

A PROPOSAL FOR

A Citizens' Assembly

ON

POLITICAL REFORM

SECOND REPUBLIC, OCTOBER 2011

Authors:

Eric Conroy
Órla Fagan
Mary Faulkner
Bronagh Geraghty
Robert Griffin
William Holden
John Hughes
Golding Kidd
Áine Moran
Oliver Moran
Aoife Ní Chéilleachair
Denis Parfenov
Siobhán Phinney
John Roden
Laura Sudulich
Tom Weafer

Advisor:

Matthew Wall

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“Our mission is to reconnect all the citizens of Ireland with the political process through the mechanism of a Citizens’ Assembly for political reform.”

Visit our website at
www.2nd-republic.ie

Contact us at
info@2nd-republic.ie

Le dul i dteagmháil linn
gaeilge@2nd-republic.ie

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Part 1:

Introduction

Summary

This document lays out a proposal for an Irish Citizens' Assembly on Political Reform. Its power structure, representative structure and mandate match the aims of the Second Republic movement (see Introduction for aims). The authors are a group of Irish citizens and long-term residents who come from a range of walks of life and have worked together as volunteers.

This proposal explains why a Citizens' Assembly on Political Reform is needed in Ireland, what it would do, who would be eligible to take part and how our proposed Assembly would operate. The Second Republic movement has purposely left aside the issue of what exact reforms should be made to the Irish political system. The following points are particularly important for ensuring the proposed Assembly's legitimacy and usefulness.

Establishment: The Assembly will be established via a referendum, which will also define its mandate and empower it to propose Constitutional reforms directly to the people.

Mandate: The proposed Assembly will be charged with drawing up proposals for:

- reform of the political system,
- reform of public administrative systems,
- constitutional revision with the sole focus of reforming the political system.

Membership: The membership will be randomly selected from the electoral register, with some seats reserved for non-resident Irish citizens. Members of the Assembly will be mandated to participate solely as individual citizens and not as representatives of places, groups or interests.

Operation: The Assembly will operate under the auspices of the President of Ireland, who will appoint a Chairperson and Organising Committee. The Assembly will operate independently of Government.

Once Assembly Members have been selected, a 13-month process will follow incorporating induction and learning, public consultation and the collaboration of Assembly subgroups with experts to draw up specific proposals. The final reform proposals will be agreed upon at full meetings of the Assembly during the concluding deliberation phase.

Implementation: The final proposals of the Assembly for constitutional reform will be put unchanged to the people in a binding referendum within six months. Non-constitutional reforms may also be presented as outline proposals for legislation. The Assembly Chairperson will be charged with monitoring and publicly reporting on implementation of the Assembly's proposals by the Oireachtas.

On October 11th Taoiseach Enda Kenny said "With regard to the setting up of a Constitutional Convention, once proposals are approved by Government I intend that they will be the subject of full consultation with the Opposition parties." The Second Republic movement has forwarded this proposal document to all the political parties and trusts that it will help to inform the debate in the Dáil on whether ordinary citizens should have a central leading role in the Constitutional Convention or not.

This proposal is not intended to be final. Issues arose where opinions differed among the authors on how best to proceed and these are listed at the end of the proposal. Second Republic invites discussion, comments and positive ideas that might improve on this proposal at the online forum to be found at forum.2nd-republic.ie.

Achoimre

Is éard atá sa cháipéis seo ná leagan amach ar bheartas ar son Tionóil Saoránach um Athchóiriú Pholaitiúil in Éirinn. Tá a structúr cumhachta, a structúr ionadaíochta agus a údarás ar aon dul le h-aidhmeanna ghluaiseacht an Dara Poblacht (aidhmeanna - féach an chéad leathnach eile).

Saoránaigh Éireannacha agus daoine atá ina gcónaí go fadtéarmach sa tír, as gach gné den saol, a d'oibrigh go deonach le chéile isea na húdair ar an cháipéis seo.

Míníonn an beartas seo an fáth go bhfuil Tionól Saoránach um Athchóiriú Pholaitiúil riachtanach anseo in Éirinn; míníonn cad a dhéanfaidh an Tionól beartaithe seo; cé bheadh i dteideal páirt a ghlacadh ann agus conas a fheidhmeodh sé.

Fágadh ar lár d'aon ghnó, ceisteanna faoi na leasaithe ar leith a mba chóir a dhéanamh ar an gcóras pholaitiúil. Tá na pointí seo leanas thar a bheith tábhachtach chun a chinntiú go mbeadh dlísteacht agus áisiúlacht ag baint le córas feidhmiúcháin an Tionóil.

Bunú: Bunófar an Tionól trí reifreann, a dhéanfaidh sainmhíniú ar Udarás an Tionóil agus a thabharfaidh cumhacht dó chun leasaithe bunreachtúla a mholadh don phobal gan mhoill agus gan cur isteach.

Údarás: Beidh sé mar dhualgas ar an dTionól atá beartaithe moltaí a réiteach le haghaidh:

- Athchóiriú ar an gcóras pholaitiúil
- Athchóiriú ar an gcóras riaracháin poiblí,
- Aithbhreithniú ar Bhunreacht na hÉireann dírithe ar leasaithe an chórais pholaitiúil.

Ballraíocht: Roghnófar daoine go fánach ón gclár toghthóirí. Coimeádfar roinnt suíochán in áirithint do shaoránaigh Éireannacha nach bhfuil cónaí urthu in Éirinn. Beidh sé d'údarás ag baill an Tionóil páirt a ghlacadh ann mar shaoránaigh aonaracha amháin agus ní mar ionadaithe do cheantracha ná do grúpaí comhleasa.

Feidhmiúchán: Feidhmeoidh an Tionól faoi choimirce Uachtaráin na h-Éireann, a cheapfaidh Cathaoirleach agus Coiste Eagraithe. Feidhmeoidh an Tionól go neamhspleách ón Rialtas.

A luaithe agus a ceapfar baill an Tionóil, leanfaidh próiséis trí mhí dhéag inar ndéanfar ionduchtú agus oideas, dul i gcomhairle leis an bpobal agus comhoibriú le foghrúpaí an Tionóil maraon le saíneolaithe chun moltaí ar leith a dhréachtú.

Aontófar na moltaí deiridh i leith athchóiriú polaitiúil ag cruinnithe iomlána an Tionóil nuair a bheas na céimeanna breithniúcháin curtha i gcrích.

D'fhógair an Taoiseach Enda Kenny sa Dáil ar an 11ú Deireadh Fomhair 2011 "With regard to the setting up of a Constitutional Convention, once proposals are approved by Government I intend that they will be the subject of full consultation with the Opposition parties."

Tá an cháipéis seo seolta ar aghaidh chuig gach páirtí polaitiúil ag gluaiseacht an Dara Poblacht agus muinín acu go gcabhróidh agus go gcuirfidh an beartas seo le díospóireacht sa Dáil faoi ar chóir túsáite a bheith ag gnáth shaoránaigh na hÉireann i gComhdháil Bhunreachtúil nó nár chóir.

Níl sé i gceist go mb'é seo deireadh an bheartais ach an oiread. Ní raibh na húdair ar aon tuairim faoi gnéithe áirithe i gcónaí. D'eascair ceisteanna áirithe as an plé agus an díospóireacht agus tá liosta de na cúrsaí san ag deireadh an doiciméid.

Fáiltíonn an Dara Poblacht roimh aon léirmheas, tuairimí dearfacha agus díospóireacht a chuirfidh le feabhas an bheartais trí fóram ar líne ag an nasc seo: forum.2nd-republic.ie.

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Aidhmeanna an Dara Poblacht

1. Bealach a aimsiú leis an dara poblacht a bhunú in Éirinn a mbeidh glacadh inti le cách, agus an aidhm sin a bhaint amach trí athbhreithniú agus athscríobh a dhéanamh ar Bhunreacht na hÉireann, agus trí mholtaí a fhoilsiú le leasuithe polaitiúla a chur i bhfeidhm, rud a bheas faoi réir ag rannpháirtíocht dhíreach an phobail sa bpróiseas a thioctas i gceist uaidh seo amach.
2. Féachaint chuige go mbunófar Tionól Saoránach um Athchóiriú Polaitiúil in Éirinn a mbeidh sé d'údarás dlí aige leasuithe bunreachta agus polaitíochta a leagan síos de bharr na nithe seo a leanas:
 - a. é a bheith neamhspleách ar an Oireachtas i gcomhlíonadh a chuid oibre,
 - b. clár agus scóip a chuid oibre a bheith leathan agus oscailte,
 - c. ionadaíocht a bheith ann de shaoránaigh na tíre ar fad, daoine de chineálacha éagsúla ina measc.
 - d. na saoránaigh féin a bheith i gceannas ar an Tionól agus gan greim ná laincis a bheith ag na páirtithe polaitiúla ná ag na grúpaí comhleasa air,
 - e. moltaí a bheith aige laistigh de 12 mhí ó dháta a bhunaithe i gcomhair dréacht den bhunreacht athbhreithnithe, agus moltaí ina mbeidh athchóiriú polaitiúil agus athchóiriú na n-eagrais poiblí i gceist leis ionas gur féidir leis an stát feidhmiú go daonlathach mar ba chóir.
 - f. iachall a bheith ar an tír reifreann a thionól maidir le moltaí an Tionóil sé mhí tar éis a bhfoilsithe ar a dheireanaí.

Introduction

This proposal document has been written by members of the Second Republic movement, an Irish civil society group for political reform founded in November 2010. The movement was established in an effort to respond actively and positively to the various crises and failures that Ireland currently faces. We firmly believe that for genuine political reform to happen in Ireland, leadership and direction from outside the political party system is needed.

In brief, our position is as follows: 1) the Irish political system must be reformed, 2) ordinary citizens need to initiate and play a central role in a comprehensive process of political reform throughout Ireland, and 3) real reform will not and should not come from within politics alone.

Our agenda is simple and pragmatic: we wish to kick-start the process of political reform through the mechanism of an Irish Citizens' Assembly for Political Reform. We have focused in this proposal on how a process of genuine citizen-led political reform can be instituted throughout Ireland. Who decides on political reform is as important a question for us as the fine details of possible reforms are for some political parties.

Second Republic is a grassroots movement funded by members' donations and operates through voluntary effort. We are very aware that any organisation in Ireland with the word *republic* in its title may be regarded as suspect due to the continuing territorial and violent connotations associated with the adjective *republican* in the Irish context. However, we wish to encourage Irish people to rediscover and reclaim the word *republic* (or *poblacht* in Irish) as *res publica*: a public affair; for the people by the people.

In January 2011, at our first AGM, we defined the aims of the Second Republic movement as follows:

1. To seek an inclusive 2nd Irish Republic founded through an examination and revision of the Constitution of Ireland/Bunreacht na hÉireann and through the formulation of proposals for political reform, subject to the direct participation of the People of Ireland in any process leading up to this.
2. To see the establishment of a legally-empowered Irish Citizens' Assembly for Political Reform which will:
 - a. be independent of the Oireachtas in the exercise of its function,
 - b. be open-ended in its remit and agenda,
 - c. contain a representative cross-section of citizens,
 - d. be citizen-led and not be dominated by political parties and interest groups,
 - e. present its recommendations for a revised constitution, for political reform and for reform of public bodies pertaining to the proper democratic functioning of the State within 12 months of its formation,
 - f. be binding insofar as these recommendations will be put to a referendum of the People within a further six months.

We did not form a political party because this would necessitate producing a detailed list of reforms and other policies, which would divert attention from our proposal for an Irish Citizens' Assembly for Political Reform (see next section for our proposal).

Why Irish Citizens Must Remake the Irish Republic

At the moment, most people in Ireland are feeling the real-life consequences of poor political decisions and political inaction throughout Irish society. This is not the first time we mismanaged our national finances and put our State in jeopardy. A faulty system of governance combined with political incompetence has created a national crisis of an unprecedented scale. As citizens, we

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must now ask ourselves some very difficult questions. In particular we must address how we collectively allowed this to happen.

We believe that Irish citizens have a responsibility to call for a genuine process of political reform and that Irish politicians need to be reminded or convinced by ordinary citizens that further inaction will be detrimental to the future of our State. Rather than passively accepting what has been ordained for us, we, the citizens of this republic, need to act in order to fix a political system, which is so obviously broken.

It is not necessary to reinvent the wheel and begin again. We can learn from past successes and failures, as well as from other countries with similar experiences. We believe that the fundamental cause of our problems is a failure of government facilitated by flawed political structures. These structures have not secured sufficient trust or involvement of the majority of the people. The low participation of Irish people in political parties in comparison with the European average is worthy of note in this regard. We need a political system which will inspire our trust and confidence, a transparent system of governance where we can see what those who govern us do and understand why they do so. In short, we need a new republic — a Second Republic.

At present, there are insufficient checks and balances in the Irish Constitution to limit the damage to our country by government acting in pursuit of electoral advantage alone. However, apart from voting at election time, it is virtually impossible to hold politicians and public administrators to account for poor or corrupt decisions.

While some may argue that questions of political reform should be left to our elected representatives, clearly successive generations of Irish politicians have failed to engage with the issue. Ordinary citizens must take a lead in transforming Ireland's politics.

The proposal for an Irish Citizens' Assembly for Political Reform contained in this document originates directly from Second Republic's two aims above and from a thorough debate among our members on how best to bring about citizen-led political reform in a legitimate and practical way in Ireland. We have outlined an original design for an Irish Citizens' Assembly for Political Reform which could actually work in practice and give Irish people ownership over the process of reforming our State.

We are asking for a democratic and truly representative Irish Citizens' Assembly for Political Reform. The Assembly will combine extensive education, consultation with the public, access to expertise, and an opportunity to consider and modify opinions and proposals. We are not alone in our wish to involve ordinary citizens.

In February 2011, in their general election manifestoes, all of the political parties then represented in Dáil Éireann promised formal structures to involve ordinary citizens in drafting reform proposals. The coalition government's Programme for Government in February 2011 includes a Constitutional Convention to undertake a wide review of the Constitution and recommend changes to the Government. No details have been issued so far (October 2011); but all the indications to date are that ordinary citizens will be very much in the minority in the Convention and that it will simply send a report to Cabinet for its appraisal.

What an Irish Citizens' Assembly for Political Reform might look like

In this document, we propose and describe a citizen-led approach to Irish political reform. We do so by outlining in a realistic and achievable way what an Irish Citizens' Assembly for Political Reform might look like. We have purposely left aside the issue of what particular reforms should be made to the Irish political system. Instead, by defining how an Irish Citizens' Assembly for Political Reform might operate, we have created a template that describes two key issues: 1) how and 2) by whom proposals for reforms to our political system should be made.

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The Irish Citizens' Assembly for Political Reform which we propose represents a legitimate and practical way to generate citizen-led political change in Ireland. Various similar models have been used or are currently used in other countries e.g. Canada, the Netherlands and Iceland. We have spoken directly to those involved in the Canadian and Icelandic models, who generously shared their time with us, and our proposal builds on their valuable insights.

We in Second Republic have created an original and ambitious model which we believe can be used to find ways to improve Ireland's political structures. The Assembly will operate in public, so that its process of refining proposals for political and constitutional reform raises the level of awareness of such issues among the wider population.

The members of our proposed Assembly will be randomly selected members of the Irish public. The Assembly will involve educational and consultation phases, aimed at producing informed, widespread debate and generating viable ideas for Irish constitutional and political reform, as well as ensuring that Assembly members are well versed on topics relevant to political reform. Crucially, under our proposal, when the Assembly concludes its deliberations, it will be up to the Irish people to decide in a binding referendum whether or not its proposed reforms are adopted.

How this proposal was written

Our proposal for an Irish Citizens' Assembly for Political Reform demonstrates how ordinary citizens of different ages and backgrounds can arrive at creative solutions and formulate clear policies. We in the Second Republic movement found ourselves acting like a citizens' assembly when drafting this document. Individual members took responsibility for researching individual sections. Our formal proposal for an Irish Citizens' Assembly for Political Reform was agreed by volunteer members of Second Republic at weekend meetings from April to October 2011. It was refined over the course of many Skype conference calls, online polls and online debates. Draft proposals were referred to our wider membership and the public for comments and suggestions, all of which subsequently helped to shape the finished document.

Constructing a realistic proposal for a meaningful citizens' assembly grounded in the Irish political context involved making complex decisions. We agreed on thorny issues such as the Assembly's mandate, how it is composed, how it should function, and how it should relate to the Oireachtas. We have also looked into matters of logistics and cost. Our group has provided several suggestions geared to make the Irish Citizens' Assembly for Political Reform cost effective. We are conscious that the public is unhappy with the "gravy train" syndrome in public life, e.g. the tribunals ultimately funded by the taxpayer.

The following proposal is our attempt to put forward a solution that can bring about practical and positive renewal of our republic's system of governance. It is not, however, intended to be "final" or binding. Rather, it is intended to demonstrate how a Citizens' Assembly for Political Reform could work in practice and to serve as a catalyst to stimulate discussion and debate. As a group we know that this is a long-term project and we are committed to improving the quality of Irish democracy in the short, medium and long term. We hope that this proposal contributes to the eventual establishment of a process of citizen-led reform, with ordinary citizens contributing to a remaking of our State.

Eric Conroy, financial controller, Dublin
Órla Fagan, international development professional UNICEF, Iraq
Mary Faulkner, concerned citizen, Dublin
Bronagh Geraghty, retail sales / homemaker, Co. Kildare
Robert Griffin, lecturer, Dublin
William Holden, logistics manager, Cork
John Hughes, teacher, Co. Galway

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Golding Kidd, insurance manager, retired, Co. Dublin

Áine Moran, deputy school principal, Co. Dublin

Oliver Moran, software engineer, Cork

Aoife Ní Chéilleachair, office administrator, Cork

Denis Parfenov, social entrepreneur, Dublin

Siobhán Phinney, adult education tutor, Co. Galway

John Roden, IT consultant, Dublin

Laura Sudulich, political scientist, Amsterdam

Matthew Wall, political scientist, Brussels

Tom Weafer, product manager, Dublin

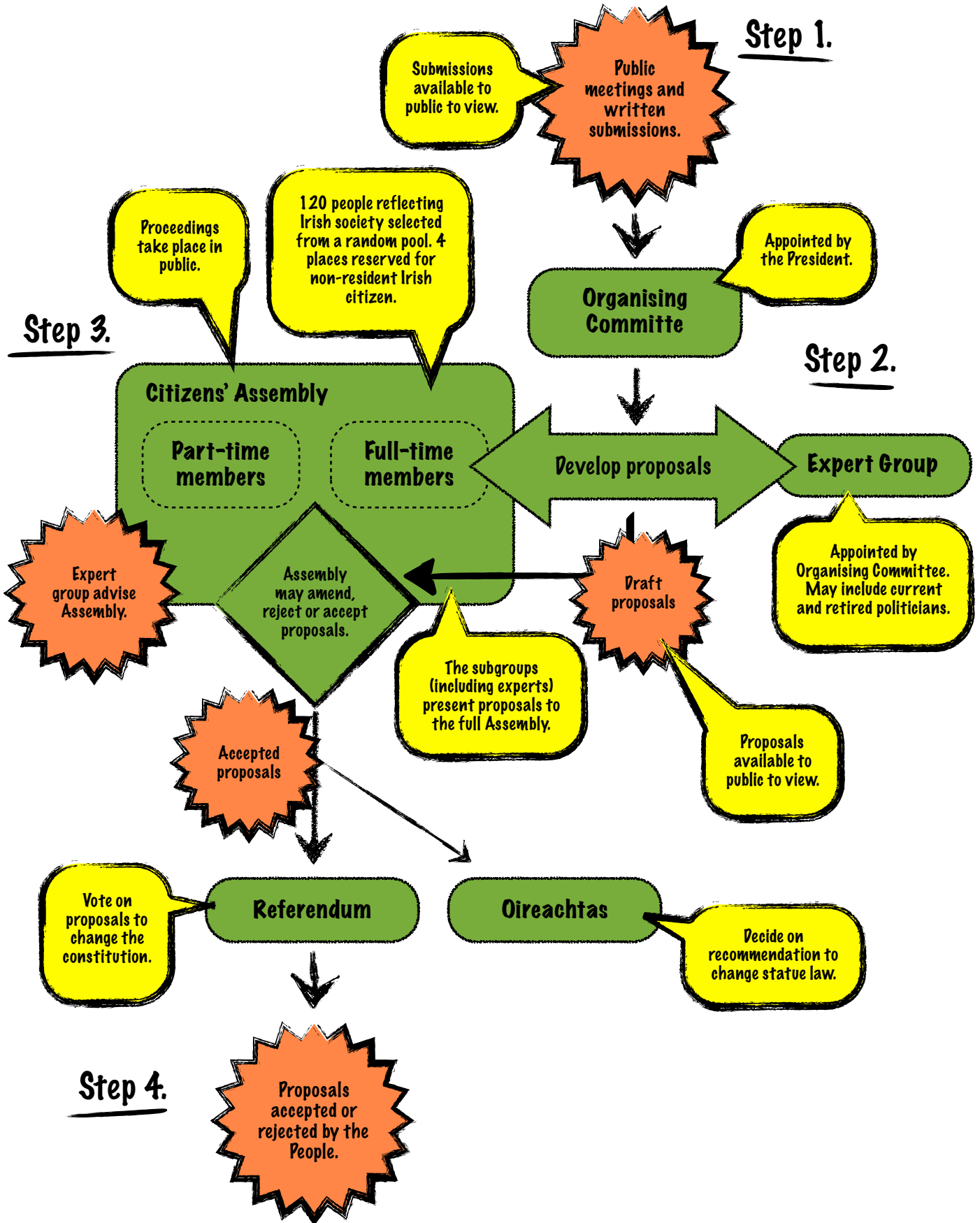
Authors of the proposal for an Irish Citizens' Assembly for Political Reform

October 2011

Part 2:

Proposal

Graphic overview



Proposal for a Citizens' Assembly for Political Reform

Section 1 – Establishment and Mandate

1.1

A Citizens' Assembly for Political Reform will be established in the Republic of Ireland by seeking approval of the People in a referendum and subsequently through enactment of legislation. The referendum will define the Assembly's mandate and empower it to place proposals for constitutional reforms directly to the people in a referendum.

1.2

This method of establishment (following an open public debate on its merits during the referendum campaign) is intended to give legitimacy from the People to the Assembly and reflect its high level of responsibilities and functions. Ideally, the establishment of the Assembly will be initiated by the Oireachtas as a result of cross-party Initiative.

1.3

The scope of the Assembly shall be to draw up proposals for the following:

- a. reform of the political system,
- b. reform of public administrative systems,
- c. constitutional revision with the sole focus of reforming the political system.

1.4

The Assembly's agenda will be:

- a. a review and revision of the Constitution to effect political reform (including reform of the electoral system),
- b. the operation of the Oireachtas:
 - i. the President,
 - ii. the Seanad,
 - iii. Dáil Éireann, including Dáil committees,
 - iv. the legislative process;
- c. ethics and accountability in politics;
- d. local government;
- e. transparency and freedom of information;
- f. the civil service;
- g. public bodies, including the judiciary;
- h. other matters for political reform or projects for practical collaboration that emerge during the Assembly process.

1.5

Members of the Assembly will be mandated to participate solely as individual citizens and not as representatives of geographical areas, or interest groups.

1.6

Assembly members will undertake a learning phase to be ready to analyse possible political reforms. By the end of the learning phase, members should be confident with the language and concepts of political reform and able to make informed judgments regarding specific proposals for political reform.

1.7

The Assembly, through the Organising Committee, will appeal for and receive written submissions through various media and receive oral submissions at public meetings. All Irish people will be offered the chance to

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state their views on political reform and revision of the Constitution. Submissions must be received four months before the Assembly begins deliberations.

1.8

Public meetings to discuss the political reform items in subsections 1.3 and 1.4 will be called throughout the State. For the purpose of soliciting oral submissions from non-resident Irish citizens and the diaspora, some public meetings will also be held outside of the State.

1.9

The final proposals of the Assembly will be put unchanged to the people in a referendum within six months.

1.10

As an ancillary role, and at the conclusion of its deliberations, the Assembly may in its final report recommend non-constitutional political reform to the Oireachtas. This may take the form of outline proposals for new legislation and recommendations for changes to existing statute law pertaining to political reform and reform of public bodies.

1.11

Ensuring funding and logistical support for the Assembly will be the ultimate responsibility of the State. However the Assembly will operate independently and without interference from Government.

1.12

The Oireachtas will defer from initiating legislation that has a bearing on the Assembly's mandate while the Assembly is ongoing.

Section 2 – Referenda and Implementation of Legislation Regarding Political Reforms

2.1

In order to facilitate the proposals of the Assembly going directly to a binding referendum, a proposal to amend Article 46.2 of the Constitution of Ireland/Bunreacht na hÉireann will be included as part of the referendum proposing the establishment of the Assembly. This amendment to Article 46.2 will allow proposals for amendments of the Constitution to be put directly and unchanged to the people in a referendum and consequently will not need to go before Dáil Éireann as a Bill.

2.2

When the Assembly's work is concluded the final proposals of the Assembly for constitutional reform will be put as one or more amendments to one or more referenda.

2.3

Normal Irish referendum rules as defined in Article 47 of the Irish Constitution will apply to any referendum on the Assembly's constitutional proposals. No additional stipulations may be set to obstruct the passing of a referendum on the Assembly's proposals.

2.4

If the Assembly's referendum proposals are passed by the people, the Oireachtas will initiate legislation giving effect to them within six months of the date of the referendum.

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2.5

The Chairperson of the Assembly will monitor the initiation and enactment of legislation relating to the Assembly's constitutional amendments and outline legislative recommendations for political reform. The Chairperson shall present clear and easily understood written and spoken reports to the public regarding the progress of said legislation within six months of the referendum.

2.6

If no legislation has been initiated in the Oireachtas within six months of the Assembly's constitutional amendments being passed in a referendum the Government will be obligated to clearly indicate to the public its intentions.

2.7

Likewise, if within six months of the Oireachtas receiving the Assembly's recommendations for non-constitutional legislative reforms no legislation has been initiated to implement them, the Government will be obligated to clearly indicate to the public its intentions.

Section 3 – Organising Committee and Assembly Chairperson

3.1

The Assembly will operate under the auspices of the President. The Assembly's Organising Committee and full-time Chairperson will be appointed by the President of Ireland in consultation with the Council of State. A government minister will liaise with the Assembly.

3.2

The Organising Committee shall delegate to an independent, auditable logistics team the responsibility of planning and organising the staffing, facilities and budgetary aspects of the Citizens' Assembly. Additionally, the Organising Committee will invite auditors to exercise due diligence and to ensure good value, economy, transparency and integrity during the costing and operational process.

3.3

The Organising Committee will manage the day-to-day running of the Citizens' Assembly. The Committee's tasks will include the collection of written submissions and hosting of a public consultation process. The Organising Committee will also oversee the selection of Members of the Assembly and invite experts to work in conjunction with the Assembly.

3.4

The ultimate authority within the Assembly will be held by the membership during full meetings of the assembly. Day-to-day authority may be exercised by the Chairperson, as instructed by the members in a full meeting of the Assembly.

3.5

The Assembly Chairperson will have the following responsibilities:

- To ensure the Assembly operates in a fair and non-partisan manner;
- To chair meetings of the Assembly;
- To ensure that order is kept, that rancour is avoided, and that all opinions are respected during the proceedings of the Assembly;
- To make decisions on matters of procedure;
- To act as a public representative of the Assembly for the media and interested parties;
- To steer the Assembly towards consensus whenever possible;
- To encourage members to focus on solutions rather than problems;
- To be a non-voting Member of the Assembly, with casting vote in the event of a tie;
- To chair public meetings during the consultation phase.

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3.6

The Chairperson is answerable to the Assembly and may be removed by a two-thirds majority during a full meeting of the Assembly.

Section 4 – Membership Selection, Criteria and Time Commitment

4.1

The Organising Committee of the Assembly shall oversee the membership selection process. The Organising Committee may appoint agents to carry out delegated tasks on its behalf as a part of this process. Allocation of membership places will be conducted in a transparent fashion. A fair and credible system for selection of the Assembly's membership will be essential for legitimacy.

4.2

The Assembly shall be composed of 120 members: 40 full-time and 80 part-time members approximately.

4.3

Membership of the Assembly will not be compulsory. The Organising Committee will be charged with ensuring that the Assembly's membership is balanced so as to reflect Irish society.

4.4

People resident in Ireland who are registered on the local Election Register will be eligible to be included during the selection process of possible candidates for membership of the Assembly. Candidates for membership of the Assembly will be randomly selected from the local Electoral Registers. This will promote engagement and ownership of political reform by all people living in the Republic of Ireland and also de-politicise the process of drafting reform proposals. A publicity campaign encouraging people resident in Ireland to enlist on the Electoral Register will be undertaken before seeking potential candidates for the Assembly.

4.5

It will not be a requirement of membership to be an Irish citizen, however, registration on the electoral list will be mandatory.

4.6

Letters of invitation asking selected candidates to consider participating in the Assembly will be sent out by the Organising Committee. Every effort will be made to achieve a significant response rate to the letters of invitation from all sections of society to ensure membership reflects the full spectrum of Irish society.

4.7

Invited candidates will be required to indicate whether they are interested in full-time or part-time membership through written confirmation. It will fall to the Organising Committee to ensure that there is an appropriate balance of full-time and part-time members in the Assembly.

4.8

Selection of members from agreed participants will be random, but will employ stratification to ensure that the assembly is broadly representative of Irish society. This stratification process will correct an uneven uptake of the participation request in the population. Stratification criteria will include gender, age, geographic location of residence and socio-economic status.

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4.9

Four full-time places on the Assembly shall be reserved for non-resident Irish citizens who will return to Ireland for the duration of the Assembly. Notices seeking expressions of interest from non-resident Irish citizens in membership of the Assembly will be advertised internationally. This will ensure an element of the diaspora has a chance to contribute to the future of Ireland and bring their experience abroad to bear on the Irish political status quo.

4.10

The following criteria shall be applied when selecting Members of the Assembly:

- Candidates must be of voting age.
- Candidates must be free to devote their time to the Assembly for its full duration.
- Candidates must be listed on a local Electoral Register; however this criterion will not apply to the candidates for places reserved for non-resident Irish citizens.

4.11

Members of the Assembly will be compensated for loss of earnings. Members will also be legally entitled to leaves of absence from work.

4.12

Full-time members will attend for five days per week and also attend some evening meeting. Part-time members will attend regional evening meetings during the week and full meetings of the Assembly on Saturdays. All members will attend a continuous two-week sitting of the Assembly during the final deliberation phase. The Assembly will operate for thirteen months and members will attend for its full duration.

Section 5 – Education of the Public and Transparency

5.1

The Citizens' Assembly for Political Reform will be publicised in Ireland and abroad as a work of national renewal. A coherent education and publicity campaign will run simultaneously to ensure the confidence of the Irish public in the Assembly. Education of the Public about the Assembly and extensive communication through the media will begin before the appointment of the Organising Committee. This publicity campaign will start well in advance of membership selection and continue throughout the process until after the referendum.

5.2

To engage the public and engender trust, the Assembly process will be as transparent as possible. All presentations, documents, minutes of meetings, written submissions, etc. provided for Assembly members will be made simultaneously available to the general public on the Assembly website.

5.3

Full meetings of the Assembly shall be held in public and will be made available for simultaneous viewing online.

5.4

An independent external group of three international experts will be invited by the Organising Committee to comment publicly at intervals on the operation of the Assembly.

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Section 6 – Assembly Subgroups and Expert Proposals Group

6.1

The broad scope and agenda of the Assembly requires that work via sub-groups will focus on the issues listed earlier in subsections 1.3 and 1.4.

6.2

Subgroups will consist of full-time Assembly members with experts as non-voting advisory members. Subgroups will report back to full meetings of the Assembly at weekends.

6.3

The Organising Committee, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Assembly, will select a wide pool of experts (some of whom may be retired) to work in conjunction with members of the Assembly. These experts may include Irish and international academics, politicians, legal specialists, retired political journalists and other experts as decided by the Organising Committee. Experts will work with subgroups of the Assembly. Experts may also address full meetings of the Assembly at its discretion.

6.4

In order to avoid overburdening the Assembly with responsibilities, a Proposals Group consisting of a broad range of experts will draft proposals (presenting arguments for and against) based on submissions received during the public consultation phase for the Assembly to deliberate on.

6.5

The membership of this Proposals Group will not be fixed and specialists may be consulted as required. The Proposals group will work in conjunction with subgroups of the Assembly.

Section 7 – Operation of the Citizens' Assembly

7.1

The Citizens' Assembly will endeavor to operate in a non-partisan and unbiased manner.

7.2

Members of the Assembly will participate in the public consultation process and will attend regional meetings to gain first-hand participatory experience of the debate. Public consultation will ensure that members of the public have access to Assembly members. The original submissions received during the consultation phase and prepared summaries of the public consultation will be made available online to the public and to the members of the Assembly.

7.3

Advocates of ideas submitted to the Assembly during the consultation phase may be asked, at the Assembly's discretion, to address the Assembly in full meetings or to address a subgroup. Advocates may represent groups or speak as individuals in support of submissions to the assembly.

7.4

As a part of the consultation process, Irish people will be invited to share ideas on political reform through a citizen-centred online platform on the Assembly's website. This platform will be also be used to debate submissions received by the Assembly. In order to choose submissions and ideas for the Assembly's consideration online polls will also be held on this platform.

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7.5

During the learning phase members of the Assembly will learn through:

- a. home study;
- b. full meetings of the Assembly;
- c. subgroups of the Assembly;
- d. regional workshops;
- e. webinars;
- f. other appropriate methods.

7.6

Varying educational backgrounds of members, knowledge of politics and levels of IT experience will be considered. To prevent a few experts having undue influence on Assembly members, a wide panel of experts will contribute to the education of Assembly members to facilitate their exposure to a wide variety of ideas.

7.7

Regional hubs will be used to facilitate evening meetings and reduce the need for part-time members, in particular, to travel to Dublin. Full meetings of the Assembly will be held on Saturdays.

7.8

Decisions of the Assembly will require a quorum. Decisions should, if possible, be achieved by consensus, but if required can be determined by a majority of those present. The Chair does not have a vote, but may cast a deciding vote in the event of a tie.

7.9

The Assembly will have the power to expel a member by a two-thirds majority for gross misconduct.

Section 8 – The Deliberation Process of the Assembly and Final Referendum Proposals

8.1

During the deliberation phase, proposals drafted by subgroups in conjunction with the expert Proposals Group will be referred to full meetings of the Assembly for debate. Experts will be available to advise the Assembly during the deliberation process. The entire Assembly will debate these proposals and will either (a) revise, (b) refer back, (c) reject or (d) accept each of these proposals over the three months of deliberation. In the absence of consensus, decisions regarding proposals/recommendation will be made by simple majority vote.

8.2

At some stage during the deliberation process, the full Assembly will meet over a two-week period to finalise agreement on proposals.

8.3

Legal experts will be instructed to ensure that any proposed amendments to the Constitution put forward by the Assembly are free of legal ambiguities and ready to go to a referendum. Proposed amendments to the Irish Constitution agreed on by the Assembly will go directly to a referendum.

8.4

Any outline recommendations for legislation regarding non-constitutional political reform will be presented to the Houses of the Oireachtas when the deliberations of the Citizens' Assembly are complete.

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Section 9 – Timing and Duration of the Phases of the Assembly Process

The entire Assembly process will adhere to the following outline schedule:

1. Legal establishment: 3 months
2. Preliminary administrative work: 6 months
3. Selection of Assembly Members: 3 months
4. Induction and learning phase: 3 months
5. Public consultation phase: 3 months
6. Preparing of report of consultation phase: 1 month
7. Proposal phase: 3 months
8. Deliberation phase (the full Assembly sitting on Saturdays and for 2 weeks full-time): 3 months

In the six months prior to the referendum members will speak publicly in support of the Assembly's proposals.

Section 10 – Funding

10.1

The State will finance the Citizens' Assembly. However, given the financial crisis, original ways of financing the Assembly and running it economically will be important.

10.2

People employed by the Organising Committee to work full-time on logistics, education, legal advice, finance, IT, secretarial support, etc. will be paid a rate up to a maximum of twice the average industrial wage. Competitive tendering will apply for all specialist services.

10.3

To reduce the cost of the Assembly, members of the civil service/public service will be permitted to volunteer their services (under paid leave conditions) but the Organising Committee will use a screening process for accepting seconded staff.

10.4

Full-time Assembly members will be remunerated at the average industrial wage. Members of the Assembly can apply for loss of earnings beyond. In total, the sum of remuneration and compensation for loss of earnings paid to any member will not exceed twice the average industrial wage.

10.5

Part-time members will receive travel and accommodation expenses.

10.6

Childcare and crèche facilities will be provided for Assembly members.

10.7

In the interest of reducing expenditure, the Organising Committee will accept donations from private donors and welcome services offered for free. Funding and services offered without conditions attached will be accepted to support the work of the Assembly.

10.8

The Organising Committee will encourage voluntary participation of the public in support of the Assembly such as assisting with the organisation of public meetings, publicity, etc. In particular, the voluntary input of experienced retired people will be sought. It is confidently expected that many invited experts will offer their

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services free of charge in the national interest. The Organising Committee will have total discretion over volunteer assistance.

Section 11 – Resources and Costing

NB: This is only an estimate and will need to be costed by the State.

Approximate Cost of Irish Citizens Assembly for Political Reform:

Expense	Cost
Staff: salaries, PRSI, holiday pay, health insurance, pension provision, temporary staff	€445,000
Employee costs: advertising for staff/engagement fees/agency fees	€20,000
Remuneration of full-time CA members	€2,125,000
Travel: airline/car expenses, meals, hotels, car rental	€180,000
Subsistence allowances for Members of the Assembly	€360,000
Advertising: publicity costs	€36,000
Hotels, conference facilities	€420,000
Regional meetings	€100,000
Management fees: charges, etc.	€100,000
Office	€60,000
Phone	€10,000
Insurance: general liability, fire, theft, employers, public liability, car insurance	€40,000
Professional services: legal, experts, consultancy fees	€400,000
IT facilities and technical maintenance	€100,000
Total Approx Cost	€4,396,000

Questions and Answers

What is citizen-led political reform?

Political reform is about changing, and hopefully improving, the political process, and not about achieving particular political outcomes or decisions.

Those involved in political reform in Ireland need to examine the rules of our own political system, and seek a more just way to do things. To do this, we have to look at core values, and ask whether they are adequately reflected in the way we structure our politics.

Currently, many people believe there are insufficient checks and balances in the constitution to limit the damage by governments acting in pursuit of electoral advantage alone. Apart from voting at election time, it is virtually impossible to hold politicians and public administrators to account for poor or corrupt decisions. Weakness at the heart of our system of governance has led to questionable and conflicting strategies. Take for example the costly decentralisation of our public service, which ignored the carefully planned proposal for development of strategic hubs in the regions.

Political reform goes beyond just pointing out failings in our system. It also involves proposing and pushing for solutions we think will improve our politics. It is important to note reform need not dispense with the things we think are right about the current system. There are several aspects of Ireland's political system that work very well. Our ability to change government by means of a free and fair popular vote is certainly not to be taken for granted given current events elsewhere in the world.

While political reforms can be implemented by politicians, the process of reform must be led by ordinary citizens. The legitimacy of any political institution rests on the support it enjoys among citizens and any democracy requires a politically active citizenry. Citizen-led reform should be facilitated by our elected representatives.

What is a citizens' assembly?

A citizens' assembly is made up of a group of citizens of a state, usually between 25 and 150 people, though larger and smaller numbers are possible. These citizens are convened to draft proposals for political reform of their state. Citizens' assemblies are ideally suited to initiating political reform, because politicians tend to have vested interests in maintaining the political system.

Typically, the assembly members participate in an education programme with access to legal and academic expertise. This ensures that members are informed in political theory and best practice. In most cases, citizens' assemblies have looked at their state's voting system.

Over several months, assembly members deliberate — hearing proposals for change, questioning the experts, hearing opposing points of view, and debating the options. The assembly members can travel to different parts of the country to discuss aspects of the political system under investigation and to hear ideas and opinions. Subsequently, they work to arrive at proposals for reform, with disagreements decided by majority votes after arguments from both sides. This process itself, whereby ordinary citizens come together to try to find acceptable solutions on complex issues, gives added legitimacy to the Assembly's proposals.

Some citizens' assemblies present their proposals to the legislature for consideration. Others are empowered to put their proposed reforms directly to the people in a referendum and, if accepted by voters, the proposals are then adopted as law.

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What issues should be considered when setting up an citizen's assembly?

The following issues will be crucial in determining what an Irish citizens' assembly can achieve:

- a. the scope of its political reform agenda and its empowerment to fulfill its role

Among the most important aspect of the assembly is its scope, that is the issues that it will be charged with addressing. If an assembly is convened with its "wings clipped" by narrow terms of reference, it will struggle to develop useful meaningful proposals.

Another key issue is empowerment; especially the question of whether the assembly's proposals are to be presented directly to the public in a binding referendum or to the Oireachtas as recommendations. Without real empowerment, any assembly risks being no more than a talking shop.

- b. logistical support and planning

To be successfully implemented, the citizens' assembly will require extensive educational, legal and administrative support. A fair and credible selection system for its membership is essential for legitimacy.

Additional logistical issues came to our attention in our preparation of this proposal. Such issues include recruitment of members, transport, expenses/salary of administrative staff, assembly members and support teams, the use of NAMA hotels for events and the use of regional hubs to avoid locating everything in Dublin.

- c. legal establishment

The manner in which a citizens' assembly is established has an important bearing on its legitimacy. For instance, the legitimacy of a similar project in Iceland was partially undermined due to difficulties concerning the direct election of its membership.

- d. publicity and public education campaigns

The differences between representative democracy and deliberative democracy could work against a Citizens' Assembly for Political Reform gaining acceptance in Ireland. Engagement with and education of the public will be crucial to the assembly's success. We should learn from mistakes in other countries. For instance, in British Columbia just before the referendum took place on the proposals of the Citizens' Assembly for Electoral Reform, two thirds of voters were unfamiliar with the Citizens' Assembly itself.

In the Netherlands only about 1,500 out of 50,000 citizens randomly picked for the Burgerforum (Citizens' forum) replied to indicate they were able and willing to participate. This shows how a poorly managed awareness and implementation campaign can damage the credibility of a citizens' assembly.

Without a coherent education and publicity campaign, there is a real danger of disconnection between the public and the assembly. The We the Citizens project discovered that Irish people see the current system of civic and political education as being inadequate. Indeed it is in the interest of those who wish to maintain the status quo to see a poorly politically educated population. Publicity and public education campaigns will be needed to raise public awareness of this new democratic process for generating reform proposals. At the end of this education and publicity campaign, Irish people should understand the Assembly structure, its mandate, its consultation process, and the binding nature of the referendum, which will follow its work.

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Is it not the job of politicians to carry out political reform?

Our State is, in essence, 90 years old, and yet the only serious revision of the constitutional basis of our government took place in 1937. This revision brought us closer to the Westminster model – not the obvious model for a republic and certainly not the only model of democratic governance in the modern world.

Despite volumes of reports created by decades of Oireachtas committees, the Oireachtas has been unable to implement even the most straightforward procedural reforms over the years. A classic example concerns a referendum in 1979 extending voting rights in Seanad University Panel elections to all Irish third-level graduates. Although the referendum outcome was resounding (92% in favour), no legislation was passed. To this day, the Seanad continues to attract criticism for its selection methods – and yet remains unreformed.

The Seanad is only one example of how our political system has proved incapable of reforming itself. Indeed, many of our elected politicians themselves recognize this fundamental conflict of interest. A recent report of the Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution (July 2010) acknowledged that citizens, not politicians, should be front and centre in proposing Irish political reforms. The report specified that any reform of the Irish political system needs to “promote engagement and ownership by citizenship”.

It went on to recommend that “In order to de-politicise any reform process, [the Committee] proposes the establishment of a Citizen Assembly to examine the performance of PR-STV (Proportional Representation-Single Transferable Vote) in Ireland, and if it deems that reforms are necessary, to propose changes ... it is the opinion of the Committee that the establishment of such an Assembly would facilitate greater popular engagement with the democratic institutions as well as enhancing the legitimacy of any proposed reform.”

The report further stated in relation to citizens' assemblies abroad: “As the electoral system is such an important component of the political system, the citizens' assembly was seen as a mechanism that took the question of electoral reform out of the hands of the political parties, and removed any possibility of politically motivated bias that might affect the outcomes of the process. In all three cases, the citizen assemblies came about because of a government initiative.”

How might a citizens' assembly reform things differently?

Politicians, the judiciary, and the senior civil servants who advise politicians are mainly from similar educational and occupational backgrounds. Their views are likely to be fixed within the frame of the status quo because it generally serves their world-view and there is little opportunity for divergence of opinion among policy makers and legislators.

Senior civil servants are often reluctant to openly question government policy or Cabinet decisions. Politicians themselves, particularly backbenchers, are particularly constrained due to the party whip system and the total concentration of executive power and initiative around the Cabinet table. Little opportunity exists for the open disagreement from which good original ideas usually emerge.

Ordinary people have less of a stake in the status quo than political stakeholders. This is the main argument that has been advanced in other countries for using citizens' assemblies to deal with electoral reform, a topic that directly involves politicians.

Therefore, the difference between our proposal and the “politics as usual” approach lies primarily in our proposal's separation of reform procedures from the political system. During discussions of political reform people often observe that “turkeys don't vote for Christmas”.

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With our citizens' assembly model, citizens rather than politicians will propose reforms. As such, Assembly members are not likely to have the same vested interest in the design of our political system as politicians.

Furthermore, the assembly itself will not be a "substitute Dáil". A Citizens' Assembly can insist on nothing, has no executive power and cannot become an alternative parliament. Only the voters, by casting their votes in a referendum, will have the power to choose whether the Assembly's proposals are accepted.

Rather than undermine the democratic mandate of the Dáil, a citizen's assembly has the potential to revitalize the political system and make Dáil Éireann more democratic in the way it operates.

Who draws up referendum proposals?

The Irish constitution cannot be changed without a referendum. In addition, the Dáil passes constitutional amendment proposals before they go to a referendum. These measures protect constitutional laws to ensure they are not easily changed.

The problem with a referendum, however, is the public is limited to a yes/no response to a fixed proposition. The proposition itself has often been negotiated with partisan political gain as the goal rather than in the country's best interests. For instance, many people found this was the case with the recent AV referendum in the UK – the people were asked to choose between two non-proportional electoral systems: First-Past-the-Post and the Alternative Vote. They were therefore not given a meaningful choice between proportional and non-proportional systems. This was a political compromise agreed during negotiations leading to the formation of the UK coalition government, rather than an openly discussed proposal, based on the public good.

For precisely these reasons, we think that it's important that citizens be allowed to frame the content of constitutional referenda, as well as voting on their outcomes.

How legitimate will the mandate of an Irish Citizens' Assembly be?

It is important to realise that the legitimacy of any political institution cannot be achieved without popular support among the people for whom it is mandated to serve.

For instance, in Ireland, we have faced repeated crises of legitimacy with regard to the European Union. This has led to multiple "repeat" referenda in recent years.. Clearly an institution has to work for its mandate — people must firstly be aware of its existence and must then be given a chance to interact with it. If people trust in and approve of the actions of an institution as they interact with it over time, then it will be considered legitimate.

That is why our proposal indicates that the assembly should be established via a referendum (which is also necessary to empower it to submit its proposals directly to the people for approval). Our proposal also includes an extensive public education phase, which will take place before, during and after the deliberations of the assembly. Furthermore, all proceedings of the assembly will be public.

A concern that has been expressed is that an Irish citizens' assembly would be another "talking shop", or the government would use it to "kick political reform to touch". Many of us who wrote this document share the same concern. That is why our proposal insists that any constitutional reforms generated by the citizens' assembly must be put directly to the people in a referendum. It is also why we set out a time limit. In this way, we seek to give the assembly the chance to affect genuine change in Ireland's political system, without obstruction or derailment by the very bodies it seeks to reform.

Won't ordinary citizens arrive at poor decisions?

We have to believe in the judgments and capacities of our fellow citizens and provide appropriate support and education to enable sound decision-making. There may be a perception that ordinary citizens will arrive at poor decisions because of lack of experience and specialist knowledge or be manipulated by experts for their own end. The Learning, Consultation and Deliberation phases of the citizens' assembly will be designed to empower Assembly members to make informed decisions.

Politicians and the judiciary also need education on the Assembly process. Finally, the transparency of the process – from the selection of Organising Committee members and right through to the Assembly voting on its final proposals should make it extremely difficult for any single expert or interest to exert undue or improper influence.

Can we afford it?

Many people argue the country is already financially strained and an Irish Citizens' Assembly for Political Reform would be a further unnecessary expense. Certainly, resources are required to make our proposed citizens' assembly a success. Assembly members will need logistical, technical and organisational assistance if they are to draw up a thorough, realistic programme of political reform in Ireland.

However, we have to consider the costs of not reforming Ireland's current political system. Doing nothing simply preserves the status quo and there are strong financial arguments to be made against a status quo that encourages inefficiency, inadequate accountability and lack of expertise in Irish governance.

In Ireland, we have recently seen ample evidence that the financial costs of maintaining poorly functioning systems of governance are higher than the costs of seeking to improve them. We have spent billions on transport infrastructure and building in Ireland since the 1990s. We are currently pouring further billions into bailing out bondholders in a number of collapsed banks. Given the loss of Irish economic sovereignty as a consequence of the IMF/ECB deal and the current limited control over our economic policies, one area where the Irish people can independently act and plan for the future at a modest expense is in the reform of our system of governance.

Second Republic argues that we should use this opportunity to invest time and funding to radically reform our political infrastructure, which will prove a worthwhile investment and cheaper in the long term.

Won't this just be another taxpayer-funded gravy train?

One thing we all want to avoid is creating yet another "cash cow" for a small segment of society. This is why we have placed limits on remuneration for members of the assembly that we propose and administrative staff.

Additionally, we expect and are confident that many talented Irish people at home and abroad, while they may not be members of the Assembly, will offer their services pro bono in the national interest to help renew Ireland. This has been the experience in other examples of citizens' assemblies.

Are the Irish abroad included?

We see an important role for the wider Irish community of the Diaspora to help with this project. Members of the diaspora will be invited to participate in the assembly and to return to Ireland for

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the duration of the proposed Assembly. The Irish abroad can also make submissions to the Assembly during the consultation process.

How important is Government support?

Citizens' assemblies are set up by governments and depend on government to operate them and implement their proposals. For a citizens' assembly to succeed, it is essential that governments give a clear mandate in the legislation establishing them. The success of any Assembly hinges on a firm commitment by government particularly in the areas of empowering the Assembly and the facilitation of any binding referendum that may follow.

However, ultimately it is up to citizens to hold their governments accountable. Only the Irish people can ensure that there is sufficient incentive to make an Irish Citizens' Assembly for Political Reform happen and be a success.

Can I find more information on the internet?

The following web links may be of interest:

- Constitution of Ireland: www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Youth_Zone/About_the_Constitution_Flag_Anthem_Harp/Constitution_of_Ireland_March_2010.pdf

The Oireachtas Constitution Review Group has produced reviews of different parts of the constitution, including many recommendations for reform.

- Constitution Review Group website: www.constitution.ie

The 2011 Programme for Government included a commitment to establish a Constitutional Convention.

- 2011 Programme for Government: www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Publications/Publications_2011/Programme_for_Government_2011.pdf

That commitment followed election-period manifesto commitments from all of the parties then represented in the Oireachtas to a process of citizen-led reform, including citizens' assemblies.

- Election period commitments: www.2nd-republic.ie/site/?page_id=972

Part 3:

Support

How to support our proposal

We will be holding events across the country to publicise this proposal. You can find details on our website (www.2nd-republic.ie) of our latest events and activities.

We also want to inspire similar efforts in other citizens who, like us, desire constructive and citizen-led political reform. Our biggest enemy in our efforts to transform Ireland is individual and collective lethargy: the feeling that we cannot change anything, so we shouldn't bother trying. The easiest thing in the world is to sit back, shrug your shoulders, and wait for somebody else to make a change. Indeed, it is easy to criticize the efforts of others from the comfort of an armchair.

We reject the idea that 'ordinary' citizens are incapable of organizing themselves or coming up with great ideas for change and improvement. By coming together as citizens, we can change our politics, and our society. We can also rediscover the dignity of democracy and make important choices together, rather than witnessing others choosing for us.

If you would like to join our group or attend our events, we would be delighted and any assistance however small is very welcome. We have an opportunity and the momentum to be the generation that faces up to our past mistakes, draws inspiration from our achievements past and current, and brings Ireland firmly into the 21st century both as a nation and as a state.

To find out how to offer financial support to Second Republic [please visit our website](#).

Give feedback on this document

This proposal is by no means definitive. Our hope is that by presenting it, we can inspire others to imagine and aspire to an Irish Citizens' Assembly for Political Reform.

While writing this document we have answered most of the key questions, we consciously have not answered them all in full. A theme that emerged in our discussions was that we shouldn't restrict the operation or outcome of the Citizens' Assembly too tightly in this proposal, and we were mostly concerned with ensuring that our proposed body would be legitimate in terms of membership and empowered to effect real change in Irish politics.

For non-Irish readers, we would be delighted to have this proposal spread beyond Ireland's shores, as we feel it is relevant for many modern states. Feel free to use this document, but please note that the document has a creative commons license and that authorship should be acknowledged.

In our formal proposal, we have gone into some detail but there are many issues that require further discussion prior to the establishment of an assembly.

Questions that may generate further thought include:

- How exactly could new technologies be used to facilitate public input during the consultation phase and enhance transparency during the deliberation phase of the Assembly?
- How should the Oireachtas and the Assembly coordinate their work?
- What would happen if a government fails to initiate legislation implementing the Assembly's proposals passed in a referendum?
- How exactly could costs be kept down through the use of voluntary and pro bono services?
- Should donations to the Assembly be strictly anonymous?
- What would be the best logistical arrangements for running the Assembly, including consultation, the work of full-time members and experts, as well as full meetings of the assembly?
- Can you be a full-time member and not live in Dublin?
- How do we ensure that the Irish people themselves engage with this process?

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- Would Assembly members be able to vote online if they were unable to attend the Assembly due to a reasonable cause?
- How would experts be chosen?
- How would presenting a balanced cross section of opinion to Assembly members be ensured?

The members of the Second Republic have been debating these questions for some time. For each issue, we discussed several potential answers. However, we believe that this should be an open and interactive discussion. We welcome ideas and views on both our proposal and the outstanding questions. We therefore invite your feedback on the forum at forum.2nd-republic.ie.

Part 4:

Appendix

Glossary

Bunreacht na hÉireann

The Irish Constitution.

Ceann Comhairle

Chairperson of Dáil proceedings

Council of State

Comprises the Taoiseach, Tánaiste, Attorney General, Ceann Comhairle, Cathaoirleach (chair) of the Seanad, president of the High Court, the Chief Justice, some retired Taoiseachs, presidents and Chief justices. An additional seven members are nominated to the Council of State by the President.

Dáil Éireann

The lower house of the Oireachtas.

Oireachtas

The national parliament of Ireland, comprised of Dáil Éireann, Seanad Éireann and the President of Ireland.

Seanad Éireann

The Senate, the upper house of the Oireachtas.

Tánaiste

The Deputy Prime Minister of Ireland.

Taoiseach

The Prime Minister of Ireland.

Teachta Dála (TD)

A member of Dáil Éireann, commonly called a Dáil deputy.

