



General Election 2016

How (and why) to talk to elected officials about Financial Justice Issues

If there is a specific issue you want the government to change in Ireland, then the best way to bring about that change is to lobby elected officials.

Knowing who to contact, and how, is not always clear. Ultimately, the Oireachtas is responsible for changing law in Ireland.

The Oireachtas (parliament) comprises:

- The Dáil – the lower house;
- The Seanad – the upper house; and
- The President.

If you want to lobby on a particular issue, then the first step is often to contact a TD, Senator or Minister.

How to contact a TD, Senator or Minister

To contact your local TD or Senator, you can find their details here:

<http://www.oireachtas.ie/members-hist/>

You can also write to all TDs at Leinster House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2.

If you want to write to them about an issue, it is best to tailor your letter specifically to them, rather than sending them on a general letter or email addressed to many different TDs. They are more likely to follow up with you if you are a constituent. If you want to meet with them, you can try to attend one of their surgeries and/or request a 1:1 meeting.

The Seanad has 60 members, 11 of whom are appointed by the Taoiseach, 6 are elected by university graduates (three each for Trinity and the NUI) and 37 elected on panels which are voted by local councillors. The Seanad is less powerful than the Dáil: senators may not amend the budget, introduce a constitutional amendment or change a money Bill, nor does it have a system of asking parliamentary questions. However it has a long tradition of raising social issues and is a useful place to have issues debated.

If you wish to contact a Minister about an issue, you do not need to be their constituent. If you are contacting them about their role as a Minister, rather than as a TD, then you can go through their department. You can find details of the relevant departments here:

<http://www.gov.ie/en/tag/departments/>

What can your local TD do about an issue?

If you want to contact your TD about a policy issue, it helps to have a specific request and an outcome you would like to see.

Some of the things you can ask your local TD to do are:

raise a parliamentary question. In the Dáil, an hour is normally set aside each day so that ministers may answer questions on matters that concern their brief. Questions go to the different ministers in rotation, so that each minister may expect to answer questions every month or so.

There are four types of questions:

1. Leaders' questions
2. Priority
3. Oral and
4. Written.

You are most likely to get a TD to agree to ask a written question on your behalf. There are over 50,000 Parliamentary Questions (PQs) a year and they can be a useful way to get extra information on a topic.

lobby internally to change their party's policies on the issue

If your TD says to you they are committed to the issue you are raising, then one way for them to prove that is to show their party policy supports it, or if now, for them to show they are trying to change it.

issue press statements/draw attention to issues : TDs have a much higher profile and can help make an issue the matter of public debate.

bring it to the attention of a relevant committee:

At the beginning of a new Dáil and Seanad, individual TDs sign up to the committees they are most interested in. Some TDs are on several committees, some on none. If your local TD is on a relevant committee, then they will have more influence over the issue, and will be better able to advise you on how to get issues debated and how to shape and influence Bills.

Full list of Committees

[Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine](#)
Joint sub-Committee on [Fisheries](#)

[Committee on Education and Social Protection](#)
Select sub-Committee on [Education and Skills](#)
Select sub-Committee on [Social Protection](#)

[Committee on the Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht](#)
Select sub-Committee on [Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht](#)

Select sub-Committee on [Environment, Community and Local Government](#)
An Fochoiste um an [Straitéis 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge 2010 – 2030 agus Rudaí Gaolmhara](#)

[Committee on European Union Affairs](#)

[Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform](#)

Select sub-Committee on [Finance](#)

Sub-Committee on [Global Taxation](#)

Select sub-Committee on [Public Expenditure and Reform](#)

Select sub-Committee on the [Department of the Taoiseach](#)

Sub Committee on [European Scrutiny - Finance & Expenditure](#)

[Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade](#)

[Committee on Health and Children](#)

Select sub-Committee on [Children and Youth Affairs](#)

Select sub-Committee on [Health](#)

[Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement](#)

[Committee of Inquiry into the Banking Crisis](#)

[Committee on Public Service Oversight and Petitions](#)

Joint sub-Committee on [Public Petitions](#)

Joint sub-Committee on the [Ombudsman](#)

[Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation](#)

[Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality](#)

Sub-Committee on [Human Rights relative to Justice and Equality Matters](#)

[Committee on Members' Interests \(Dáil Éireann\)](#)

[Committee on Members' Interests \(Seanad Éireann\)](#)

[Committee on Procedure and Privileges \(Dáil Éireann\)](#)

Sub-Committee on [Administration](#)

Sub-Committee on [Dáil Reform](#)

Sub-Committee on [Privileges](#)

[Committee on Procedure and Privileges \(Seanad Éireann\)](#)

Sub-Committee on [Administration](#)

[Committee of Public Accounts](#)

[Committee of Selection \(Seanad Éireann\)](#)

[Public Consultation Committee \(Seanad Éireann\)](#)

[Committee on Transport and Communications](#)

Select sub-Committee on [Transport, Tourism and Sport](#)

Select sub-Committee on [Communications, Energy and Natural Resources](#)

[Committee on Standing Orders \(Private Business\)](#)