

THERE IS A BETTER WAY



TÁ BEALACH NÍOS FEARR ANN



Sinn Féin General Election Manifesto 2011
Sinn Féin - Forógra Olltoghcháin 2011

INTRODUCTION	P3
RÉAMHRÁ	P5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	P7
ACHOIMRE FEIDHMIÚCHÁIN	P11
PART 1 – ECONOMIC RECOVERY	P15
» Fixing the Economy	P15
» Jobs Creation and Retention	P18
» Wages and Incomes Protected	P20
» A Fair Taxation System	P21
PART 2 – PUBLIC SERVICES	P25
» The Health System Transformed	P25
» Education and Children – The Best Start for Our Children	P27
» The Wrongs of the Celtic Tiger Put Right	P28
» The Rural Way of Life Protected and Developed	P29
» Local Communities Made Safe	P31
PART 3 – TOWARDS A NEW REPUBLIC	P33
» Political Reform – An End to Cronyism, Corruption and Privilege	P33
» Building an Ireland of Equals	P34
» An Ghaeilge agus na Gaeltachtaí	P36
» Uniting Ireland	P38



**THERE IS A
BETTER WAY**

**TÁ BEALACH
NÍOS FEARR ANN**

INTRODUCTION

THERE IS A BETTER WAY

Ireland is at a crossroads. This election will be one of the most important ever held. Fianna Fáil and the Greens have ruined the economy.

440,000 citizens are unemployed; 100,000 more people will emigrate over the next two years. Families are at risk of losing their homes. Our elderly and disabled, low-income and middle-income families, our urban and rural communities and small businesses, have all been badly hurt by the bad decisions of this incompetent Government.

Our sovereignty has been handed over to the IMF and EU and the banking debt has become the personal debt of every man, woman and child in the State. This is wrong.

There is a better way to reduce the deficit and put our economy back on track without cutting the heart out of society and destroying our education, health and social services.

If we are to fix this our society we need to put honesty and fairness into politics. We need people in the Dáil who are there to represent the best interests of citizens, not the banks or themselves. We need people who put job creation and quality public services first – who will make sure the ordinary person and the most vulnerable in society are protected. All that is still possible, even in these difficult times. But it means political choices.

Fianna Fáil's and the Greens' savage Budget targeted working families and those on low and middle incomes. And, despite

their rhetoric, Labour and Fine Gael have both said that they intend to implement the policies produced by the Government.

Four years ago, these parties were also saying the same thing – cut taxes, increase spending and give more power to the EU.

Four years ago, Sinn Féin said the fundamentals were not sound and that the Government was throwing away billions instead of investing in the future.

We proposed introducing a fair tax system, using available public finance to create a world-class health and education system, immediate measures to deal with a growing crisis in property and banking, the ending of cronyism and double standards. We said use the boom to build a society that we can really be proud of.

Today we are the only party to have produced costed, alternative economic proposals that have been endorsed by independent economists. Sinn Féin's commitment is to:-

- a) Invest in a major job-creation programme to get Ireland back to work;**
- b) Reverse the savage cuts and prioritise frontline services;**
- c) Burn the bondholders in Anglo Irish Bank and wind it up;**
- d) Reduce the deficit by taxing the wealthiest and eliminating wasteful spending.**
- e) Root and branch political reform aimed at producing a genuinely open and accountable form of Government which ends the notion of political elites and empowers Irish citizens**

- f) An end to the two-tier health and education systems;
- g) The proper use of Ireland's natural resources for the common good;
- h) Continued support for the Peace Process and the Good Friday Agreement

Over the last year Sinn Féin has confronted the Government and demanded higher standards. For us, actions speak louder than words.

- » Sinn Féin was the only party not to sign up to the Fianna Fáil/Green Party/Fine Gael/Labour 'Consensus for Cuts' and instead put forward a real alternative for economic recovery.
- » It was Sinn Féin which first called on Ceann Comhairle John O'Donoghue to resign, saying his position was untenable after the revelations about his lavish expenses. Only then did the other Opposition parties speak out.
- » It was Limerick City Sinn Féin Councillor Maurice Quinlivan who confronted the slíbhín politics of Minister Willie O'Dea.

- » It was the decision of Sinn Féin's Pearse Doherty to go to the courts to vindicate the rights of the people of Donegal South-West which forced the Government to hold the long-overdue by-election.
- » It was Sinn Féin's Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin TD who exposed Taoiseach Brian Cowen's contacts with leading people in Anglo Irish Bank.
- » It was Sinn Féin which opposed the Lisbon Treaty, pointing out the dangers for our sovereignty.

Sinn Féin is an Irish republican party. We are a United Ireland party. We believe in the sovereignty, independence and freedom of the Irish people and the right of our people to build our own society. Sinn Féin is committed to delivering for citizens.

Sinn Féin offers more than just hope in this election – Sinn Féin offers a real alternative.



RÉAMHRÁ

TÁ BEALACH NÍOS FEARR

Tá Éire ag crosbhóthar. Beidh an toghchán seo ar cheann de na toghcháin is tábhachtaí riamh. Scríos Fianna Fáil agus an Comhaontas Glas an geilleagar. Tá 450,000 saoránach dífhostaithe, rachaidh 100,000 duine eile ar eisimirce thar an dá bhliain atá le teacht. Tá baol go gcaillfidh teaghlaigh a gcuid tithe. De dheasca na ndroch-chinntí a rinne an Rialtas neamhinniúil seo, rinneadh a lán dochair dár ndaoine scothaosta agus dár ndaoine faoi mhíchumas, dár dteaghlaigh ísealioncaim agus meánioncaim, dár bpobail uirbeacha agus tuaithe agus dár ngnóthais bheaga. Tugadh ár gceannas don CAI agus don AE, agus rinneadh fiachas pearsanta gach fir, mná agus linbh sa Stát d'fhiachas na baincéireachta. Tá sé seo mícheart. Tá bealach níos fearr chun ár n-easnamh a laghdú agus chun ár ngeilleagar a chur ar ais ar an mbealach ceart gan an croí a bhaint as ár sochaí agus gan ár seirbhísí oideachais, sláinte agus sóisialta a scríosadh.

Má tá muid chun ár sochaí a dheisiú, ní mór dúinn macántacht agus cothroime a thabhairt sa pholaitíocht. Tá daoine ag teastáil uainn atá sa Dáil chun seasamh do leas na saoránach, in ionad leas na mbanc agus in ionad a leasa féin. Tá daoine ag teastáil uainn a chuireann cruthú post agus ardchaighdeán seirbhísí poiblí thar gach rud eile – daoine a chinnteoidh go bhfuil an gnáthdhuine agus na daoine is soghonta i sochaí faoi chosaint. Tá an méid seo fós indéanta, fiú amháin sna hamanna deacra seo. Ach seasann sé do roghanna polaitiúla.

Dhírigh Buiséad danartha Fhianna Fáil agus an Chomhaontais Ghlais ar theaghlaigh oibre

agus ar na daoine siúd ar ísealioncam nó meánioncam. Agus, beag beann ar a reitric, dúirt Páirtí an Lucht Oibre agus Fine Gael go bhfuil sé ar intinn acu na polasaithe a tháirg an rialtas a chur i bhfeidhm.

Ceithre bliana ó shin, bhí na páirtithe seo ag rá an ruda chéanna – laghdaigh cánacha, méadaigh caiteachas agus tabhair níos mó cumhachta don AE.

Ceithre bliana ó shin, dúirt Sinn Féin nach raibh na bunúsaigh iontaofa agus go raibh an Rialtas ag caitheamh billiún uaidh, in ionad a bheith ag infheistiú don todhchaí.

Mhol muid tabhairt isteach an chórais chánach atá cothrom, úsáid an airgeadais phoiblí atá le fáil chun córas sláinte agus oideachais den scoth a chruthú, bearta láithreacha chun déileáil leis an ngéarchor atá ag fás sa réadmhaoin agus sa bhaincéireacht, deireadh le cairdeas fabhair agus le caighdeáin dhúbailte. Dúirt muid go n-úsáidfí an borradh chun sochaí a bhféadfadh muid bheith an-bhródúil aisti a thógáil.

Inniu, is sinne an t-aon pháirtí a táirgeadh tograí costáilte malartacha eacnamaíochta atá formhuinith ag roinnt eacnamaithe neamhspleácha ar fud na hÉireann. Is é tiomantas Shinn Féin ná: :-

- a) Infheistiú in ollchlár um chruthú post chun Éire a chur ar ais ag obair;
- b) Na gearrthacha danartha a fhreaschur agus seirbhísí túsline a chur in ord tosaíochta;
- c) Na sealbhóirí bannaí i mBanc Angla-Éireannach a dhó agus é a fhoirceannadh;

- d) An t-easnamh a laghdú trí cháin a ghearradh ar na daoine is saibhre agus trí chaiteachas diomailteach a dhíchur.
- e) Leasú polaitíochta a dhéanamh agus a fhorbairt chun foirm Rialtais atá cuntasach agus fíoroscailte a chruthú, rud a chuirfidh deireadh le nóisean de scothaicmí polaitiúla agus a thabharfaidh cumhacht do shaoránaigh na hÉireann
- f) Deireadh a chur leis na córais dhá-chiseal sláinte agus oideachais;
- g) Úsáid cheart acmhainní nádúrtha na hÉireann don leas coiteann;
- h) Tacaíocht leanúnach do Phróiseas na Síochána, agus do Chomhaontú Aoine an Chéasta.

Thar an bhliain seo a chuaigh thart, thug Sinn Féin aghaidh ar an Rialtas agus d'éiligh sé caighdeán níos airde. Dúinn féin, is tábhachtaí bearta ná focail.

- » Is é Sinn Féin an t-aon pháirtí nár aontaigh le 'Comhdhearcadh um Ghearrthacha' Fhianna Fáil/ an Chomhaontais Ghlais/ Fhine Gael/ Pháirtí an Lucht Oibre agus, ina ionad sin, chuir sé ar aghaidh fíormhalairt le haghaidh téarnamh geilleagrach.
- » Is é Sinn Féin a d'iarr ar Cheann Comhairle John O'Donoghue éirí as ar dtús, agus é ag rá go raibh a ról dochosanta mar gheall ar an scéala ar a chostais fhlúirseacha. Labhair páirtithe eile Freasúra amach ina dhiaidh sin.
- » Is é Maurice Quinlivan, Comhairleoir Chathair Luimnigh ó Shinn Féin, a thug aghaidh ar an bpolaitíocht slíbhín de chuid Aire Willie O'Dea.
- » Ba é cinneadh de chuid Pearse Doherty ó Shinn Féin ar dhul chuig na cúirteanna chun cearta mhuintir Dhún na nGall Thiar-Theas a chosaint, rud a chuir iallach ar an Rialtas fothoghchán a bhí fada thar téarma a thionól.

- » Is é Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin TD ó Shinn Féin a nochtaigh teagmhálacha Brian Cowen, an Taoiseach, leis na príomhdhaoine i mBanc Angla-Éireannach.
- » Is é Sinn Féin a chuir in aghaidh Chonradh Liospóin, agus é ag sainathint na gcontúirtí i leith ár gceannais

Is páirtí poblachtach Éireannach é Sinn Féin. Is páirtí Éire Aontaithe sinn. Creideann muid i gceannas, neamhspleáchas agus saoirse mhuintir na hÉireann agus i gceart ár muintire maidir lenár sochaí féin a thógáil. Tá Sinn Féin tiomanta dona bheith ag seachadadh do shaoránaigh.

Tairgeann Sinn Féin níos mó ná dóchas amháin sa toghchán seo – tairgeann Sinn Féin fíormhalairt.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PART 1 – ECONOMIC RECOVERY

- 1) A new Budget as soon as possible following the election.
- 2) Close the deficit over 6 years, not 4. We would envisage a €3billion adjustment for the remainder of 2011 (€4.7billion in a full year), leaving us with a deficit of €15.7billion in 2012.
- 3) Restructuring the bank debts, including burning the bank bondholders in those banks which are insolvent, including Anglo Irish Bank. This will ensure tax raised is spent on Irish public services – not servicing or paying off the debt incurred for bailing out the banks.
- 4) Initiate a responsible wind-down of NAMA.
- 5) A €7billion job-creation programme spread over 3.5 years with the aim of saving and creating more than 160,000 jobs funded by a once-off transfer from the National Pension Reserve Fund and which we would use for a stimulus instead of transferring its reserves into the banks.
- 6) A labour-intensive essential infrastructure programme as part of the €7billion job-stimulus programme. The focus of this programme would be to build hospitals, schools, public transport networks and to roll out broadband State-wide.
- 7) Establishing within the stimulus programme a €600million Jobs Retention Fund. This fund would subsidise workers in struggling Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) with the potential to save 96,000 jobs, akin to the successful model used in Germany.
- 8) The introduction of a 1% Wealth Tax. This would be an income-linked Wealth Tax for high-earners levied on their assets over €1million in value, excluding working farmland.
- 9) The introduction of a third tax rate of 48% on individual income in excess of three times the average industrial wage (€100,000) per annum.
- 10) Standardising all discretionary taxation expenditures (tax reliefs paid at either the standard or marginal rate depending on income) with a view to ultimately eradicating tax reliefs that do not return a value for society.
- 11) Restoring the minimum wage at €8.65 an hour.
- 12) Removing the income levy/Universal Social Charge from low-earners in the 'no-tax' bracket and keep minimum wage earners out of the tax bracket.
- 13) Immediately returning social welfare payments to 2010 levels, and as soon as economic conditions permit raise them further to ensure adequate incomes (no one below the poverty line).

PART 2 – THE PEOPLE’S SERVICES

- 1) A new universal public health system for Ireland that provides care to all free at the point of delivery, on the basis of need alone, and funded from general fair and progressive taxation.
- 2) Reversing the current health cuts. Fund health in the context of reformed taxation and a progressive economic strategy. Roll out the promised Primary Care Centres throughout the State on an accelerated timetable. No more cuts to services at local hospitals and restore those services already cut.
- 3) Fewer bureaucrats, more frontline health workers.
- 4) An end to public subsidies for private healthcare. Invest all health funding in the public system.
- 5) A return to free education. End the system where schools are reliant on voluntary contributions from parents by raising the capitation grants to cover the real cost of running a school. Abolish the charge for the Leaving Cert and Junior Cert and for the mocks. Establish a book-lending scheme across all primary and secondary schools.
- 6) The creation of 500 new teaching posts and the reduction of class sizes to 20 pupils per teacher.
- 7) Opposing the reintroduction of third-level fees through any guise and reform the grants system to take into account the real costs of going to college.
- 8) The responsible wind-down of NAMA.
- 9) Examine models for mortgage debt forgiveness for those on low and average incomes who are in negative equity and who are in arrears.
- 10) Completing the stalled regeneration projects.
- 11) A secure future for rural post offices. Transform the rural postal network to make rural post offices a ‘one stop shop’ for a range of services including postal services, banking services, council services and citizens’ information.
- 12) Ensuring those with the lowest farm incomes benefit proportionally more from the single farm payment (SFP) and abolish the SFP for large businesses not directly involved in farming. Cap Single Farm Payments at €100,000.
- 13) Establishing a Rural Enterprise Fund to support new micro enterprises and co-ops being set up in rural areas, particularly in the agri-food sector.
- 14) Boosting Garda numbers by ending current recruitment, promotion and overtime embargoes. A far-reaching process of civilianisation to free-up fully trained Gardaí from administrative and other duties to fight crime is essential and must be expedited.
- 15) Raise Garda visibility and activity in areas and at times needed by reassigning Gardaí from desk duties to the beat.

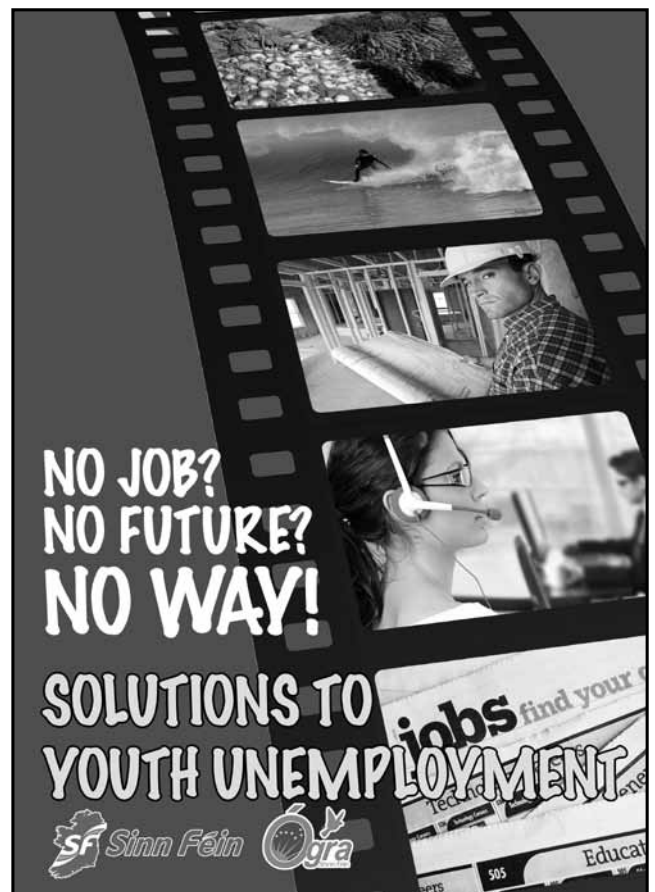


PART 3 – TOWARDS A NEW REPUBLIC

- 1) A new Constitution. Establishing an all-Ireland Constitutional Forum drawn from representatives of both legislatures on this island, civic society, business and trade unions to discuss and bring forward a Draft Constitution that would be put to the people in a referendum.
- 2) Increasing voter participation by holding elections at weekends, reducing the voting age to 16 and automatically register voters as soon as they become eligible to vote using PPS numbers to avoid fraud.
- 3) Reforming how the Dáil is elected. Elect one-third of the Dáil from a list system; the other two-thirds from six-seat constituencies based on PRSTV.
- 4) Abolishing the Seanad in its current form.
- 5) Capping ministerial salaries at €100,000; TDs' salaries at €75,000.
- 6) Northern representation in the Dáil – The existing 18 Westminster MPs to automatically be accorded membership of the Oireachtas. Voting rights in Presidential elections to be extended to citizens in the Six Counties.
- 7) Changing the law to allow for the impeachment or removal from the Dáil any TD involved in corruption, deliberate misuse of public money or fraud.
- 8) Building an Ireland of Equals where everyone's rights are guaranteed, free of divisions caused by partition, sectarianism, racism and other forms of discrimination, and free from poverty and economic inequality.
- 9) Publishing the National Positive Ageing Strategy following consultation and direct participation of older people themselves, establish a proactive Ombudsman for Older People, prioritise the protection of vulnerable older people including through the introduction of modern mental capacity legislation.
- 10) Reviewing the current Disability Act with a view to the introduction of a new rights-based Disability Act alongside robust enforcement mechanisms and establish a Disability Ombudsman and a National Disability Strategy within the Department of the Taoiseach to set annual targets towards full delivery by 2016.
- 11) Publish a National Carers' Strategy to secure an adequate income, employment and social opportunities, health and well-being supports for all family carers.
- 12) Implementation of a comprehensive strategy to roll back the erosion of the primacy of Irish in Gaeltacht areas and to create new Gaeltacht areas, particularly in urban centres, across the island.
- 13) Industrial centres of excellence under the auspices of Údarás na Gaeltachta in Gaeltacht regions to foster employment for local communities.
- 14) A referendum on Irish unity.
- 15) The integration of public services and infrastructure on an all-Ireland basis, enabling people to access services such as health and education nearest to them, regardless of which side of the border they are on.
- 16) Co-ordinating economic planning on an all-Ireland basis. Harmonise taxation policy and regulation across the island.
- 17) Ensuring that the unionist community is included at the centre of the debate about the kind of Ireland we want and their place within a united Ireland.

KEY DOCUMENTS PRODUCED BY SINN FÉIN

- » There is a Better Way – Sinn Féin Economic Plan for Recovery 2011
- » Job-creation documents: Getting Ireland Back to Work; No job? No future? No way!; Let's Get Dublin Working
- » Future of Farming and Fishing in the West (endorsed by Joint Oireachtas Committee on Agriculture)
- » Agri-food report with recommendation on expanding employment in the agri-food sector (endorsed by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Innovation)
- » Awakening the West – Overcoming Social and Economic Inequality (endorsed by Joint Oireachtas Committee on Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs)
- » Workers' Rights for an Ireland of Equals
- » Injecting Urgency: Sinn Féin Priorities for the National Drugs Strategy
- » Policing with the Community
- » Towards a New Republic - A United Ireland



ACHOIMRE FEIDHMIÚCHÁIN

CUID 1 – TÉARNAMH GEILLEAGRACH

- 1) Buiséad nua a luaithe is féidir tar éis an toghcháin.
- 2) Dúnfar an t-easnamh thar 6 bliana, ní thar 4 bliana. Thuarfadh muid coigeartú de €3 bhilliún thar an gcuid eile den bhliain 2011 (€4.7 bhilliún i mbliain iomlán), rud a d'fhágfadh easnamh de €15.7 bhilliún sa bhliain 2012.
- 3) Athstruchtúrófar na fiachais bhainc, agus dófar na sealbhóirí bannaí sna bainc siúd atá dócmhainneach, lena n-áirítear Banc Angla-Éireannach. Cinnteoidh sé seo go gcaitear an cháin a bhailítear ar sheirbhísí poiblí Éireannacha – ní ar sheirbhísí ná íoc an fhiachais a tabhaíodh trí na bainc a tharrtháil.
- 4) Tosófar foirceannadh freagrach an GNBS.
- 5) Clár €7 mbilliún um chruthú post atá scaipthe thar 3.5 bliana a bhfuil sé mar aidhm leis níos mó ná 160,000 post a shábháil agus a chruthú, cistithe ag aistriú aonuaire ón gCúlchiste Náisiúnta Pinsean, rud a d'úsáidfeadh muid le haghaidh spreagtha in ionad a bheith ag aistriú a chúlchistí chuig na bainc.
- 6) Clár dlúthfhostaíochta um bonneagar riachtanach mar chuid de chlár spreagtha post €7 mbilliún. Bheadh fócas an chláir seo dírithe ar ospidéal, scoileanna, agus líonraí iompair phoiblí a thógáil agus ar leathanbhanda a rolladh amach ar fud an Stáit.
- 7) Bunófar Ciste €600 milliún um Choinneáil Post laistigh den chlár spreagtha. D'fhóirdheonódh an ciste seo oibrithe i bhFiontair Bheaga agus Mheánmhéide (FBManna), trína bhféadfaí 96,000 post a shábháil, cosúil leis an múnla rathúil a úsáidtear sa Ghearmáin.
- 8) Tabhairt isteach Cánach Rachmais de 1%. Bheadh sí seo ina Cánach Rachmais ioncam-cheangailte do shaothraithe arda a ghearrfadh cáin ar a sócmhainní thar luach de €1 mhilliún, seachas talamh feirme oibrithe
- 9) Tabhairt isteach tríú ráta cánach de 48% ar ioncam aonair os cionn trí huaire an mheánphá tionsclaíochta (€100,000) in aghaidh na bliana.
- 10) Caighdeánú gach caiteachais chánachais discréide (faoisimh chánach a íoctar ag an ráta caighdeánach nó ag an ráta imeallach, ag brath ar ioncam) d'fhonn deireadh a chur le faoisimh chánach nach seasann do luach don tsochaí sa deireadh thiar.
- 11) Tabharfar an pá íosta ar ais ag €8.65 in aghaidh na huaire.
- 12) Bainfear an tobhach ioncaim/an Muirear Uilíoch Sóisialta ón lucht ísealioncaim sa réim 'gan cháin', agus coinneofar saothraithe pá íosta as an réim chánach.
- 13) Cuirfear íocaíochtaí leasa shóisialaigh díreach ar ais go leibhéal na bliana 2010 agus, chomh luath agus a cheadaíonn coinníollacha geilleagracha é, ardófar iad arís chun ioncaim leordhóthanacha (duine ar bith faoin líne bhochtaineachta) a chinntiú.

CUID 2 – SEIRBHÍSÍ AN PHOBAIL

- 1) Córas sláinte nua poiblí uilíoch d'Éirinn a sholáthraíonn cúram do gach duine atá saor ag an bpointe seachadta, ar bhonn riachtanais amháin, agus atá maoinithe ag cánachas cothrom forásach ginearálta.
- 2) Freaschuirfear na gearrthacha sláinte reatha. Cisteofar sláinte i gcomhthéacs an chánachais leasaithe agus straitéis fhorásach gheilleagrach. Rollfar amach na hIonaid um Chúram Príomhúil atá geallta ar fud an Stáit ar chlár ama luathaithe. Ní bheidh aon ghearrthacha eile ag ospidéal áitiúla agus tabharfar ar ais na seirbhísí siúd a gearradh cheana féin.
- 3) Níos lú maorlathach, níos mó oibríthe túslíne sláinte.
- 4) Cuirfear deireadh le fordheontais phoiblí do chúram sláinte príobháideach. Infheistefar gach cistiú sláinte sa chóras poiblí.
- 5) Filleadh ar shaoroideachas. Cuirfear deireadh leis an gcóras ina mbraitheann scoileanna ar ranníocaíochtaí deonacha ó thuismitheoirí trí na deontais chaipitiúla a ardú chun fíorchostas ar reáchtáil na scoile a ghlanadh. Cuirfear deireadh leis an gcostas ar an Ardeistiméireacht agus ar an Teastas Sóisearach agus ar na bréagscrúduithe. Cuirfear scéim um iasacht leabhar ar bun trasna gach bunscoile agus meánscoile.
- 6) Cruthú 500 post nua teagaisc agus laghdú na méideanna ranga go 20 dalta in aghaidh an mhúinteora.
- 7) Cuirfear i gcoinne ath-thabhairt isteach na dtáillí tríú leibhéal in aon fhoirm agus leasófar an córas deontais le go gcuirfear na fíorchostais ar dhul chun coláiste san áireamh.
- 8) Foirceannadh freagrach an GNBS.
- 9) Iniúchadh a dhéanamh ar mhodhanna maithimh um fhiachas morgáiste ar son daoine atá ar ioncam íseal nó ar meánioncam atá i gcothromas diúltach agus atá i riaráiste.
- 10) Tionscadail athghiniúna nach bhfuil ar siúl a chur i gcrích.
- 11) Todhchaí cinnte d'oifigí poist tuaithe. Tiontófar gréasán poist na tuaithe chun 'ionad ilfhreastail' a dhéanamh d'oifigí poist na tuaithe ar son réimse seirbhísí, lena n-áirítear seirbhísí poist, seirbhísí baincéireachta, seirbhísí comhairle agus eolas do shaoránaigh.
- 12) Cinnteofar go mbaineann na daoine a bhfuil na hioncaim feirmeoireachta is ísle acu tairbhe níos comhréirí as an Íocaíocht Feirme Aonair (ÍFA) agus cuirfear cosc ar an ÍFA do ghnóthais mhóra nach bhfuil baint dhíreach acu le feirmeoireacht. Caidhpeálfar Íocaíochtaí Feirme Aonair ag €100,000.
- 13) Bunófar Ciste Fiontraíochta Tuaithe chun tacaíocht a thabhairt d'fhiontair bheaga agus do chomharchumainn a chuirtear ar bun i gceantair tuaithe, go háirithe in earnáil an agraibhia.
- 14) Méadófar líon na nGardaí trí dheireadh a chur leis an lánchosc ar earcaíocht reatha, ar ardú céime agus ar ragobair. Is gá go n-úsáidtear próiseas leathan sibhialaithe chun lígean do Ghardaí lánoilte dualgais riaracháin agus eile a fhágáil le dul i ngleic le coiriúlacht.
- 15) Ardófar gníomhaíocht agus sofheictheacht na nGardaí i limistéir agus ag amanna riachtanacha trí Ghardaí a bhogadh ó dhualgais ag an deasc go dtí na sráideanna.

GUID 3 – I DTREO POBLACHT NUA

- 1) Bunreacht nua. Bunófar Fóram Bunreachtúil Uile-Éireann a dhéantar as ionadaithe den dá reachtas ar an oileán seo, as sochaí shibhialta, as ceardchumann agus as cumainn ghnó chun Dréacht-Bhunreacht a phlé agus a chur ar fáil.
- 2) Méadófar rannpháirtíocht na vótálaithe trí thoghcháin a eagrú don deireadh seachtaine, tríd an íosaois vótála a laghdú go 16 bliain d'aois, agus trí vótálaithe a chlárú go huathoibríoch chomh luath is atá siad i dteideal vótála, ag úsáid uimhreacha an PSP chun calaois a sheachaint.
- 3) Leasófar an dóigh a dtoghtar an Dáil. Toghfar trian den Dáil ó chóras liosta; agus toghfar an dá thrian eile ó dháilcheantair sé shuíochán, bunaithe ar an IC-AI.
- 4) Díothófar an Seanad mar atá sé faoi láthair.
- 5) Caidhpeálfar tuarastail airí ag €100,000; agus caidhpeálfar tuarastail na TDanna ag €75,000.
- 6) Ionadaíocht ón Tuaisceart sa Dáil - tabharfar ballraíocht uathoibríoch den Oireachtas do 18 AP de chuid Westminster. Leathnófar cearta vótála i dtoghcháin Uachtaráin do shaoránaigh sna Sé Chontae.
- 7) Athrófar an dlí chun tainseamh nó baint den Dáil aon TD a bhfuil baint aige le héillitheacht, le mí-úsáid d'aon ghnó d'airgead poiblí agus le calaois a cheadú.
- 8) Cruthófar Éire ina bhfuil gach duine cothrom agus ina bhfuil cearta na saoránach á ráthú, saor ó dheighiltí a bhí cruthaithe ag críochdheighilt, saor ó chiníochas, ó sheicteachas agus ó shamplaí leithcheala eile, ó bhochtaineacht agus ó éagothroime gheilleagrach.
- 9) Foilsíú Straitéise Náisiúnta um Aosú Dearfach tar éis comhchomhairliúcháin le daoine atá sean agus tar éis a rannpháirtíochta díri, bunófar Ombudsman réamhghníomhach do Sheandaoine, tosaíochta a thabhairt do chosaint seandaoine atá leochaileach trí chur isteach reachtaíochta nua-aimseartha um inniúlacht meabhrach, mar shampla.
- 10) Déanfar athbhreithniú ar an Acht um Míchumas d'fhonn acht nua um míchumas cearta-bhunaithe a chur isteach, chomh maith le meicníochtaí feidhmiúcháin atá daingean, agus Ombudsman do Dhaoine faoi Míchumas agus Straitéis Náisiúnta Míchumais laistigh de Roinn an Taoisigh chun spríocanna bliantúla a leagan amach le haghaidh seachadta faoin mbliain 2016.
- 11) Foilsíú Straitéise um Chúramóirí Náisiúnta le hioncam cuí, deiseanna fostaíochta agus sochaí, tacaíochtaí sláinte agus folláine do chúramóirí teaghlaigh go léir a chinntiú.
- 12) Cur i bhfeidhm straitéise cuimsithí chun creimeadh phríomhaíocht na Gaeilge i gceantair Ghaeltachta a thiontú agus chun ceantair Ghaeltachta úra a chruthú ar fud an oileáin, go háirithe sna ceantair uirbeacha.
- 13) Ionaid Thionsclaíochta Barr Feabhais faoi choimirce Údarás na Gaeltachta i réigiúin Ghaeltachta chun fostaíocht a chruthú do phobail áitiúla.
- 14) Reifreann ar aontacht na hÉireann
- 15) Comhtháthú seirbhísí poiblí agus bonneagair ar bhonn uile-Éireann, ag cur ar chumas na ndaoine teacht ar sheirbhísí atá cóngarach dóibh, lena n-áirítear seirbhísí sláinte agus oideachais, beag beann ar an taobh den teorainn ar a bhfuil siad suite.
- 16) Comhordú pleanála geilleagraí ar bhonn uile-Éireann. Comhchuibheofar polasaí cánach agus rialúchán ar fud an oileáin.
- 17) Cinnteofar go bhfuil rannpháirtíocht an phobail aontachtaigh i lár na díospóireachta ar an gcineál tíre ba mhaith linn agus ar a n-áit laistigh d'Éirinn aontaithe.

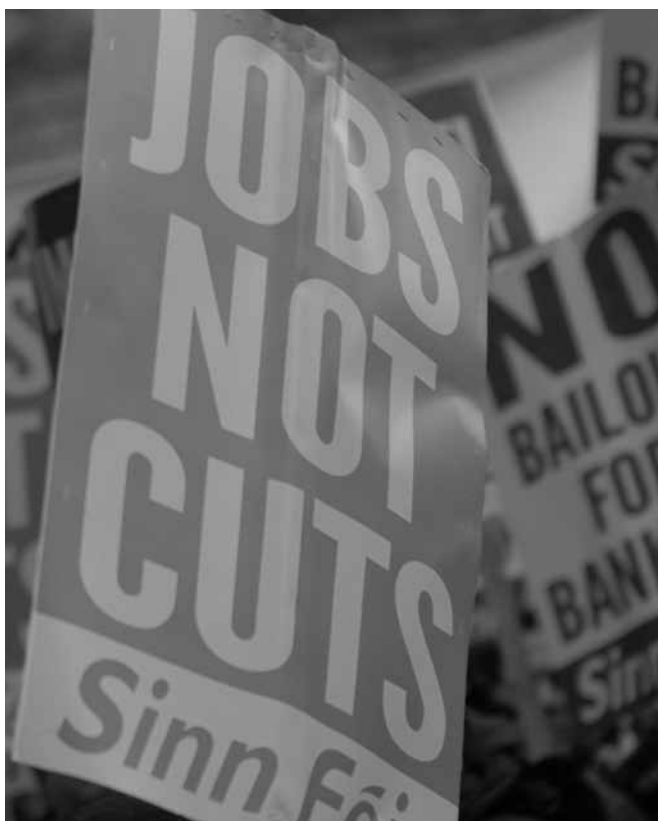


PART 1

ECONOMIC RECOVERY

FIXING THE ECONOMY

Fianna Fáil and the Green Party have brought the country close to economic ruin. They have introduced five successive Budgets, as well as emergency measures in February 2009, and everything they have done has made the situation worse. Their approach of slash and burn and bailing out the banks has completely failed. The sacrificing of our economic sovereignty to the IMF/EU and the handing over of control of decision-making to them will be disastrous for the economy and society in general.



FIANNA FÁIL/GREEN PARTY LEGACY

- » 2011 will be the fourth consecutive year of declining employment
- » By the end of 2011, 300,000 jobs will have been lost since 2007 – there are now 440,000 on the Live Register
- » 35% of those on the Live Register are there for more than one year
- » 100,000 more people will emigrate over the next two years
- » Retail sales (excluding car sales) remain in decline
- » The domestic economy, which accounts for 80% of the economy, continues to contract – the only growth is in exports and most of those exports come from large multinational companies, not home-grown Irish businesses.
- » The Government have based their fiscal plans on 1.75% growth in the economy which cannot and will not be achieved under their plans

The Government's economic policy is focused solely on deficit reduction and bailing out the banks. They have left the State without a plan for growth. No plan for growth means no credible plan for deficit reduction.

The banks continue to receive our money in the bail-out but have not reinvested it in the State. This money is being put into zombie banks here so that the leading banks of Europe can avoid the consequences of their own reckless lending decisions. The money is heading straight back out of the country, leaving only increased debts for Irish taxpayers.

It is the banking debt that is plunging us into this debt, not the State's exchequer finances. Fully nationalise AIB and Bank of Ireland. Introduce a Banking Resolution Bill which protects depositors. Don't rescue the remaining banks. Introduce a stimulus package. Overhaul the taxation system. Eliminate wasteful spending. By taking these steps we will become a good investment for the bond markets.

High bond rates and credit rating downgrades show that Ireland is being punished for trying to service an unsustainable debt and by taking on more in the form of the EU/IMF loan.



SINN FÉIN'S PLAN FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Sinn Féin has put forward an alternative plan for economic recovery which has been endorsed by a number of independent economists.

Our plan is based on job creation, taxation justice, an end to wasteful expenditure, a sensible deficit reduction timetable, the separation of sovereign debt from bank debt and a realistic approach to addressing the banking crisis.

REDUCING THE DEFICIT AND FUNDING THE STATE

The Exchequer deficit is €18.7 billion and Sinn Féin aims to close this deficit over a six-year period.

Sinn Féin would introduce a new Budget as soon as possible following the election and begin implementing our proposals.

Sinn Féin would introduce a major jobs stimulus package and close the deficit over 6 years, not 4. We would envisage a €3 billion adjustment for the remainder of 2011 (€4.7 billion in a full year), leaving us with a deficit of €15.7 billion in 2012.

Over the following years, a combination of the new tax measures (and overhauling the system to shut down tax evasion and avoidance loopholes and get rid of tax reliefs), continued savings and the return from a stimulus package (including a growing economy in the private sector), would begin to close the deficit.

For the remainder of 2011, resources from the National Pension Reserve Fund (NPRF) and the Exchequer Fund in the Central Bank should be used to run the State. These two bodies hold €30.56billion (€14.9billion in the NPRF and €15.7billion in the Exchequer Fund in the Central Bank) between them. That gives us until the end of 2011 to bring about a banking resolution.

RETURNING TO THE BOND MARKETS

Sinn Féin proposes returning to the international bond markets in 2012 at the latest with a banking resolution package in place, a growing economy and a declining deficit. By doing this we would restore confidence in the Irish economy with the international bond markets.

The reason the bond yields increased was because of an over-exposure to bank debt and Ireland's commitment to paying back bondholders. This increased interest rates. We need to separate bank debt from sovereign debt. A quick bank resolution plan, coupled with a radical shift in where Irish funds are diverted, would see bond rates move back to a reasonable rate.

Our debt/GDP ratio if we take the banks off the national balance sheet would be 75%. The corresponding figures for other European countries are: Greece 126%, Italy 116%, Portugal 76%, France 78% and Germany 73%.¹

SORTING OUT THE BANKING CRISIS

The impact of the banking crisis on the public finances has been nothing short of catastrophic. Our domestic public finances can be fixed but we need to start with a change to how we deal with the banking crisis. The Government needs to:-

- 1) Separate sovereign debt from private bank debt;
- 2) Abolish the bank guarantee – apply a market solution to a market problem;
- 3) Burn the bondholders or allow them to negotiate debt for equity swaps in the smaller banks;
- 4) Burn Anglo Irish Bank and Irish Nationwide bondholders;
- 5) Introduce a bank resolution plan that protects depositors and, at the same time, taxpayers;
- 6) Complete the nationalisation of AIB and Bank of Ireland and convert the two into a merged state bank;
- 7) The responsible wind-down of NAMA.

¹ <http://www.davidmcwilliams.ie/2010/12/15/separate-bank-from-state-debt-or-else-face-econocide>

☉ SINN FÉIN IS COMMITTED TO:

- a) Introduce a new Budget immediately after the election;
- b) No further drawing down of the IMF/EU loan;
- c) Separate sovereign debt from private bank debt;
- d) Sori out the banking crisis by burning the bondholders in Anglo Irish Bank and Irish Nationwide, abolishing the guarantee, introducing a bank resolution plan that protects depositors, and completing the nationalisation of Bank of Ireland and AIB;
- e) Reverse savage cuts imposed in the Fianna Fáil/Green Party December 2010 Budget which unfairly targeted those on low and middle incomes and were extremely deflationary;
- f) €7billion for a 3.5-year employment/ infrastructure provision stimulus package to to get Ireland back to work – €2billion of this to be used for employment stimulus in 2011;
- g) A €595million financial stimulus initiative from current spending;
- h) Reduce the deficit over six years beginning with a €3billion reduction for the remainder of 2011 through a combination of the new tax measures (and more overhauls such as shutting down tax evasion and avoidance loopholes and getting rid of tax reliefs), continued savings and the return from a stimulus package (including increased tax revenues from growth in the private sector);
- i) In 2012 our proposals would see a total deficit reduction of €4.2billion and we would go into 2013 with a deficit of €11.5billion;
- j) Return to the markets in 2012 at the latest – If we take the banks off the State's balance sheet, the debt/GDP ratio of Ireland falls below that of Belgium, which raised money in December at 1.8%;
- k) Over the next four years – 2013 to 2016 inclusive – our stimulus package returns a total of €15billion (as set out in our pre-Budget submission appendices) in revenue returns, social welfare savings and economy growth. Year after year our new taxation measures would increase the tax-take further and we would seek additional spending savings where achievable in a fair and efficient manner.

JOB CREATION AND JOB RETENTION

Jobs can be created. The solutions exist. Creating jobs has to be at the core of any economic recovery plan.

By December 2010, over 440,000 people were unemployed. Many people are struggling to survive on decreasing dole and social welfare payments while increasing numbers are emigrating. Reminiscent of the 1950s and 1980s, a whole generation of young people sees no future in the country and they are leaving. The ESRI has warned that up to 60,000 will leave by the end of this year and a further 40,000 next year if employment levels do not improve.

Our job creation proposals are based on providing immediate and direct employment in key sectors such as infrastructure – building schools, health facilities, improving secondary roads and public transport, and rolling out broadband – creating employment, particularly for those affected by the construction sector crash.

Sinn Féin will also focus on creating new jobs across the agri-food, tourism and IT/pharma sectors, and Research and Development as well as with initiatives that will ensure Ireland becomes a world leader in green energy. This will improve

the State's competitiveness in addition to providing us with world-class infrastructure to attract Foreign Direct Investment and support indigenous enterprise for longer-term employment creation. This sustainable long-term employment would broaden and secure the tax base.

🎯 SINN FÉIN IS COMMITTED TO:

- a) A €7billion job-creation programme spread over 3.5 years with the aim of saving and creating more than 160,000 jobs. This will be funded by a once-off transfer from the National Pension Reserve Fund, which we would use for a stimulus instead of transferring its reserves into the banks.
- b) A labour-intensive essential infrastructure programme as part of the €7billion job-stimulus programme. The focus of this programme would be to build hospitals, schools, water infrastructure, public transport networks and to roll out broadband State-wide.
- c) Establish within the stimulus programme a €600million Jobs Retention Fund. This fund would subsidise workers in struggling Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) with the potential to save 96,000 jobs, akin to the successful model used in Germany.
- d) Create employment through the construction and delivery of childcare services. There is a significant deficit which, if unaddressed, will be an impediment to economic recovery.
- e) A new generation of co-operatives. Provide start-up funding and other support co-operatives as a viable choice for start-up businesses and the conversion to co-operatives as an alternative to closure for struggling businesses.
- f) Jobs created for the under-25s. A Youth Jobs Fund to create 20,000 new jobs and an individual plan for the long-term prospects of every person under 25 who is on the Live Register.
- g) Boost employment in the tourism sector by developing tourist attractions, including cultural tourism attractions, amenities for those interested in adventure sport and attractions for children and young people. Implement steps to make Ireland the top destination for those who want a clean, green tourist destination in Europe. Target emerging and different/niche markets.
- h) Grow the agri-food sector by implementing the proposals in the report produced by Sinn Féin TD Arthur Morgan for the Oireachtas Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Employment. These proposals include funding and support central production hubs for SMEs involved in the agri-food sector.
- i) Employ apprentices on public projects. Make the employment of a set amount of apprentices a condition on which public contracts are awarded to contractors building public infrastructure to help address the crisis in non-completed apprenticeships due to the construction sector collapse.
- j) Create a new generation of entrepreneurs. Do this by changing the PRSI system to create a safety net for those who attempt to establish their own business, launching a National Entrepreneurship Programme with incubation centres around the country and doubling the target for supporting High Potential Start-Ups (HPSUs) from 200 to 400 per year.
- k) Break up local authority and public sector construction, service and procurement contracts to create a level pitch for small businesses to tender.
- l) A 'Sales Ireland' strategy to help Irish firms increase exports to markets outside the US and Britain. Assist Irish firms looking to set up manufacturing businesses with the potential to compete with our largest imports, including through the provision of R&D funding.

- m) A publicly-owned national green technology firm for Ireland that would manage and use the island's energy resources. To be established within 12 months, it would be an energy provider and funder gathering expertise and resources to make Ireland energy independent by 2020. Cost: approximately €100million.
- n) Increase and enhancing CE schemes, making the schemes more relevant for the needs of society, economy and the community.
- o) Initiate a 'Front Line Services Aides Scheme' where young people are employed to take on specific work from overworked front-line workers (e.g. civilianising administrative work that is currently done by Gardaí).
- p) Enhance Government-backed 'Buy Irish' campaign and 'Shop Local' campaigns.
- q) To reduce the pressure on retailers, end upward-only rent reviews for business premises.
- r) A radical overhaul of FÁS to ensure that the courses and assistance which it provides are relevant to the needs of job seekers and the economy, including being orientated towards growth sectors in the economy.

Even in times of severe economic difficulties the Government must ensure that everyone has a decent standard of income, whether that is through wages earned in employment or through social protection payments.

Reducing poverty has to be a core aim of Government. This will require enhanced education and employment opportunities and improved income supports. Countries which are successful in reducing poverty have comprehensive welfare systems, high payment rates and high employment rates.

As soon as economic conditions permit new, longer-term benchmarks against which the evolution of social welfare rates can be measured should be set.

In addition, reducing payments to the incomes of those who spend everything takes money out of the local and national economies and is deflationary which in turn leads to more job losses. Cuts in expenditure and tax increases need to be centred on the areas where they have the most positive impact on the economy.

Sinn Féin is committed to stopping any downward pressure for the working and middle classes on wages and reducing the major costs facing households, including the amount that those on low and average incomes pay on mortgage repayments and rent.

We will strengthen workers' rights protection to prevent wages being driven down. We will reduce the social welfare bill by creating jobs rather than by cutting payments. Pushing people into poverty will not lift us out of recession.

🎯 SINN FÉIN IS COMMITTED TO:

- a) Restore the minimum wage at €8.65 an hour. Sinn Féin has proposed other measures that can be applied to help viable businesses legitimately struggling

WAGES AND INCOMES PROTECTED

People across Ireland are struggling to pay bills, meet rising mortgage costs and survive on incomes which have drastically fallen due to unemployment and pay cuts. Social welfare rates have been cut. ESB and gas prices are rising. The minimum wage has been cut and this will have knock-on consequences on other low-paid workers.

- to keep people employed, such as our Jobs Retention Fund.
- b) Oppose attempts by employers to unilaterally opt-out of agreed wage rates.
 - c) Remove the income levy from low-earners in the 'no-tax' bracket, reverse the Universal Social Charge and keep minimum wage earners out of the tax bracket.
 - d) Immediately return social welfare payments to 2010 levels, and as soon as economic conditions permit raise them further to ensure adequate incomes (no one below the poverty line).
 - e) Protect the social welfare fund by working to end fraud and creating jobs to get people off the dole.
 - f) Restore the Christmas Bonus social welfare payment.
 - g) Restore Child Benefit to 2010 levels.
 - h) Improving the social welfare system to ensure support is given to people seeking financial help in an holistic way – ensure a decent standard of living, access to childcare when job seeking, studying or training and, when employed, the provision of skills training and counselling where needed.
 - i) New guidelines, protocols and training around the 'habitual residence' condition to ensure that returned Irish emigrants are not wrongly denied social welfare. Centralise application data to ensure geographical consistency in decision-making.
 - j) Improve the PRSI system to ensure employers are contributing fairly to their employees' welfare (Irish employers contribute the least in Europe to their employees' social protection).
 - k) A cap on utility prices, including electricity and gas, for a minimum of three years and a reduction where possible.
 - l) Maintaining VAT at its current rate, with eventual decreases of this regressive taxation.
 - m) Ensure a percentage is allocated from the carbon tax income fund in order to

specifically address energy poverty and subsidise energy efficiency measures for the lowest-income groups. Introducing compensatory measures to offset the carbon tax for low-income families, as demanded by social justice groups across the State.

- n) Introduce a Cost of Disability Payment on a phased basis, to offset extra costs related to disability and in recognition of disproportionate rates of poverty and unemployment among people with disabilities.

A FAIR TAXATION SYSTEM

The purpose of the tax system is to collect finances to run the State, including providing services like health, education, justice and social welfare.

A good tax system is fair – it taxes those who can afford it most and asks for less from those who cannot afford it. In this State, the tax system has been undermined as a result of changes introduced by successive governments leaving us in a position where the tax-take is insufficient to fund basic public services.

Fianna Fáil has steadily reduced direct taxation (income taxes) on the better-off while increasing flat taxes (VAT and rates), which is regressive and impacts most on ordinary people. The introduction of a Universal Social Charge in Budget 2011 and the lowering of the tax bands to bring more people into the tax net and more lower-earners into the marginal higher tax rate of 41% has unfairly targeted the least-well-off for tax increases and lessened these groups' disposable income – doing more damage in the long-run to the State's finances.

Sinn Féin believes in providing high-quality, free at the point of delivery public services and these must be paid for. This State

does not have a spending problem in its structural finances; it has a tax-raising and retention problem. Many people made vast fortunes during the Celtic Tiger era, much of which was under-taxed due to the extent of tax breaks available.

We believe that those who can afford it should be asked to pay more.

Sinn Féin is also advocating tax harmonisation across the island so we can remove a dual system that penalises border businesses and citizens and impedes the development of an all-island economy.

🎯 SINN FÉIN IS COMMITTED TO:

- a) Restructure the bank debts, including burning the bank bondholders in those banks which are insolvent, including Anglo Irish Bank. This will ensure tax raised is spent on Irish public services – not servicing or paying off the debt incurred for bailing out the banks.
- b) The introduction of a 1% Wealth Tax. This would be an income-linked Wealth Tax for high-earners levied on their assets over €1million in value, excluding working farmland. Potential to raise €1billion.
- c) The introduction of a third tax rate of 48% on individual income in excess of three times the average industrial wage (€100,000) per annum. Raises €410million.
- d) Standardise all discretionary taxation expenditures (tax reliefs paid at either the standard or marginal rate depending on income) with a view to ultimately eradicating tax reliefs that do not return a value for society. Raises €1.1billion.
- e) Increase 'wealth taxes': Capital Gains Tax to rise to 40% (15% increase) – raises €240million; and increase Capital Acquisitions Tax to 35% (10% increase). Raises €96million.
- f) Abolish mortgage interest relief for landlords. Raises €285million (2009 figure).
- g) Increase tax on second homes to €600 and introduce a tiered tax increase on subsequent homes: e.g. €700 for third homes, €800 for fourth and fifth homes.
- h) Hardship appeals system: Examine the introduction of an income-linked waiver for individuals with second homes who cannot sell them in the current climate, are struggling to meet mortgage repayments or are in financial difficulties. Potential to raise €120million.
- i) Abolish exemptions including PRSI exemption for share options. Raises €18million.
- j) Abolish the income tax exemption for share-option schemes. Raises €3million.
- k) Adjust PRSI on share-based remuneration and Capital Gains). Raises €79million.
- l) Abolish legacy amounts of property tax reliefs. Potential to raise €400million per annum.
- m) In the longer-term, see progressive multiple bands and rates to ensure that those who have the most pay the most. We commit to keeping minimum-wage earners out of the tax net and restoring the standard rate tax band to its 2010 levels.
- n) Reverse the Universal Social Charge and ensure that social insurance is progressive, so that those who have more pay more.
- o) Reduce dependence on regressive indirect taxes. Rebalance the tax system to so that it is less dependent on regressive 'indirect' taxes such as VAT and stamp duty.
- p) End tax breaks and close loopholes abused by higher-earners. Vigorously pursue tax avoiders and change the laws so that tax exiles lose their citizenship.
- q) No introduction of water charges or of property taxes for primary homes.
- r) The introduction of an international tax on speculative currency transactions (a 'Tobin Tax') to increase global economic stability.

- s) Ensure the State finances benefit from natural resources by increasing licence fees for off-shore exploration companies. The State to take a 51% shareholding in these resources. An immediate levy of 48% and a royalty of 7.5% should be applied on landed gas and oil.
- t) Keep the ESB and all other public companies in public ownership.





PART 2

PUBLIC SERVICES

THE HEALTH SYSTEM TRANSFORMED

Sinn Féin's vision is of a new Irish health system with care for all based on need alone.

Our public healthcare system is in crisis because Fianna Fáil-led governments for the past 13 years have been about privatising the health service, and imposing savage cuts. Operations are being cancelled, public hospital beds are being closed, services are being slashed, frontline healthcare jobs are being cut back and patients are suffering.

All this is happening in a two-tier system where wealth can buy you better care in the private health sector – a private sector subsidised by the Government at the expense of the public system.

Even at the height of the boom the health system continued to struggle from crisis to crisis, never properly recovering from the cuts of the 1980s imposed by Governments involving Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and Labour.

The HSE has failed because it is top heavy with expensive bureaucracy and is trying to operate an inherently inequitable and inefficient system based on fundamentally flawed policy.

Too often the health system has failed the most vulnerable young people in its care. It has failed patients whose illnesses have been misdiagnosed and those who have

been left on waiting lists so long that their illness has become terminal. Such failures cannot be accepted.

The health system will only be transformed if we have a clear vision of the kind of healthcare citizens deserve. Doctors, nurses and other health professionals do a great job in circumstances that are increasingly intolerable. It is time to start building a health service that meets the needs of all citizens and that treats them all on a basis of equality. We need a system that has primary and preventative healthcare at its core. A refocus on primary and preventative healthcare, together with complementary measures to address the social determinants of ill-health, will over time produce healthcare savings to the Exchequer by reducing the necessity for higher cost acute care in many cases.

We will all benefit – the economy will benefit in the long run – if we build a world-class health system.

SINN FÉIN IS COMMITTED TO:-

- a) A new universal public health system that provides care to all free at the point of delivery, on the basis of need alone, and funded from general fair and progressive taxation.**
- b) End the 'two tier system'. Introducing comprehensive community-based primary health and social care services for all, free at the point of delivery, including General Practitioner and dental services and abolishing all prescription charges.**

- c) Restore direct Ministerial and Departmental responsibility for health services which are funded by public money.
- d) A Health Funding Commission to plan the transition to a new single-tier healthcare system.
- e) Reverse the current health cuts. Fund health in the context of reformed taxation and a progressive economic strategy. Roll out the promised Primary Care Centres throughout the State on an accelerated timetable. No more cuts to services at local hospitals and restore those services already cut.
- f) Fewer bureaucrats, more frontline health workers. Carry out a review of managerial and administrative posts within the health service and the Department of Health, with a view towards eliminating those positions that are surplus to requirement and using the money saved to hire more frontline health professionals.
- g) An end to public subsidies for private healthcare. Invest all health funding in the public system, immediately end tax breaks for private hospitals and the land gift scheme, phase out public subsidisation of and ultimately replace the private system within an agreed timetable. Abolish the National Treatment Purchase Fund and return its funding to the public health system
- h) End private hospital co-location scheme. Potential to save €100million
- i) Apply charges based on the full economic cost to all use of all beds in public and voluntary hospitals in the State for the purposes of private medical practice. Saves €305million.
- j) Action should be taken to regulate excessive GP fees. Roll out the promised Primary Care Centres throughout the State on an accelerated timetable.
- k) Reduce the cost of medicines in our health system, establishing a state company for the wholesale distribution of drugs, using lower-cost generic drugs, and tackling over-prescription and wastage. Saves €200million (figure provided by the Department of Health in 2009).
- l) A regular, free, full health screening for every citizens as part of a fundamental reorientation of the health system adopting a central focus on prevention, health promotion and primary care (including mental health care). This will save people from needless suffering and is the best way to avoid more expensive treatments later. It will also help reduce lost working hours, saving money for workers, businesses and the healthcare system.
- m) An end to the over-centralisation of hospital facilities and a reversal of cutbacks in services at local hospitals. Provide cancer care on a truly nationwide basis, with access to radiation oncology and other cancer services in all the regions.
- n) Plan for enhanced provision of essential public nursing home beds, community care facilities and home care.
- o) Develop health services on an all-Ireland basis, progressing from increased co-operation to integration of services on the island.
- p) Improving accountability and transparency in planning and financing mental health service reform.
- q) Modernise mental health legislation in line with the new Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- r) Promoting cross-departmental action to combat social exclusion, prejudice and discrimination against people with mental health problems.
- s) Ring-fence 12% of annual Department of Health budget for mental health services in line with World Health Organisation recommendations.
- t) Develop and promote suicide prevention strategies.
- u) Ensure provision of required child and adolescent community-based mental

health services and end the placement of children in adult in-patient facilities.

- v) Develop neurological care services, prioritising implementation of the National Rehabilitation Strategy, including acute neurology and stroke services.
- w) A Supplementary Lourdes Hospital Redress Scheme, acknowledging and compensating the remaining 35 women victims of Michael Neary, to be undertaken and completed within the current calendar year.
- x) A Commission of Inquiry into the practice of symphysiotomy and take all appropriate steps to help bring closure for the women survivors of this barbaric practice.
- y) Equity in access to hospice and palliative care services.

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN – THE BEST START FOR OUR CHILDREN

Sinn Féin believes that children's rights should be enshrined in the Constitution.

Every parent aspires to the best start for their children. We are committed to ensuring that is more than an aspiration – we are committed to delivering the best start for our children. Free primary, secondary and third-level education is a top priority for Sinn Féin. This will mean eliminating the growing parental contributions and other costs that have undermined the entitlement to free education.

We will focus on improving childcare choices for parents in the earliest years of their children's lives including through the introduction of what is the norm in most European states – a state pre-school system. We will improve the care given to the most vulnerable children.

The best start for children today offers the best future for us all as a society and for the economy.

🎯 SINN FÉIN IS COMMITTED TO:

- a) A Constitutional referendum to enshrine fully the rights of children in the Constitution.
- b) Introduce a robust system of child protection, ensuring that every child in care is allocated a social worker with whom they would have ongoing contact with, and resource the care system according to need; put Children First guidelines on a statutory footing; ensure that children are listened to, and the child's best interests are paramount in all matters concerning them; legislate to ensure that children have a statutory right to aftercare services on leaving care.
- c) Ensure the public provision of comprehensive child-centred childcare services. These need to be developed in consultation with parents and communities, reflecting the needs of children and families, and recognising the importance of childcare for social cohesion and economic development and the true value of the labour of childcare workers.
- d) A return to free education. End the system where schools are reliant on voluntary contributions from parents by raising the capitation grants to cover the real cost of running a school. Abolish the charge for the Leaving Cert and Junior Cert and for the mocks. Establish a book-lending scheme across all primary and secondary schools.
- e) A minimum of 150 school building projects to enter the architectural and planning stage each year so that schools are ready to proceed as quickly as possible to the construction phases. End wasteful spending on the use of prefabs.

- f) Enhance Irish-medium education and Irish-language learning by giving the Department of Education and Skills responsibility to create and service the demand for Gaelscoileanna, including the immediate building of Irish primary and secondary schools where the demand has already been shown.
- g) Restore special needs assistants, resource hours, and language resource teachers and Traveller education supports. Recognise and resource Educate Together and other non-denominational schools at primary and secondary level where there is demand for them.
- h) The creation of 500 new teaching posts and the reduction of class sizes to 20 pupils per teacher.
- i) The extension of breakfast clubs, homework clubs and school meals to all schools in disadvantaged areas
- j) An end to the state subsidy of private education.
- k) Recreational and leisure facilities to be more widely available including playgrounds, youth cafes, and skate parks and tennis/basketball courts.
- l) Prioritise action on autism to ensure the earliest intervention for all who need it, access to Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) and enhanced funding for people with autism, their carers and support organisations
- m) Oppose the reintroduction of third-level fees through any guise and reform the grants system to take into account the real costs of going to college.

THE WRONGS OF THE CELTIC TIGER PUT RIGHT

For more than a decade, Fianna Fáil-led government policies supported and fuelled the development of an unsustainable economic model which became known as the Celtic Tiger. Many of these policies have left us with serious social and economic problems that cannot be left unaddressed.

The legacy of the Celtic Tiger includes 'ghost' housing estates, negative equity, an unprecedented banking crisis, unemployment, a personal debt crisis, badly planned towns and a huge Exchequer deficit. These legacy issues for which Government policy is largely responsible have to be addressed if we want to avoid even greater social and economic difficulties into the future.

Increasing numbers of homeowners are struggling to pay off mortgages with many others experiencing negative equity. Without intervention, mortgage default is likely to become a major issue in the time ahead. While other economies are slowly coming out of recession, if our homeowner debt situation is not addressed it could greatly hamper our chances of recovery.

SINN FÉIN IS COMMITTED TO:

- 1) The wind-down of NAMA.
 - a) The State must take the properties already transferred to NAMA. A redirection of some of this stock must be made, where possible, to eradicate the current housing waiting list and for social good. In other cases, estates must be finished to a high standard and sold where possible. Clear or demolish unviable house starts.

Examination must be made of the proposals for apartment blocks and hotels, etc, acquired by NAMA to be used for schools, homeless shelters, state-run nursing homes and step-down facilities.

2) Help people – not bail out banks.

- a) Examine models for mortgage debt forgiveness for those on low and average incomes who are in negative equity and who are in arrears. This would include looking at making available a system of recourse for those struggling to pay their mortgages whose difficulties are primarily the result of reckless lending by financial institutions. Under such a scheme householders should be permitted to hand back the keys and walk away from the mortgage without the debt following them.
- b) Nationalise the Bank of Ireland and AIB, amalgamate them and turn them into a state bank. Wind down Anglo Irish Bank and Irish Nationwide which cannot exist without State help.
- c) Legislate if necessary to ensure all those responsible for reckless and corrupt behaviour in the banks and auditing firms are held to account.
- d) Hold developers to account. We will ensure that ghost estates are completed where appropriate.
- e) Enforce a requirement for all future developments to follow a strict procedure for planning that includes the provision of essential infrastructure such as transport, schools, health clinics and shops, increase the bond which developers are required to provide to local authorities and require all work to be completed to a certified standard.
- f) Prevent future property bubbles by capping land prices zoned for housing and increasing the regulation of banks and all those involved in the

property sector. Increasing Capital Gains Tax as proposed earlier would also curb the development of future property bubbles.

- g) A Housing Ombudsman with a remit to monitor and enforce the relevant codes of conduct, provide an effective remedy short of the courts, monitor the implementation of housing and planning legislation, monitor changes in house prices, mortgage payments in arrears, mortgage interest rates and professional fees, and repossessions.
- h) Complete the stalled regeneration projects.
- i) End long-term homelessness within two years of taking office – do this through the provision of social housing and provide a dedicated revenue stream for supported accommodation for the homeless; implement a new strategy on youth homelessness; provide for a reliable annual count of all people in homeless services using ‘Counted-In’ methodology.
- j) A Tenants’ Rights Charter including rent controls and strengthen the enforcement of existing tenancy laws.

THE RURAL WAY OF LIFE PROTECTED AND DEVELOPED

Rural communities have been put under threat as a result of Government policy. The erosion of crucial services and the failure to create jobs has meant that emigration and depopulation is a live issue for many parts of rural Ireland once again. The importance of the rural economy – of farming, fishing, tourism and the growth potential of

the renewable energy sector – has not been recognised nor their potential fully developed.

Sinn Féin has been very critical of Government policy but we have also put forward our own alternative. Sinn Féin produced three major Oireachtas reports: Awakening the West – Overcoming Social and Economic Inequality; Report on the Future of Farming and Fishing in the West; and Report on the Agri-food Sector.

Sinn Féin is committed to protecting the rural way of life, including vital rural services such as bus services, post offices, Garda stations and primary schools. We have put forward realistic proposals to maintain jobs in rural communities.

SINN FÉIN IS COMMITTED TO:

MAINTAINING ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND CREATING JOBS

- a) Total opposition to the sale of Coillte into private hands. It holds lands valued at €1.2billion and made €300million profit since 1989. It is a vital State asset that needs to be developed and not sold into private hands.
- b) Restoration of the sugar beet processing industry either for sugar or ethanol production or both. At the time, Sinn Féin argued against the closure and highlighted the potential of converting the industry to dual production of sugar and ethanol.
- c) Increase investment in public transport at affordable prices. Reject privatisation. More frequent services linking rural areas to urban centres. Introduce smaller vehicles for rural communities and a demand-responsive dial-up transit system.
- d) A secure future for rural post offices. To save a number of post offices at risk of imminent closure, immediately intervene

in the form of a public service obligation order (PSO) requiring An Post to continue to provide postal services in those areas under threat. Transform the rural postal network to make rural post offices a 'one stop shop' for a range of services including postal services, banking services, council services and citizens' information. We will look at the feasibility of reopening as many as possible of the 344 post offices that were closed between 2001 and 2008.

- e) Uphold the Universal Service Obligation and oppose privatisation of postal services.
- f) End the policy of closing rural schools.
- g) Reform planning laws to enable rural people to build or buy a home for themselves locally.

DEVELOP FARMING AND FISHING

- a) Ensure those with the lowest farm incomes benefit proportionally more from the single farm payment (SFP) and abolish the SFP for large businesses not directly involved in farming. Cap Single Farm Payments at €100,000.
- b) Reverse cuts to the Disadvantaged Area Scheme and the Early Retirement Scheme.
- c) Develop employment potential through a range of measures including the promotion of traditional cattle and sheep breeds, an increase in the energy crop grant to €125 per hectare and the promotion of community-based wind-energy projects.
- d) Establish a Rural Enterprise Fund to support new micro enterprises and co-ops being set up in rural areas, particularly in the agri-food sector.
- e) Full country of origin labelling for meat, fish, poultry products and all agricultural products sold here.
- f) Negotiate a radical reform of the Common Fisheries Policy as part of current review.

- g) Greater resources devoted to combating illegal fishing by non-Irish vessels.
- h) Introduce administrative sanctions for fisheries offences.
- i) Measures to address the issue of fish discard.
- j) Implement Ombudsman's recommendations on the Lost at Sea Scheme.
- k) Oppose any move at EU or WTO level that undermines the Irish food sector; continued ban on Brazilian beef imports.

LOCAL COMMUNITIES MADE SAFE

People have the right to feel safe in their homes and communities. Sinn Féin will prioritise making communities tormented by anti-social behaviour, crime and drugs safer communities.

We will increase the number of Gardaí and community Gardaí on the ground, focusing on building better relationships between the community and the Gardaí.

We will put resources into diverting young people away from involvement in drugs, crime and anti-social behaviour.

Older people and those living on their own or in isolated areas must feel secure in their homes.

Women have the right to feel safe in their community and in our towns and cities, day and night.

SINN FÉIN IS COMMITTED TO:

- a) Boost Garda numbers by ending current recruitment, promotion and overtime embargoes. A far-reaching process of civilianisation to free-up fully trained Gardaí from administrative and other duties to fight crime is essential and must be expedited.
- b) Increase Garda resources in rural Ireland to allow Gardaí to serve the community fully and end the policy of closing rural Garda stations.
- c) Scrap the Garda Reserve and use the money saved to employ full-time Gardaí.
- d) Increase funding for Garda Drugs Units with enhanced community input into their use and priorities and guarantee the future of the 'Dial to Stop Drug Dealing' non-Garda confidential phonenumber.
- e) Raise Garda visibility and activity in areas and at times needed by reassigning Gardai from desk duties to the beat. Secure a greater number of sniffer dogs and handlers skilled in the detection of drugs and firearms.
- f) Properly resource and equip An Garda Síochána, the office of the DPP, the Courts Service and the State Forensic Laboratory to detect, investigate and secure sound convictions. This must include a secure digital radio system and appointment of more Criminal Asset Profilers.
- g) Addressing the large number of alcohol outlets by imposing further restrictions on them and giving more power to Joint Policing Committees and local authorities to decide on location and opening hours.
- h) Tackle organised crime – Ensure existing laws are used more effectively together with sufficient resources to ensure more robust and systematic investigations to target organised crime.
- i) Invest all monies confiscated by the Criminal Assets Bureau in the communities worst affected by crime.
- j) Keep victims of crime, especially of violent crime, fully informed throughout the investigation and prosecution process and at pre-release stage.
- k) Ensure consistent prosecution of sexual assault, rape and domestic violence. Enlarge the network of Sexual Assault Treatment Centres and increase funding

- to sexual assault victim support services. Where appropriate, ensure attachment of conditions of release that prevent an offender from returning to an area where a victim lives or works and implement swift sanctions for sex offenders who break these or other conditions.
- l) Introduce practical protections for juries and witnesses. Develop and place a revamped Witness Protection Programme on a statutory footing.
 - m) Speed up the trial process to reduce the windows of opportunity to intimidate and threaten witnesses, including by reducing court holidays to four weeks per year.
 - n) Enhance the intelligence-gathering capacity of An Garda Síochána and consequently the potential for successful investigations and prosecutions of gangland criminals by developing and maintaining strong links between Gardaí and the communities they serve.
- o) Introduce sentencing guidelines and judicial training to ensure that sentences handed down are appropriate to the crime committed and the harm caused to the victim and the community.



PART 3

TOWARDS A NEW REPUBLIC

POLITICAL REFORM – AN END TO CRONYISM, CORRUPTION AND PRIVILEGE

The political system has failed the people of Ireland. Public disillusionment with politics has grown as the role of the Government and the Establishment parties in bringing about the economic crisis has become more apparent. This has been exacerbated by revelations of corruption, outrageous expenses claims and an ineffectual Oireachtas.

The political system is dominated and corrupted by the privileged, paralysed by clientelism and dynastic politics, and resistant to change. The Oireachtas has consistently failed to exert sufficient scrutiny over the Government and public bodies.

Sinn Féin believes that it is time for fundamental political reform. The current system is not fit for purpose. It has brought us 'boom/bust' economics and has failed to create a fair society where there is genuine equality of opportunity and outcome. It has not delivered the adequate provision of the essential building blocks of a vibrant and fair society nor the ability to underpin that society with a robust and sustainable economy.

For many citizens, the political institutions on this island are exclusive, inaccessible and unaccountable. A large proportion of those eligible to vote don't vote. Other Irish citizens, including those living in the Six Counties and those working and living abroad, are denied the right to vote.

Partition has had a corrosive and deeply damaging impact on our politics, economy and society. The all-Ireland structures of the Good Friday Agreement should be developed and enhanced and additional ones established.

🎯 SINN FÉIN IS COMMITTED TO:

- a) **Frame a new Constitution. Establishing an all-Ireland Constitutional Forum drawn from representatives of both legislatures on this island, civic society, business and trade unions to discuss and bring forward a Draft Constitution. The Forum would involve consultation at grassroots level and ensure participatory governance. Its goal would be to produce a Constitution fully reflective of the values and aspirations of the Irish people today, soundly based on democratic principles and international human rights standards, and which would form the basis for a future 32-county Republic.**
- b) **Increase voter participation. Hold elections at weekends. Reduce the voting age to 16. Establish an Independent Electoral Commission to be responsible for voter registration and education. Automatically register voters as soon as they become eligible to vote using PPS numbers to avoid fraud.**

- c) Extend the right to vote to Irish citizens living and working outside of the jurisdiction as is the norm in most modern democracies. Models in place in other countries should be examined to find the best model to apply here that could involve restrictions based on the length of time that a person has been abroad.
- d) Extend voting rights to non-citizens legally resident in the country for at least five years.
- e) Reform how the Dáil is elected. Elect one-third of the Dáil from a list system; the other two-thirds from six-seat constituencies based on PRSTV.
- f) Abolish the Seanad in its current form.
- g) Cap ministerial salaries at €100,000; TDs' salaries at €75,000.
- h) Make the Dáil more accessible to the public, increase the number of days the Dáil sits and introduce family-friendly sitting hours.
- i) Increase the power of TDs to hold the Government to account and to question the Taoiseach and ministers on issues of importance without giving prior notice of questions.
- j) Give Dáil committees investigative powers and allocate committee chairs proportionally on the basis of party strength with no additional financial reward attached to them.
- k) Northern representation in the Dáil – The existing 18 Westminster MPs to automatically be accorded membership of the Oireachtas. Voting rights in Presidential elections to be extended to citizens in the Six Counties.
- l) Enhance Citizens' Information Centres and MABS (Money Advice and Budgeting Service) offices around the country.
- m) Increase the availability of social workers and other independent advocates to ensure that fair treatment and full access to rights and entitlements no longer depend on wealth or social or political connections.
- n) A significant cull of QUANGOs and unelected bodies to cut back on waste and improve transparency and efficiency in decision-making, retaining only those agencies whose independent function is essential to the public interest.
- o) All State boards to be answerable to the Oireachtas through relevant committees and ministers with transparency and efficiency in decision-making.
- p) Establish an All-Ireland Parliamentary and Consultative Civic Forum and complete the Review of the All-Ireland Implementation bodies with particular consideration of the case for additional bodies.
- q) End political appointments to State boards – there needs to be an open and transparent system of appointments to State bodies.
- r) Change the law to allow for the impeachment or removal from the Dáil any TD involved in corruption, deliberate misuse of public money or fraud.

BUILDING AN IRELAND OF EQUALS

Inequality and discrimination remain a fact of life for many in Ireland. While the gap has widened between those with massive wealth and those who are forced to work long hours and have poor quality of life as a direct result of Fianna Fáil policy, this crisis is about more than the economy.

The number of children living in consistent poverty is increasing, as well as the number of people in need of social housing. The Celtic Tiger bypassed many people and they are worst affected by the cuts, both economically and socially.

The republican vision is about building of 'An Ireland of Equals'. It is at the core of our agenda for change. For this reason we need a new type of politics based on inclusion, equality and fairness.

Investing in equality is what will help Ireland recover. Inequality costs society more. The elimination of inequality is possible. Investing in economic equality will be a key part of bringing the 26 Counties out of recession and ensuring that people's quality of life is of the highest standard.

This is not just rhetorical – we bring equality and human rights in to every area of our policy. Sinn Féin fought hard for the equality and human rights protections introduced as a consequence of the Good Friday Agreement and we will continue to press for the fulfilment of the principle of equivalence in human rights and equality protections between the Six Counties and 26 Counties and for their continual improvement.

SINN FÉIN IS COMMITTED TO:

- a) **Build an Ireland of Equals where everyone's rights are guaranteed, free of divisions caused by partition, sectarianism, racism and other forms of discrimination, and free from poverty and economic inequality.**
- b) **An all-Ireland 'Strategy for Women's Equality'.**
- c) **Bind gender targets of at least 40% for either gender on the boards of State and semi-State bodies, the judiciary, and the Cabinet. Consider extending such targets to private-sector bodies in receipt of Government funding within a given timeframe.**
- d) **Publish the National Positive Ageing Strategy following consultation and direct participation of older people themselves, establish a proactive Ombudsman for Older People, prioritise the protection of vulnerable older people including through the introduction of modern mental capacity legislation.**
- e) **Review the current Disability Act with a view to the introduction of a new rights-based Disability Act alongside robust enforcement mechanisms and establish**
 - a **Disability Ombudsman and a National Disability Strategy within the Department of the Taoiseach to set annual targets towards full delivery by 2016.**
- f) **A major pilot study on direct payments to include individuals from across the disability spectrum. Define people's qualifications for personal assistance services, supporting independent living for disabled people, and regulate in law the provision of these services to ensure proper standards.**
- g) **Publish a National Carers' Strategy to secure an adequate income, employment and social opportunities, health and wellbeing supports for all family carers.**
- h) **Legislation to permit and recognise same-sex marriage. Provide full and equal recognition of all civil partnerships in law.**
- i) **Stronger hate crime legislation. Reinstate previous funding levels for anti-racism initiatives and provide annual increases as necessary. Fully implement and resource the National Action Plan Against Racism.**
- j) **Official recognise Travelling people as an ethnic minority deserving of protection under the UN Convention Against All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Repeal the sections of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2002 that criminalise the Traveller way of life.**
- k) **A fully independent and transparent Immigration Appeals Tribunal. Ensure that Irish citizens have family reunification rights equal to those of other EU citizens resident in Ireland.**
- l) **A new 'Equality Strategy' that draws together previously fragmented strategies to eliminate discrimination and introduce real equality and establish an Oireachtas Committee on Equality and Human Rights to monitor implementation of our new equality and human rights laws.**
- m) **Ensure that the Irish Human Rights Commission remains as a stand-alone body. Expand the Equality Authority to address poverty, and ensure that**

appointments to the boards of both organisations are through an open and transparent process.

- n) A statutory duty to equality-proof all law and policy including budgets to promote equality at least equivalent to that operates in the Six Counties.
- o) Multi-annual funding being made available to the community and voluntary sector and ensure organisations are supported to fulfil their obligations under the Charities Act 2009. Introduce a VAT refund scheme for charities and protect the community and voluntary sectors right to engage in advocacy.

AN GHAELGE AGUS NA GAELTACHTAÍ

Sinn Féin supports the restoration of the Irish language as the spoken language among the majority of people in Ireland and the creation of a truly bilingual society.

We believe that there should be an Aire Gaeilge agus Gaeltachta in Cabinet with responsibility to deliver on the 20-year strategy.

Equality is an integral part of a democratic society and this includes upholding the rights of Irish-language speakers.

Gaeltacht areas must be protected, supported and developed. The future of the Irish language is dependent upon the continuing existence of sustainable Gaeltacht communities where Irish remains the primary language of the community. These communities require a clear Government strategy for their survival and development.

Sinn Féin believes that the Irish language must be fully supported and resourced in the education system and the right to be educated through the Irish language should be constitutionally and legally enshrined.

🎯 SINN FÉIN IS COMMITTED TO:

- a) Implementation of a comprehensive strategy to roll back the erosion of the primacy of Irish in Gaeltacht areas and to create new Gaeltacht areas, particularly in urban centres, across the island
- b) Sinn Féin supports the Guth na Gaeltachta campaign and believes that cuts to the payments made to Mná Tí under the Scéim na bhFoghlaimoirí Gaelige will not only seriously deter young people from attending Gaeltacht colleges but will negatively impact upon the Gaeltacht itself.
- c) Reconstitute COGG as a statutory body with defined powers to represent the views and recommendations of stakeholders for formulating educational policies for the Gaeltacht, Irish-speaking communities and Irish – medium schools.
- d) Industrial centres of excellence under the auspices of Údarás na Gaeltachta in Gaeltacht regions to foster employment for local communities.
- e) The incoming Irish Government must ensure that they and the British Government follow through on their commitments to introduce a fully-resourced and rights-based Irish Language Act in the North of Ireland.
- f) Full implementation of the 20-year Strategy on the Irish Language, including the recommendations made by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Tourism, Culture, Sport, Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs.
- g) Adequate funding for Irish-medium education from early years through to third level is essential. We also support the development of an Irish-medium teacher training college based in the Gaeltacht.
- h) Syllabus reform in respect of Irish. It needs to be changed in order to make it more communicative and a shift in the balance of marks awarded in examinations in favour of oral and aural competence.
- i) Keep Irish a compulsory subject in primary and second-level education.

AN GHAELIGE AGUS NA GAELTACHTAÍ

Tugann Sinn Féin tacaíocht d'athbhunú na Gaeilge mar theanga labhartha d'fhormhór na ndaoine in Éirinn agus do shochaí dhátheangach a chruthú.

Creideann muid gur cheart go mbeadh Aire Gaeilge agus Gaeltachta sa Chomh-aireacht a mbeadh an fhreagracht aige an straitéis 20 bliain a leagadh amach a sheachadadh.

Is bonn tábhachtach de shochaí dhaonlathach é comhionannas agus folaíonn sé seo seasamh le cearta chainteoirí na Gaeilge.

Ba cheart go mbeadh ceantair Ghaeltachta á gcosaint, á dtacú agus á bhforbairt. Tá todhchaí na Gaeilge ag brath ar mharthain leanúnach de phobail Ghaeltachta inbhuanaithe ina maireann an Ghaeilge mar phríomhtheanga an phobail. Teastaíonn ó na pobail seo straitéis shoiléir Rialtais le haghaidh a marthana agus a bhforbartha.

Creideann Sinn Féin gur gá go dtugtar lántacaíocht agus áiseanna don Ghaeilge sa chóras oideachais agus gur gá an ceart oideachais trí mheán na Gaeilge a fháil a chumhdú go cionmhar agus go dleathach.

🎯 TÁ SINN FÉIN TIOMANTA:

- a) Do chur i bhfeidhm straitéise cuimsithí chun creimeadh phríomhaíocht na Gaeilge i gceantair Ghaeltachta a thiontú agus chun ceantair Ghaeltachta úra a chruthú ar fud an oileáin, go háirithe sna ceantair uirbeacha.
- b) Do thacaíocht a thabhairt d'fheachtas Ghuth na Gaeltachta agus creideann muid nach mbeidh daoine óga á spreagadh chun freastal ar choláistí Gaeltachta mar gheall ar na gearrthacha ar íocaíochtaí a thugtar do mhná tithe faoi Scéim na bhFoghlaimoírí Gaeilge agus go n-imreoidh sé seo drochthionchar ar an nGaeltacht féin.

- c) D'athbhunú an COGG mar chomhlacht reachtúil a mbeidh cumhachtaí sainaitheanta aige moltaí agus tuairimí na bpáirtithe leasmhara á léiriú le haghaidh polasaithe oideachais don Ghaeltacht, do phobail Ghaeilge agus do scoileanna Gaeloideachas a ullmhú.
- d) D'ionaid Thionsclaíochta Barr Feabhais faoi choimirce Údarás na Gaeltachta i réigiúin Ghaeltachta chun fostaíocht a chruthú do phobail áitiúla.
- e) D'aithint an ghá a bheidh ag an chéad Rialtas eile agus ag Rialtas na Breataine na dualgais a chomhlíonadh a bhaineann le cur isteach Acht na Gaeilge i dTuaisceart na hÉireann a bhfuil áiseanna aige agus atá cearta-bhunaithe.
- f) Do chur i bhfeidhm iomlán na Straitéise 20 Bliain um Ghaeilge, lena n-áirítear na moltaí a chuir Comhchoiste an Oireachtais Ar Thurasóireacht, Chultúr, Spórt, Phobal, Chomhionannas agus Ghnóthaí Gaeltachta i láthair.
- g) Do chistiú Gaeloideachais ó na blianta tosaigh go dtí an tríú leibhéal. Tugann muid tacaíocht freisin do choláiste oiliúna múinteoirí do Gaeloideachas atá lonnaithe sa Ghaeltacht a fhorbairt.
- h) Do leasú siollabais i leith na Gaeilge. Tá gá le hathrú an tsiollabais ionas go mbeidh sé ní ba chumarsáidí agus go mbeidh athrú i gcothromaíocht na marcanna a bhronnfar i scrúduithe i bhfabhar cumais labhartha agus chluastuisceana.
- i) Don Ghaeilge a choinneáil mar ábhar riachtanach in oideachas bunscoile agus oideachas an dara leibhéal.

UNITING IRELAND

The achievement of a united Ireland is within our reach. Unity offers the best future for all people of Ireland. In a time of unprecedented economic difficulties, partition makes no economic sense and is a barrier to the creation of jobs and the building of prosperity. Differences in VAT, Corporation Tax, excise duties and currency create barriers to economic development on both sides of the border and therefore cost millions in lost tax revenue. The removal of such impediments will create efficiencies, employment, wealth and opportunities across this island and will hasten the reunification of Ireland.

Ninety years after partition, as communities divided by the border become increasingly reintegrated, the logic and inevitability of reunification demands that we should.

It is going to happen; we should plan for it .

Since the Good Friday Agreement, cross-border trade has steadily increased. Hundreds of thousands of people live in one jurisdiction while they shop, study or work in the other. As old allegiances change within unionism, particularly within the working class, the potential for positive dialogue with those from the unionist community about their place in a united Ireland becomes possible. It is time to begin the transition towards a united Ireland.

Sinn Féin believes a new start is needed in Ireland. There is wasteful duplication in public services: there are two currencies, two tax systems, two social services structures, and two different sets of laws and regulations.

Unity is not an issue of the past it is the future. Partition does a massive disservice to the people who live on this island. Irish unity makes sense.

THE PEOPLE OF A UNIFIED IRELAND WOULD BENEFIT FROM HAVING:-

- 1) Democratic control over all monetary and fiscal policies;
- 2) An equitable and progressive tax regime;
- 3) A fully integrated energy, transport and ICT infrastructure to support the growth of island-wide prosperity based on the principles of environmental sustainability;
- 4) Universal access to quality public services;
- 5) Public ownership of infrastructure, run efficiently in the public interest;
- 6) All-Ireland enterprise development and economic planning.

Building a better Ireland must include unification of the island.

SINN FÉIN IS COMMITTED TO:

- a) A referendum on Irish unity.
- b) An all-Ireland Charter of Rights as provided for under the Good Friday Agreement.
- c) The integration of public services and infrastructure on an all-Ireland basis, enabling people to access services such as health and education nearest to them, regardless of which side of the border they are on.
- d) Co-ordinate economic planning on an all-Ireland basis. Harmonise taxation policy and regulation across the island.
- e) A Government minister with specific responsibility for driving forward the measures required to ensure a successful transition towards a united Ireland, the referendum on Irish unity and negotiations with the British Government and elected representatives from the North.
- f) The transfer of fiscal powers from Westminster to the North.

- g) Ensuring that the unionist community is included at the centre of the debate about the kind of Ireland we want and their place within a united Ireland.
- h) Implementing the other outstanding elements of the Good Friday Agreement, including the North-South Parliamentary Forum and the All-Ireland Consultative Civic Forum.
- i) Requiring the British Government to comply with the unanimous request of the Oireachtas in 2008 to allow independent, international access to all original documents held by the British Government relating to fatal attacks in the 26 Counties involving collusion between crown forces and unionist paramilitaries.





www.sinnfein.ie