARIES AND TURNOUT

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No two elections are the same. In addition to the national mood, a variety of local factors may also have a bearing on turnout, including the proximity of a local candidate, particularly in rural constituencies.

An examination of voter turnout (by reference to election tallies) in areas which have been displaced i.e. form part of a neighbouring constituency, but in a different county, shows some patterns emerging, when comparing turnout in 2016 to that in 2011, and also looking at the turnout relative to the turnout in the rest of the county to which the area concerned belongs.

### **West Cavan** (2011: Cavan Monaghan; 2016: Sligo Leitrim)

**2011:** turnout was 75%, ten points ahead of the rest of Cavan, at 65%.

**2016:** turnout was 65%, down ten points;  
turnout in the rest of Cavan was 70%, up five points.

Whereas turnout in West Cavan was ten points better than in the rest of Cavan in 2011, it was five points lower in 2016.

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### **South Mayo** (2011: Mayo; 2016: Galway West)

**2011:** turnout was 75%, two points above the average for the rest of Mayo, 73%

**2016:** turnout was 64%, down eleven points;  
turnout in the rest of Mayo was 69%, down four

Whereas turnout in South Mayo was two points better than in the rest of Mayo in 2011, it was five points lower in 2016.

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### **East Meath** (2011: Louth; 2016: Louth)

**2011:** turnout was 60%, six points below the average for the rest of Meath East

**2016:** turnout was 49%, down eleven points.  
turnout in the rest of Meath East was 62%, a drop of only four points  
in Louth, turnout was 60%, down five points.

Whereas turnout in East Meath was six points lower than in the rest of Meath East in 2011, it was thirteen points lower in 2016.

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### **North Tipperary** (2011: Tipperary North; 2016: Offaly)

**2011:** turnout was 76%, three points above the average for the rest of Tipperary North, 73%

**2016:** turnout was 69%, down seven points.  
turnout in the rest of Tipperary North was also 69%, down only four points.

However, whereas turnout in north Tipperary was three points higher than in the rest of Tipperary North in 2011, it was the same in 2016 – relatively speaking, there was a bigger drop in the displaced area

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## BREACHES OF COUNTY BOUNDARIES AND TURNOUT contd'

**South Offaly** (2011: Tipperary North; 2016: Offaly)

**2011:** turnout was 68%, the same as the rest of Offaly, also 68%

**2016:** turnout was 65%, down three points.

turnout in the rest of Offaly was 60%, a drop of eight points

Whereas turnout in South Offaly was the same as the rest of Offaly in 2011, it was five points better in 2016, when the area was put back into Offaly.

**Westmeath** (2011: Meath West; 2016: Meath West)

**2011:** turnout was 65%, compared to 70% in the rest of the old Coole LEA.

**2016:** turnout was 59%, down six points, compared to 64% in the rest of the area, also down six.

Turnout in that part of Westmeath which is in Meath West constituency is consistently five points lower than the turnout in the remaining part of the old LEA, in Longford Westmeath.

### Summary:

County	Area	Constituency		Turnout		
		2011	2016	2011	2016	Ch.
Cavan	West Cavan	CM	SL	75%	<b>62%</b>	<b>-13%</b>
	Rest of Cavan	CM	CM	65%	<b>70%</b>	5%
Mayo	South Mayo	MO	GW	75%	<b>64%</b>	<b>-11%</b>
	Rest of Mayo	MO	MO	73%	<b>69%</b>	-4%
Meath	East Meath	LH	LH	60%	49%	<b>-11%</b>
	Rest of Meath East	ME	ME	66%	62%	-4%
	Louth	LH	LH	65%	60%	-5%
Tipperary	North Tipperary	TN	OY	76%	69%	<b>-7%</b>
	Rest of Tipperary North	TN	TY	73%	69%	-4%
Offaly	South Offaly	TN	OY	68%	<b>65%</b>	-3%
	Offaly	LO	OY	68%	<b>60%</b>	<b>-8%</b>
Westmeath	Coole etc.	MW	MW	<b>65%</b>	<b>59%</b>	-6%
	Rest of old Coole LEA	LWM	LWM	<b>70%</b>	<b>64%</b>	-6%

In addition, Deputy Pat Deering, in his own submission, has identified that the turnout in that part of east Carlow which finds itself in Wicklow Constituency, was ten points behind the average for the Constituency of Carlow Kilkenny, in 2016.

We will now proceed to deal with each constituency, or regional grouping of constituencies, where we are proposing changes.

## DUBLIN

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Notwithstanding the fact that the Terms of Reference specifically exclude the boundaries between councils in Dublin as constituting 'county boundaries' – on the face of it, Fingal has sufficient population to warrant ten seats.

The population of Fingal (296k) falls predominantly into two constituencies, Dublin Fingal and Dublin West – with some allocated to Dublin Bay North and Dublin North West.

We considered the possibility of allocating ten seats within Fingal; Dublin Fingal currently has five seats, and Dublin West four.

A configuration involving two five seat constituencies would result in Dublin West extending right into the middle of Swords, including the EDs of Swords-Forrest and Swords-Glasmore; Dublin Fingal would then extend from Balbriggan to Howth (36km).

We also considered a three-constituency arrangement, with Dublin West having four seats, and creating two constituencies to the east, with three seats each – one north county, and the other incorporating Howth-Malahide LEA, and part of Swords. This combination results in splitting Swords in three.

Our view is that none of these options is practicable, and would meet with significant resistance from the public, in light of previous boundary configurations.

Our recommendation is that the additional seat should be allocated between the three north city constituencies – Dublin Central, Dublin North West and Dublin Bay North, comprising the area of Dublin City on the north side, together with those parts of Fingal which lie south of the M50.

The preliminary Census results indicate that both Dublin Central and Dublin North West are the most under-represented in the country, Dublin Central having a variance of 6.3%, and Dublin NW 7.3%.

We considered an arrangement of three constituencies with four seats each; in the first instance, such an arrangement would require Dublin Bay North to lose a significant amount of territory, to reflect the loss of one seat. The configurations arising from such a decision would result in Dublin NW extending eastward as far as the Malahide Road (R107). Given that the Dublin Bay North constituency was only formed on foot of the last Boundary Commission Report, and in light of the need to maintain continuity, our view is that a further change of such magnitude would do a disservice to the electorate in Dublin Bay North.

We believe that a more conservative approach is desirable, resulting in the allocation of an extra seat to either Dublin Central or Dublin NW.

The last Boundary Commission recommended the transfer of part of Dublin Central to Dublin West – comprising the EDs of Ashtown A, Ashtown B and part of Phoenix Park; these areas had been in Dublin Central since the 1980s – and as part of this review, we believe that they should be restored to Dublin Central. This would result in Dublin Central and Dublin West each falling within one local authority – Dublin Central in Dublin City, and Dublin West wholly in Fingal, which seems to make sense in terms of local government administration.

The result of this transfer (13,538) is to push Dublin Central closer to the population required for a four-seat constituency. We propose a further transfer to two EDs to generate an acceptable variance – Botanic C and Drumcondra South A.

## DUBLIN contd'

With the loss of territory to Dublin Central, Dublin West requires some additional population to justify four seats; we suggest the transfer of the EDs of Dubber and Kilsallaghan, both of which were previously in Dublin West.

As a consequence of losing Dubber and Botanic C, the constituency of Dublin North West requires some additional territory, to remain as a three seat constituency – and we suggest the transfer of Beaumont B from Dublin Bay North; the neighbouring ED of Beaumont A is already in Dublin NW.

### Effect of changes:

Constituency	Pop.	Seats	Pop/TD	% var	Change	Revised	Seats	Pop/TD	159	160
Dublin Bay North	152,830	5	30,566	1.7%	-10,062	142,768	5	28,554	-4.6%	-4.0%
Dublin Central	96,048	3	32,016	6.5%	20,950	116,998	4	29,250	-2.3%	-1.6%
Dublin Fingal	151,758	5	30,352	1.0%	-2,926	148,832	5	29,766	-0.5%	0.1%
Dublin North-West	96,898	3	32,299	7.5%	-3,878	93,020	3	31,007	3.6%	4.3%
Dublin West	122,507	4	30,627	1.9%	-4,084	118,423	4	29,606	-1.1%	-0.4%

#### Transfer from Dublin Bay North to Dublin Central

Electoral Division	Population
Drumcondra South A	5,100

#### Transfer from Dublin Bay North to Dublin North West

Electoral Division	Population
Beaumont B	4,962

#### Transfer from Dublin North West to Dublin Central

Electoral Division	Population
Botanic C	2,196

#### Transfer from Dublin North West to Dublin West

Electoral Division	Population
Dubber	6,644

#### Transfer from Dublin Fingal to Dublin West

Electoral Division	Population
Dubber	665

#### Transfer from Dublin West to Dublin Central

Electoral Division	Population
Ashtown A	10,545
Ashtown B	2,640
Phoenix Park	469
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,654</b>

## CARLOW-KILKENNY, WEXFORD, WICKLOW

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In overall terms, these three constituencies (four counties) currently have 15 seats; the population is sufficient to retain the same total number of seats.

However, Wicklow no longer requires that eastern part of Co. Carlow which is in the Wicklow constituency.

**Recommendation:** return of that part of Co. Carlow from Wicklow to Carlow-Kilkenny

### Effect of changes:

Constituency	Pop.	Seats	Pop/TD	% var	Change	Revised	Seats	Pop/TD	159	160
Carlow-Kilkenny	151,492	5	30,298	-25.9%	4,501	155,993	5	31,199	4.3%	4.9%
Wicklow	146,833	5	29,367	-28.2%	-4,501	142,332	5	28,466	-4.9%	-4.3%

### Transfer from Wicklow to Carlow-Kilkenny

Electoral Division	Population
Clonmore	527
Hacketstown	1,116
Haroldstown	291
Kineagh	350
Rahill	727
Rathvilly	876
Tiknock	331
Williamstown	283
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,501</b>



## CAVAN MONAGHAN, DONEGAL and SLIGO LEITRIM

Whilst the re-unification of Co. Leitrim in one Dáil constituency was very welcome in 2012, the resulting configuration of Sligo Leitrim constituency created much anxiety in the various counties concerned.

Together, these five counties have a combined population of 393,449 which is equivalent to 13.14 seats in a 159-seat Dáil.

Cavan Monaghan is much closer to five seats than Sligo Leitrim is to four; the extent of territory in west Cavan which has been displaced is significant.

**Recommendation:** return of that part of west Cavan from Sligo Leitrim to Cavan Monaghan  
**and**  
return of that part of south Donegal from Sligo Leitrim to Donegal

### Effect of changes:

Constituency	Pop.	Seats	Pop/TD	% var	Change	Revised	Seats	Pop/TD	159	160
Cavan Monaghan	124,289	4	31,072	-24.0%	13,076	137,365	5	27,473	-8.2%	-7.6%
Donegal	150,342	5	30,068	-26.5%	8,413	158,755	5	31,751	6.1%	6.8%
Sligo-Leitrim	118,818	4	29,705	-27.4%	-21,489	97,329	3	32,443	8.4%	9.1%

### Transfer from Sligo Leitrim to Donegal

Electoral Division	Population
Bundoran Urban	1,665
Ballintra	689
Ballyshannon Rural	1,617
Ballyshannon Urban	1,734
Bundoran Rural	975
Carrickboy	373
Cavangarden	431
Cliff	256
Ballintra	673
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,413</b>

**CAVAN MONAGHAN, DONEGAL and SLIGO LEITRIM contd'**

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**Transfer from Sligo Leitrim to Cavan Monaghan**

<b>Electoral Division</b>	<b>Population</b>
Ballyconnell	1,554
Ballymagauran	245
Bawnboy	588
Benbrack	70
Bilberry	165
Carn	135
Diamond	130
Doogary	142
Kinawley	111
Lissanover	290
Pedara Vohers / Tircahan	148
Swanlinbar	377
Templeport / Benbrack	268
Tircahan	38
Ardue	868
Arvagh	954
Ballintemple	425
Bruce Hall	211
Corr	268
Crossdoney	543
Drumcarban	611
Kilconny	548
Killashandra	1,151
Killykeen	601
Milltown	352
Springfield	171
Derrylahan	91
Derrynanta	38
Dowra	159
Dunmakeever / Derrynananta	97
Eskey	320
Killinagh / Teebane	109
Teebane	22
Tuam	331
Loughdawan	330
Scrabby	615
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,076</b>

## MAYO and GALWAY WEST

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Co. Mayo has a population of 130,425 of which, 10,333 are currently in Galway West constituency.

The county population would give rise to a variance of 9.0% (159) or 9.6% (160) if the county boundary were restored; if this is not possible, then a partial restoration should take place.

**Recommendation:** return five EDs of that part of south Mayo from Galway West to Mayo

### Effect of changes:

Constituency	Pop.	Seats	Pop/TD	% var	Change	Revised	Seats	Pop/TD	159	160
Galway West	154,816	5	30,963	-24.3%	-6,563	148,253	5	29,651	-0.9%	-0.3%
Mayo	120,092	4	30,023	-26.6%	6,563	126,655	4	31,664	5.8%	6.5%

### Transfer from Galway West to Mayo

Electoral Division	Population
Ballinrobe	3,685
Kilcommon	667
Kilmaine	970
Neale	780
Garrymore	461
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,563</b>

## TIPPERARY and OFFALY

Co. Tipperary has a population of 160,441 of which, 10,848 in the area north of Nenagh, are currently in the Offaly constituency.

The county population would give rise to a variance of 7.2% (159) or 7.9% (160) - if the county boundary were restored.

However, Co. Offaly's population of 78,003 is insufficient to support the allocation of three seats.

We considered re-instating the constituency of Laois Offaly – to see if that would accommodate changes to the boundaries affecting Tipperary and Kildare, but this would give rise to a variance of -8.8% (159) or 9.4% (160) for a five seat constituency. Reducing this variance would require further breaches of one or both county boundaries.

So, for the time being, it looks as if part of Co. Tipperary will have to remain in Offaly.

**Recommendation:** a partial restoration of territory, returning nine EDs of that part of north Tipperary from Offaly to Tipperary

### Effect of changes:

Constituency	Pop.	Seats	Pop/TD	% var	Change	Revised	Seats	Pop/TD	159	160
Offaly	88,851	3	29,617	-30.0%	-4,996	83,855	3	27,952	-6.6%	-6.0%
Tipperary	149,593	5	29,919	-29.3%	4,996	154,589	5	30,918	3.3%	4.0%

### Transfer from Offaly to Tipperary

Electoral Division	Population
Ardcrony	558
Ballygibbon	617
Ballylusky	338
Ballymackey	553
CloghJordan	1,054
Cloghprior	301
Knigh	768
Mertonhall	171
Monsea	636
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,996</b>

## MINOR CHANGES

A number of other constituencies have variances which can be corrected by the transfer of EDs in neighbouring constituencies.

### Limerick City and Limerick County

A small transfer from Limerick City to Limerick County would address the variance in Limerick County; a number of EDs have moved between these constituencies in the past.

As an example, transferring the Ballybricken ED (pop. 1,804) would result in variance of less than -5%

Constituency	Pop.	Seats	Pop/TD	% var	Change	Revised	Seats	Pop/TD	159	160
Limerick City	117,352	4	29,338	-2.4%	-1,804	115,548	4	28,887	-3.5%	-2.9%
Limerick County	83,748	3	27,916	-7.1%	1,804	85,552	3	28,517	-4.7%	-4.1%

There are other EDs, which could satisfy the need for a suitable transfer, including Roxborough, Caherconlish West, Caherconlish East, Cappamore or Bilboa

### Cork SW

Similarly, a transfer of a little as 300 population between Cork NW and Cork SW would address the variance here.

If there was a desire to achieve more equality between the constituencies, a transfer from Cork NC to Cork NW, and subsequent transfer from Cork NW to Cork SW could be considered; for example:

Constituency	Pop.	Seats	Pop/TD	% var	Change	Revised	Seats	Pop/TD	159	160
Cork North-Central	124,699	4	31,175	-29.4%	-4,191	120,508	4	30,127	0.7%	1.3%
Cork North-West	89,187	3	29,729	-32.7%	284	89,471	3	29,824	-0.3%	0.3%
Cork South-West	85,028	3	28,343	-35.8%	3,907	88,935	3	29,645	-0.9%	-0.3%

#### Transfer from Cork NC to Cork NW

Electoral Division	Population
Matehy	3,011
Gowlane	1,180
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,191</b>

#### Transfer from Cork NW to Cork SW

Electoral Division	Population
Ballymurphy	1,017
Brinny	651
Garrown	275
Knockavilly	464
Manch	581
Tadies	919
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,907</b>

## VARIANCES

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Finally, just to note that previous Boundary Commissions have been prepared to allow for constituencies which have a variance outside the 'unofficial' +/- 5% range:

Report	Constituency	Variance
1998	Sligo Leitrim	-7.44%
	Waterford	6.66%
2004	Cavan Monaghan	-7.50%
	Kerry North	-6.22%
	Kerry South	-6.58%
	Louth	7.87%
	Waterford	-6.07%
2007	Cavan Monaghan	-6.03%

In light of the limited scope to vary the total number of seats, we believe the commission should make an exception to the +/-5% rule of thumb, on this occasion.

## NATIONAL SUMMARY

This summary of variances is based on a 159-seat Dáil, with Dublin Central gaining a seat, from three to four – and a transfer of a seat from Sligo Leitrim to Cavan Monaghan.

Constituency	Pop.	Seats	Pop/TD	159	160	Change	Revised pop.	Seats	Pop./ TD	159	160
				29924	29737					29924	29737
Carlow-Kilkenny	151,492	5	30,298	1.2%	1.9%	4,501	155,993	5	31,199	4.3%	4.9%
Cavan-Monaghan	124,289	4	31,072	3.8%	4.5%	13,076	137,365	5	27,473	-8.2%	-7.6%
Clare	112,702	4	28,176	-5.8%	-5.3%		112,702	4	28,176	-5.8%	-5.3%
Cork East	121,269	4	30,317	1.3%	2.0%		121,269	4	30,317	1.3%	2.0%
Cork North-Central	124,699	4	31,175	4.2%	4.8%		124,699	4	31,175	4.2%	4.8%
Cork North-West	89,187	3	29,729	-0.7%	0.0%	-300	88,887	3	29,629	-1.0%	-0.4%
Cork South-Central	122,013	4	30,503	1.9%	2.6%		122,013	4	30,503	1.9%	2.6%
Cork South-West	85,028	3	28,343	-5.3%	-4.7%	300	85,328	3	28,443	-5.0%	-4.4%
Donegal	150,342	5	30,068	0.5%	1.1%	8,413	158,755	5	31,751	6.1%	6.8%
Dublin Bay North	152,830	5	30,566	2.1%	2.8%	-10,062	142,768	5	28,554	-4.6%	-4.0%
Dublin Bay South	120,562	4	30,141	0.7%	1.4%		120,562	4	30,141	0.7%	1.4%
Dublin Central	96,048	3	32,016	7.0%	7.7%	20,950	116,998	4	29,250	-2.3%	-1.6%
Dublin Fingal	151,758	5	30,352	1.4%	2.1%	-2,926	148,832	5	29,766	-0.5%	0.1%
Dublin Mid-West	117,588	4	29,397	-1.8%	-1.1%		117,588	4	29,397	-1.8%	-1.1%
Dublin North-West	96,898	3	32,299	7.9%	8.6%	-3,878	93,020	3	31,007	3.6%	4.3%
Dublin Rathdown	94,125	3	31,375	4.8%	5.5%		94,125	3	31,375	4.8%	5.5%
Dublin South-Central	119,121	4	29,780	-0.5%	0.1%		119,121	4	29,780	-0.5%	0.1%
Dublin South-West	150,816	5	30,163	0.8%	1.4%		150,816	5	30,163	0.8%	1.4%
Dublin West	122,507	4	30,627	2.3%	3.0%	-4,084	118,423	4	29,606	-1.1%	-0.4%
Dún Laoghaire	123,149	4	30,787	2.9%	3.5%		123,149	4	30,787	2.9%	3.5%
Galway East	93,604	3	31,201	4.3%	4.9%		93,604	3	31,201	4.3%	4.9%
Galway West	154,816	5	30,963	3.5%	4.1%	-6,563	148,253	5	29,651	-0.9%	-0.3%
Kerry	147,554	5	29,511	-1.4%	-0.8%		147,554	5	29,511	-1.4%	-0.8%
Kildare North	122,248	4	30,562	2.1%	2.8%		122,248	4	30,562	2.1%	2.8%
Kildare South	91,989	3	30,663	2.5%	3.1%		91,989	3	30,663	2.5%	3.1%
Laois	92,625	3	30,875	3.2%	3.8%		92,625	3	30,875	3.2%	3.8%
Limerick City	117,352	4	29,338	-2.0%	-1.3%	-1,804	115,548	4	28,887	-3.5%	-2.9%
Limerick County	83,748	3	27,916	-6.7%	-6.1%	1,804	85,552	3	28,517	-4.7%	-4.1%
Longford-Westmeath	120,533	4	30,133	0.7%	1.3%		120,533	4	30,133	0.7%	1.3%
Louth	150,481	5	30,096	0.6%	1.2%		150,481	5	30,096	0.6%	1.2%
Mayo	120,092	4	30,023	0.3%	1.0%	6,563	126,655	4	31,664	5.8%	6.5%
Meath East	91,151	3	30,384	1.5%	2.2%		91,151	3	30,384	1.5%	2.2%
Meath West	90,358	3	30,119	0.7%	1.3%		90,358	3	30,119	0.7%	1.3%
Offaly	88,851	3	29,617	-1.0%	-0.4%	-4,996	83,855	3	27,952	-6.6%	-6.0%
Roscommon-Galway	84,901	3	28,300	-5.4%	-4.8%		84,901	3	28,300	-5.4%	-4.8%
Sligo-Leitrim	118,818	4	29,705	-0.7%	-0.1%	-21,489	97,329	3	32,443	8.4%	9.1%
Tipperary	149,593	5	29,919	0.0%	0.6%	4,996	154,589	5	30,918	3.3%	4.0%
Waterford	116,401	4	29,100	-2.8%	-2.1%		116,401	4	29,100	-2.8%	-2.1%
Wexford	149,605	5	29,921	0.0%	0.6%		149,605	5	29,921	0.0%	0.6%
Wicklow	146,833	5	29,367	-1.9%	-1.2%	-4,501	142,332	5	28,466	-4.9%	-4.3%
<b>State</b>	<b>4,757,976</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>30,114</b>				<b>4,757,976</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>29,924</b>		

## THE DIFFICULTY WITH 160 SEATS

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Whereas the allocation of an additional seat to Dublin can be accommodated with relatively little change, the revision of constituencies required allowing for an additional seat in either Leinster or Connacht/Ulster is more problematic.

There is no obvious case for an extra seat, in respect of any one constituency, county or group of constituencies or counties.

The variances for constituencies in Leinster are all within the generally accepted +/-5% range.

Various counties have sufficient population for an additional half seat – but adding a seat may result in further breaches of county boundaries, which frequently create more problems than they solve.

The strongest cases for an additional seat arise in Counties Kildare and Meath.

Kildare has population for just under 7.5 seats; part of south Kildare (pop. 7,983) currently forms part of Laois constituency. Laois can afford to do without that territory, and still have an acceptable variance, in either a 159 or 160 scenarios (-5.6%/-5.0%)

However, whilst Co. Kildare would have a variance of -6.6% in the context of a combined eight seats (of a total of 160), even with the repatriation of territory from Laois, Kildare South would require up to 13,000 population from Kildare North, to achieve a variance of -5.1% - which would represent significant change, and in all likelihood, would not be feasible without splitting the town of Naas.

Similarly, there is a significant part of Co. Meath which forms part of Louth constituency – pop. 22,106. The county of Meath has sufficient population for just over 6.5 seats. Meath East and Meath West have three seats each.

An allocation of seven seats to the county of Meath would result in a variance of -6.4%. However, that assumes that the part of Co. Westmeath which is currently in Meath West constituency would revert to Longford Westmeath, which would generate a significant variance there of 8.6%.

The repatriation of 22,106 from Louth to Meath would see Louth lose a seat, and end up with a variance of 7.9%. Louth could retain five seats, with the loss of the Julianstown ED only, resulting in a variance of -5.6%.

However, in such a scenario, leaving the ED of St. Mary's in Louth, Meath East would have a population of 101,290 – too much for three seats, and not enough for four. Meath West needs the territory from Co. Westmeath to justify three seats, and so, with or without that territory, it does not have any population to transfer to Meath East, to contribute to a fourth seat.

Similarly, it is difficult to engineer a situation in Connacht Ulster, whereby an additional seat can be accommodated, without further breaches of county boundaries. Roscommon Galway is the only constituency with a variance in excess of -5%, but that arises from insufficient population.

Co. Galway has sufficient population for 8.64 (159) or 8.69 (160) seats – but allocating nine seats, and re-configuring the internal boundaries, would still leave Roscommon isolated – and that could only be addressed by further breaching some other county boundaries, or splitting Roscommon.

On balance, the Commission may conclude that the benefits conferred by allocating an additional (160<sup>th</sup>) seat may well be offset by the resultant breaches of county boundaries, and/or significant changes required to give effect to such changes.