

JULY 2013

FIANNA FÁIL GENDER EQUALITY

ACTION PLAN 2013 - 2018

 **FIANNA FÁIL**
THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

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Foreword By Micheál Martin TD, Uachtarán Fhianna Fáil



The first meeting of the Fianna Fáil party in 1926 was convened and chaired by a female TD, Constance Markiewicz. Women have long been the backbone of our organisation around the country. Unfortunately none of our female candidates for the Dáil were successful in the 2011 General Election. Only two of our fourteen Senators are women. In 2007, just 7 of the 78 Fianna Fáil candidates elected to Dáil Éireann were female.

The underrepresentation of women in Irish public life is not unique to Fianna Fáil.

Ireland has one of the worst gender balances in politics in the democratic world. Just 15% of our TDs are female. The last significant increase in female representation in Dáil Éireann was twenty years ago. In 1992 there were 23 female TDs elected. Since 2011 there are 25 female Deputies.

The dramatic under-representation of half of the population in our government, in our national parliament and in our councils distorts our political culture and weakens our political decision-making. It is a systemic problem, which requires radical action or nothing will change. It can only be tackled through willingness to overturn long-established practices.

As a republican party one of our core values is equality. Every party member has to work towards encouraging and engaging more women in Fianna Fáil. In 2004 the party agreed that 33% of our candidates in the 2014 Local Election would be women. We now have one year to make this happen.

Under the Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Bill 2011, a candidate gender quota of 30% will apply to all parties in the next general election. This will later rise to 40% for future elections.

I am determined that Fianna Fáil will meet these candidate targets. I also want to improve the involvement of women within our party. In 2012 I established the Taskforce on Female Participation in Fianna Fáil and asked it to recommend how both of these objectives could be achieved.

I support the proposals in this Action Plan and am setting up an Implementation Group immediately to ensure that implementation starts straight away.

It is time to renew Irish politics and make it more representative. Fianna Fáil can and will lead that renewal.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Micheál".

Micheál Martin TD

Foreword By Senator Averil Power, Chairperson Of The Taskforce

As we seek to renew our republic, we must ensure that we utilise the diverse talents of all of our people, male and female. Fianna Fáil can help to ensure that this is the case by giving women a stronger voice within our party and within public life. In doing so, we will not only make Irish politics more representative, we will also help to improve the quality of political decision-making and achieve a more equal society.



Together, the recommendations in this action plan amount to a comprehensive strategy to promote greater involvement of and support for Fianna Fáil women at four different levels:

1. As members of the party;
2. As internal leaders and decision-makers within the organisation;
3. As candidates for local, national and European elections; and
4. As elected representatives.

Our recommendations are designed to ensure that all women are empowered to play a role within the party that is in tune with their individual interests and goals.

The Taskforce believes that improving female participation within our internal structures will help to renew and reinvigorate our organisation and keep it more in tune with the interests and concerns of a diverse electorate. It will also provide us with a strong pool of female members from which to draw future election candidates.

I would like to thank the members of the Taskforce who worked hard to ensure that a comprehensive range of issues is addressed in this action plan. I would also like to thank the party members who contributed ideas and suggestions that helped to inform our work. Finally, I would like to extend my gratitude to Anita Sands for contributing her experience as one of the leading Irish businesswomen in the United States.

In order to achieve real and meaningful change, it is vital that all of the recommendations in this report are implemented. The immediate focus should, however, be on the 2014 local elections and ensuring that more women stand for the party and are elected to local authorities in that election.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Averil".

Senator Averil Power

10 Headline Recommendations

It is the Taskforce's view that all of the recommendations listed in this report should be implemented. However, the following recommendations should be prioritised initially

1. The Party Leader should immediately establish an Implementation Group to monitor the delivery of all of the recommendations in this action plan.
2. The Party Leader should write to all female members to encourage them to consider putting themselves forward for selection as Area Representatives and election candidates and to invite them to notify the Implementation Group if they are so interested.
3. The Implementation Group should make such women aware of the supports available for aspirant and selected female candidates. It will also monitor the selection of Fianna Fáil area representatives and candidates from a gender equality perspective, with an initial focus on the 2014 local and European elections.
4. At least 33% of the Fianna Fáil Area Representatives appointed before the 2014 local elections should be female.
5. A summary of this document should be sent to all members to ensure that they are aware of the party's commitment to improving female representation in Fianna Fáil.
6. The party should hold a special Fianna Fáil women's conference as soon as possible. The programme for this conference should include information sessions on the supports available to female members who want to stand for election and on the establishment of a National Women's Network.
7. The Women's Network should organise regular national and regional networking events and policy conferences for for Fianna Fáil women. It should also run fundraising events and establish a mentoring scheme through which experienced current or former politicians, male or female, will provide advice and support for female area representatives and election candidates.
8. Fianna Fáil should provide access to training courses and support packs for aspirant and selected female candidates.
9. The Fianna Fáil parliamentary party should champion policies aimed at promoting greater gender equality in Irish society. These should include legislation to reform the maternity leave system to allow leave to be taken by either parent, and proposals to make the working arrangements of our political institutions more family-friendly.
10. The party should hire a Gender Equality Officer, or assign responsibility for this area to an existing member of staff, as resources permit.

PART 1



FULL LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are designed to attract more women into Fianna Fáil, to encourage female members to be actively involved in the party and to provide effective support for potential and selected candidates.

They are also intended to address the obstacles set out in the Report of the All-Party Oireachtas Committee on Female Participation in Irish Politics – the 5Cs: Culture, Confidence, Cash, Childcare and Candidate Selection.

Overall Goal Of Our Recommendations

The recommendations in this strategy amount to a comprehensive action plan to promote greater involvement of and support for Fianna Fáil women at four different levels:

1. As members of the party;
2. As internal leaders and decision-makers within the organisation;
3. As candidates for local, national and European elections; and
4. As elected representatives

They are designed to ensure that all women are empowered to play a role within the party that is in tune with their individual interests and ambitions.

The Taskforce is of the view that the best way for Fianna Fáil to achieve its candidate targets is to ensure that it has a strong, well-supported and active female membership from which it can draw future election candidates.

We also believe that empowering the party's female members would help to renew and reinvigorate the organisation and keep it more in tune with the interests and concerns of a diverse electorate.

Our recommendations are designed to address the 5 barriers to greater female participation in elected politics identified by the report of the All-Party Oireachtas committee, which is discussed in more detail later.

These barriers are:

- **Confidence:** women are less likely to go forward for selection
- **Cash:** women have less access to resources than men
- **Candidate selection procedures:** the processes by which political parties select candidates pose a significant obstacle.
- **Culture:** a gendered culture is prevalent in all political parties.
- **Childcare:** women are more likely to have this responsibility.

Recommendations - Culture and Confidence

The male-dominated culture of elected politics in Ireland was identified by the Oireachtas committee as a major obstacle to encouraging more women to stand for election. A lack of female role models means that politics is often not seen as a job for women.

At the same time, high quality potential female candidates often lack the confidence to put themselves forward for selection. It is vital that Fianna Fáil takes steps to ensure that women are empowered to play active roles within our internal organization and in public life. We must ensure that our party culture is welcoming and supportive of women and that supports are available to help give them the confidence to put themselves forward as candidates.

The following recommendations are aimed at addressing this issue.



Recommendations

- ◆ Issue a summary of this strategy to all existing members to inform them of the party's commitment to promoting gender equality within Fianna Fáil and Irish politics and of the measures we are putting in place to achieve this.
- ◆ Make the full strategy available on the party's website and in hard copy from Fianna Fáil Headquarters.
- ◆ Hold a special Fianna Fáil conference on gender equality as soon as possible. The programme for this conference will include information sessions on the supports available to female members who want to stand for election and on the establishment of a National Women's Network. All female members should be invited to this conference.
- ◆ Establish a National Women's Network, of which all members of the organization will automatically be members.
The Women's Network will organize national and regional networking events and specific annual events for Women's Day. It will also support the constituency units of the organisation in organising specific women focused events. (For more information on the Network and how it should be organized, see the end of this section).
- ◆ Ensure that all recruitment material has a strong focus on gender equality and that all new members are issued with welcome packs containing a specific section about the party's gender equality strategy and candidate commitments.

Launch a strong marketing drive and national recruitment campaign to attract new female members, including by reaching out to national and local women's groups and community organisations.

- ◆ Give specific targets for increased female membership to each CDC. These targets should be monitored by the Implementation Group.
- ◆ Introduce a requirement that the Chairperson and Vice-chairpersons at CC and CDC levels must be of different genders in order to address the current significant under-representation of women in leadership positions within the local organisation.
- ◆ Provide training for Directors of Elections, Constituency Organisers and Deputy Constituency Organisers on gender equality.
- ◆ Require each Deputy Constituency Organiser to draw up and ensure the delivery of a local strategy to increase female representation in the party.
- ◆ Ensure constant communication of our gender equality commitments and strategy in all major party speeches by our leader, spokespersons and elected representatives.
- ◆ Ensure that the achievements of female members are highlighted and celebrated within the party, in order to provide role models for other women. For example, the weekly members email newsletter and other internal media should have dedicated sections in every issue focusing on the achievements of female members.
- ◆ Proactively seek to involve women on the party's policy committees.
- ◆ Task the National Women's Network with gender-proofing the party's existing national policies and working with the party spokespersons to develop new policies to address the needs and concerns of women.
- ◆ Publish legislation to improve women's representation in other areas of decision-making, such as on state and company boards.



Ógra Fianna Fáil

Ógra Fianna Fáil is the gateway for many young women into the Party. It is essential that it's female members are empowered to play a strong and active role. Órga is currently developing its own strategy to increase female participation. This will be an important aspect of the party's overall plan to improve Gender equality.

Recommendations - Candidate Selection

It is clear that the primary reason why more women have not been elected to political office in Ireland is because very few have stood as independents or been nominated as candidates by political parties. Under the Political Funding Act 2012, political parties may lose up to 50% of their public funding if they fail to ensure that at least 30% of their candidates in the next general election are female.

The Taskforce believes that in order to encourage the selection of strong female candidates, Fianna Fáil should implement the following recommendations.



Recommendations

- ◆ The party leader to write to all female members to encourage them to consider putting themselves forward for selection as Area Representatives and election candidates and to invite them to notify the Implementation Group if they are so interested.
- ◆ The implementation group will make such women aware of the supports available for aspirant and selected female candidates. It will also monitor the selection of Fianna Fáil area representatives and candidates from a gender equality perspective, with an initial focus on the 2014 local and European elections.
- ◆ Ensure that 33% of the Area Representatives appointed in advance of the next local elections are female, with an emphasis on encouraging women to become area representatives in areas with winnable seats.
- ◆ The Women's Network to organise a mentoring scheme for female area representatives and candidates. Mentors will include current and former Fianna Fáil elected representatives, including former Oireachtas members. The mentors should be offered training to enhance their effectiveness.
- ◆ The Women's Network to foster links with other groups that have significant numbers of female members and activists. The local party organisations in each constituency

should also reach out to women involved in local groups and encourage them to join and become active in the party. Provide access to training for aspirant and selected female area representatives and candidates, either on Fianna Fáil programmes or through other organisations.

- ◆ The Implementation Group to draw up a strategy to pair the One Member One Vote system with the party's responsibilities under the Political Funding Act 2012. To that end they should consider the options set out in Appendix 2. The objective should be to protect internal party democracy while also ensuring that our gender equality commitments are met.
- ◆ In addition to the targets for the local and national elections set out earlier, the Taskforce also believes that Fianna Fáil should take steps to ensure greater gender balance among the party's Senators and MEPs.

Recommendations - Cash

Securing campaign finance is a challenge for all candidates. However, it is a particular difficulty for many women, given the fact that Irish women on average earn 17% less than men¹ and often have less access to networks from which they might draw financial support.

The Taskforce is recommending a number of measures to help address this difficulty.

Recommendations

- Task the National Women's Network Should with running fundraising events to raise funding for initiatives to support gender equality in the party and to help secure the election of female candidates.
- Ensure that training is provided for female area representatives, candidates and elected representatives on areas such as fundraising and the design of marketing material (including websites and leaflets).
- Encourage female area representatives and candidates to use the new print facility in party headquarters to print leaflets.

Recommendations - Childcare

While men are increasingly playing a greater role in the home, the vast majority of those caring for children on a full-time basis are female. According to the CSO, more than half a million women were looking after the home/family in 2011, compared with only 9,600 men. Childcare was identified by the All-Party Committee as a major obstacle to greater female participation in politics.

Changes should be made to social supports and the working practices of political institutions in order to make politics more accessible for people with families.

The Taskforce believes that general improvements in childcare for Irish families and the adoption of family friendly working arrangements by our political institutions would enable more women to get involved in, and stay involved in, public life.

¹ European Commission study as quoted in the Irish Times on 2nd March 2012. Only 123,000 women in Ireland earn more than E50,000, compared with 254,000 men. The gender pay gap widens considerably with age. Irish women in their 20s earn about 90% of what their male counterparts earn. However, women in the 35-44 age group earn only 71.5% of what their male colleagues earn, while the figure for women in their 50s is just 61.4%.

Recommendations

- ◆ The Fianna Fáil parliamentary party should champion policies aimed at promoting greater gender equality in Irish society.
- ◆ It should publish legislation to reform the maternity leave system to allow leave to be taken by either parent.
- ◆ It should also publish proposals to change the working arrangements of our political institutions to make them more family friendly, including:
 - An entitlement to newborn child leave for political representatives
 - Arrangements to facilitate remote voting by parents during this period
 - Effective use of teleconferencing.
 - Changes to working hours and standard meeting times to make them as family friendly as possible

Recommendations - Overall Implementation of This Strategy

Fianna Fáil will only succeed in implementing this strategy if all sections of the party, including its members, party officers, elected representatives and staff play their part in ensuring that targets are reached. It is therefore imperative that everyone takes ownership of the plan and does their best to help implement it.

The new National Women's Network will also have a major role to play as it will be responsible for organizing networking and policy events and running programmes to support female candidates, with the assistance of party staff.

Overall progress on this strategy should be monitored by an Implementation Group. This group should include representatives from the National Women's Network, the Ard Comhairle and the parliamentary party, in addition to other people with relevant expertise, for example in areas such as change management and promoting gender equality in the business sector. The group should be made up of both men and women.

The implementation group will monitor delivery of the recommendations in this strategy, evaluate its impact, and publish regular progress reports. This will help to ensure that the targets set out herein are achieved.

It is vital that this implementation group be put in place immediately. In order to monitor delivery of the recommendations in this report, the group should receive reports every six months from the following:

- The National Women's Group in respect of the recommendations under their remit,
- The head of the party's research office in respect of the policy recommendations in the Childcare section of this strategy and other party policies to promote gender equality,
- The General Secretary, or a staff member appointed by them, in respect of progress in achieving gender balance in the selection of Area Representatives and candidates and other recommendations.

The implementation group should use this information to produce one overall report every six months detailing progress that has been made on the recommendations in this strategy and highlighting any areas of concern. This report should be submitted to the Ard Comhairle and the Parliamentary Party.

A written report from the Implementation Group should be included in the Clár for each Ard Fheis.

An interim review of this Action Plan should be carried out in the first half of 2015 and published on the Fianna Fáil website.

The Proposed New Fianna Fáil National Women's Network

Having considered the experience of women's networks in business and politics, the taskforce believes that establishing a new Fianna Fáil National Women's Network has the potential to play a significant role in achieving greater gender equality in the party.

The Role Of The Women's Network:

We envisage that the Network would:

- Organize national and regional networking events and specific annual events for Women's Day.
- Run policy conferences.
- Give women an opportunity to come together to exchange views, discuss common concerns and develop supportive networks within the party.
- Support the constituency units of the party in organising specific women focused events.
- Put in place a mentoring scheme for female area representatives and candidates by matching them to current and former Fianna Fáil elected representatives, including former Oireachtas members.
- Help to attract new female members.
- Encourage women to be actively involved in the mainstream party structures and not just in the Women's Network.
- Encourage women to put themselves forward for leadership positions within the general party organization and for selection as area representatives and election candidates.
- Work with party staff to ensure that training is provided for aspirant and selected female candidates and area representatives.
- Help female candidates to build their campaign teams.
- Run fundraising events to raise funding for initiatives to support gender equality in the party and to help secure the election of female candidates.
- Foster links with other national and regional groups that have significant numbers of female members and activists.
- Play a strong role in organisations aimed at securing greater female participation in political life such as Women For Election, the 50:50 group, the Women's Manifesto groups and Longford Women's Link.
- Interact with the women's networks in our ALDE sister parties across Europe.

The Membership and Structure of the Network:

All female members of the party should automatically be members of the Women's Network.

It should elect its own President, Secretary and other officers. The first elections to these posts should take place at, or shortly after, the Women's Conference proposed in headline

recommendation number 6. Thereafter, elections should take place at the Ard Fheis, thereby helping to ensure that the Network has a high profile within the party. This election process should result in manifestos and debate about how best to increase female participation within the party. The Liberal Women's Network election should be considered as a model for these elections.

The President and the Secretary of the National Women's Network should be ex-officio members of the Ard Comhairle. The President should also automatically become a Vice President of the party. These changes would require rule changes at the Ard Fheis. Initially, a strong link between the Ard Comhairle and the National Women's Network should be secured by the Party Leader assigning one of the party's existing Vice Presidents to assist the National Women's Network.

Interaction Between the Network and Other Party Units

While the National Women's Network will provide significant extra supports for women, the promotion of gender equality must be seen as the responsibility of all units of the organization. All units must play their part in securing greater equality and not leave it to the Women's Network.

The Taskforce is not recommending the establishment of formal constituency-level women's groups. We are conscious that the 2005 Ard Fheis voted to disband such groups due to a concern that having separate local structures had hindered the active participation of women within the mainstream party units. Rather than having separate local women's groups, women should be encouraged to play a stronger role at cumann, CC and CDC level and to take up internal party leadership positions. One way in which this can be achieved is by introducing a requirement that the Chairperson and Vice-chairpersons at CC and CDC levels must be of different genders, as recommended earlier.

However, we believe that running local events aimed at women has the potential to attract new female members to the party. Every CDC should therefore run at least one event each year aimed at female members. It should also avail of the opportunity to invite non-members, such as women involved in local community groups, to attend such events. The National Women's Network should provide advice to the CDCs on running events aimed at women.

The National Women's group should also run regular regional and national events.

Review of the National Women's Network:

As part of the 2015 review of this strategy, the impact of the National Women's Network and its interaction with other units of the organization should be evaluated.

PART 2



THE NEED FOR CHANGE: WOMEN IN IRISH PUBLIC LIFE & IN FIANNA FáIL

Women In Irish Public Life - One Of The Worst Records In The World

The recommendations in this strategy are designed to help address the poor record of female participation in Irish political life.

- In February 2011, 566 candidates ran for election to Dáil Éireann; only 86 of these (15%) were women.
- 25 of 166 of those elected to the Dáil in 2011 were women (15%)
- This is the best representation women have ever had in Dáil Éireann
- It is an increase of just 5% in 35 years
- 21 of our 43 constituencies did not elect a single female TD in 2011, largely as a result of a lack of female candidates on the ballot paper.
- Despite the use of multi-member constituencies, almost half of Irish women have no female TD at all in their constituency

Since the foundation of the State, our Dáil has never been less than 85% male. Progress was made between 1977 and 1992, when the percentage of female TDs increased from 4% to 12%.

However, over the past twenty years little progress has been made and only five more women were elected in 2011 than in 1992.

At local level the story is similar: women make up 16% of elected representatives, an increase of just 1% in ten years, despite comprising about one third of the membership of the main political parties.

This has implications both for women's representation in local decision-making and for the availability of female candidates for Dáil elections who have experience at local government level.

The gender balance in the Seanad is far better at 30% but this is due in large part to the fact that two-thirds of the Taoiseach's nominees are female.

Only 5 more women were elected in 2011 than in 1992 and Ireland's relative standing internationally has dropped dramatically in that period.

Despite the improvements in equality that have been made in other spheres, little or no progress has been made in political life.

The National Women's Council has estimated that at the current pace it will take 370 years to achieve gender balance in Irish politics.

Ireland has one of the worst gender balances in our political institutions in the democratic world. We rank 23rd out of the 27 EU countries and 78th in the world in terms of female representation in the lower house of parliament.

The low number of women elected to political office in Ireland is directly related to the low level of female candidates.

Once on 'the ticket', female candidates do just as well as their male counterparts. Indeed, the success rate in the 2011 general election, at 29%, was the same for both male and female candidates.

Female Participation In Fianna Fáil – Key Indicators



Fianna Fáil Public Representatives

- Fianna Fáil has no female T.D.s
- Only 2 of the 14 Fianna Fáil Senators are female (14%).
- Only 16% of Fianna Fáil councillors are female.
- Only 15% of Fianna Fáil candidates in the 2011 General Election were female.
- Fianna Fáil has no female M.E.P.s
- Overall, women make up just 6% of our parliamentary party

Fianna Fáil Members & Party Office-Holders*

Women comprise:

- 34% of our **members**
- 11% of cumann **chairpersons**, 7% of CC chairpersons and 7% of CDC chairpersons
- 16% of cumann **vice-chairpersons**, 12% of CC vice-chairpersons and 6% of CDC vice-chairpersons
- Approximately 25% of **treasurers** across all three levels
- 32% of cumann **secretaries**, 37% of CC secretaries and 46% of CDC secretaries
- 30% of CC PROs and 23% of CDC PROs
- 30% of cumann **membership officers**
- Approximately 25% of our youth officers
- 26% of Ard Comhairle members
- 30% of the Central Officer Board of Ógra Fianna Fáil (2013)

**Figures as at June 2012*

The Imperative For Change In Irish Public Life And In Fianna Fáil – ‘Why Women Matter’

The case for greater female representation in elected politics tends to centre around three propositions:

1. That greater female representation would improve the quality of political decision-making and enhance “good governance”.
2. That it would deliver more effective representation for women voters.
3. That gender equality is an essential requirement of social justice.

Higher Quality Decision-making:

According to IBEC, studies show strong links between gender balance and financial performance, innovation, competitiveness and corporate governance.

The World Economic Forum, in their Global Gender Gap Report for 2010, argues that closing the gap between men and women economically is closely correlated with increased competitiveness and a higher GDP per capita.

The success of gender diverse workforces is often attributed to four factors.

First, the more closely a company’s workforce reflects its market demographic, the more likely it is to understand the needs of its customers.

Given that women are responsible for eighty per cent of consumer purchasing decisions in the developed world, having a gender diverse management can offer a company a competitive advantage.

Second, companies that are more gender diverse invest greater resources into their human capital, which provides them with a competitive advantage over their market competitors.

Third, innovation in business requires creativity and the most creative companies are more likely to be gender diverse.

Boards whose directors come from the same gender, socio-economic, educational and ethnic background are more likely to suffer from ‘group think’.

Fourth, it has also been shown that companies with a higher proportion of women on their boards are more likely to employ ‘good governance’ procedures and avoid risky business practices.

This results in better financial performance overall. It has also helped gender diverse companies to suffer less during the current economic crisis, in terms of loss of stock market value.

It is argued that each of these four elements is equally as relevant to political decision-making and that the quality of political representation is being compromised due to a lack of gender diversity.

Irish politics, and ultimately the Irish people, are losing out by not utilising the talent, skills and experience of both men and women in our political institutions.

More Effective Representation for Women

The concept of representativeness is a complex one. There is no doubt that all TDs, male or female do their best to represent all their constituents as best they can.

It is also clear that party policy and geographical considerations have a major impact on the priorities of Irish politicians.

However, it could also be argued that the personal perspectives and priorities of individual politicians are largely influenced by their own life experience. While many things, including social class and geography, affect people's life experience, gender is a significant factor.

Men and women's lives are increasingly becoming similar. Younger women in particular are achieving higher levels of education and greater success in the workforce than ever before.

Men and women share similar concerns about the economy, unemployment, mortgages and other issues. However, there are still many ways in which men and women's lives are significantly different.

While the taskforce is reluctant to define certain matters as "women's issues" at the same time we are conscious that certain issues disproportionately affect women.

Women are far more likely to be full-time carers in the home, either for children or dependent adults such as elderly parents. They are more likely to be part-time or low-wage employment.

It could be argued that the low level of female participation in elected politics in Ireland means that certain issues have not been given the attention they deserve.

According to Claire McGing, "It has been argued that female parliamentarians, because of gendered experiences, are more likely than their male colleagues to actively promote legislation to improve women's lives (Phillips, 1995)."

McGing conducted a survey of female TDs in 2011. It is interesting to note that some of them believed that female constituents preferred to speak to a woman TD about particular issues and that two TDs specifically stated they "dealt with the more personal and private concerns of their constituents (both female and male) than their male colleagues."

A survey of women TDs by Galligan et al (2000) found that they placed a high priority on issues relating to education, health and social, family and children's affairs, issues which may disproportionately affect women.

Social Justice

Women are 52% of the population but make up just 15% of elected representatives. If we are to accept the arguments made above regarding gendered representation, then it follows that women's concerns are not being effectively represented at the current time.

Women have been particularly badly hit by the recession and in particular the current Governments regressive changes to the State Pension Contributory and the One Parent Family Payment.

The recent cuts to the Child Benefit have also hit women the hardest.

The Implications For Fianna Fáil Of The Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Act 2012

The Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Act 2012 provides that political parties may have their public funding reduced by up to half if they do not have at least 30% women and 30% men candidates at the next general election.

Seven years from the general election where this provision first applies, this will rise to 40% women & 40% men candidates.

The potential impact for Fianna Fáil of not meeting these targets will depend on the number of TDs elected for the party in future general elections.

In 2012, Fianna Fáil's total public funding was €3, 091, 818. €1,746,501 of this was accounted for by the Party Leaders Allowance and €1,345,317 by funding under the Electoral Acts.

It is vital that the party takes decisive action now to ensure that we can meet the targets set out in this new legislation.

‘Quotas Alone Won’t Work’ – The Need For A Comprehensive Package Of Supports

As noted earlier, the Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Act 2012 provides for the introduction in Ireland of candidate quotas for general elections.

Candidate quotas are designed to ensure that voters are offered a choice of male and female candidates.

This approach can be contrasted with results-based quotas used in some countries, where a set proportion of parliamentary seats are actually reserved for women.

According to Buckley and McGing, “There is consensus amongst comparative studies that gender quotas are an effective mechanism for increasing women’s numerical representation in parliament.” Quotas are used in more than 100 countries worldwide, including by seventeen of the twenty countries with the highest levels of female political representation.

However, it is also evident from the experience in other countries that candidate quotas alone will **not** deliver a significant increase in the number of women actually elected.

First, one of the risks associated with the candidate quota approach in the Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Act 2012 is that women may be selected merely as “sweepers” or put on tickets which give them little chance of actually winning a seat.

For quotas to result in improved representation, women must be selected to contest elections to “winnable seats”.

Second, a wide range of different measures must be put in place to encourage women to get involved in political parties and stand for election.

These must address all of the 5C’s identified in the 2009 report of the All Party Oireachtas Committee discussed earlier.

Third, in order to achieve a sustainable long-term shift in female representation, actions are needed not just to help more women get elected but also to support their retention and progression with the political system.

High attrition levels due issues such as family-unfriendly working arrangements would be a major lost opportunity for real progress.

PART 3



FIANNA FÁIL'S OVERALL PARTY RENEWAL PROGRAMME & PREVIOUS INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE GENDER EQUALITY

Fianna Fáil's Overall Renewal Programme

A range of proposals for reform and modernisation of the party were adopted by the 2012 Ard Fheis.

These aim to revitalise our organisation, improve internal democracy and open up the party to new members, both male and female.

The changes agreed by the Ard Fheis include:

- The adoption of a One Member One Vote system for selecting candidates.
- In future, each member of least 12 months standing, who is an active participant in party events and who has paid a nominal membership fee to headquarters will be entitled to exercise voting rights.
- The creation a new post of Deputy Constituency Organiser with special responsibility for the Promotion of Membership, Youth and Gender equality.
- Increased political activity at all levels, with units of the party being obliged to adopt their own annual action plans.

The move to a One Member One Vote system was motivated by a desire to give all members a say in internal party decision-making and in the selection of candidates and to incentivise the recruitment of new members.

Making the Fianna Fáil organisation more welcoming to new members in general may help to encourage more women to join the party and to get involved at different levels.

The organisation of policy conferences open to all members and the establishment of the Futures Group as a forum for debate and networking should also provide opportunities to attract and involve new members, male and female.

However, these developments will not of themselves deliver a significant increase in female participation either within the organization or as election candidates. Additional targeted measures are necessary, as recommended in this strategy.

The Importance Of The 2014 Local Elections

Greater female representation in local government is important in its own right for the reasons outlined in the previous section regarding effective decision-making, representativeness and social justice.

Local authorities make important decisions that affect the daily lives of women and their families in areas such as planning, the provision of community facilities and the delivery of local services. It is vital that women's perspectives influence the priorities of our local decision-makers.

Participation in local politics helps politicians to gain the experience and profile necessary to succeed in elections to the Dáil, Seanad and European Parliament.

Currently, only 16% of Fianna Fáil councillors are female. If the party is to meet its responsibilities under the Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Act 2012 and avoid major financial penalties, we simply must get more women elected to town, city and county councils in 2014.

Research by Buckley and McGing demonstrates that “when women enter the political ‘pipeline’ through involvement in local government service, they are statistically more likely than men to win a Dáil seat.”

Meeting the 33% gender target in the 2014 local elections will therefore help Fianna Fáil to establish a sufficient pool of electable women from which to draw our candidates for the next and subsequent general elections.

The party is currently in the process of putting local area representatives in place to work alongside our councillors and in areas where we have no councillor at present.

Becoming a local area representative will give Fianna Fáil members an opportunity to serve their communities and to prove their potential as possible future election candidates.

In order for the party to achieve its gender equality target for the next local elections, it is essential that at least 33% of our area representatives are female.

Given that 84% of our incumbent councillors are male, and that many of these are likely to seek re-election, this figure should be seen as a minimum target.

The Taskforce notes that in every constituency, women are playing a strong role in local community organisations and campaign groups.

Many of these women have the community involvement, campaign experience and leadership skills to make excellent public representatives.

Some of them are already members of our organisation but many are not currently involved in any party.

Fianna Fáil should constantly and proactively reach out to such women and encourage them to join us so that we will have high quality candidates in the 2014 elections.

Lack Of Incumbents – An Opportunity To Achieve Gender Balance

The relatively low turnover of incumbent politicians has traditionally presented difficulties for Fianna Fáil in getting new candidates, male and female, on the ticket and elected at local and national level.

The gender balance among non-incumbent candidates was higher than that among incumbent candidates in the last two elections.

While 19% of our candidates in the 2009 local Elections were female, the proportion of non-incumbent female candidates was almost 25%.

In the 2011 general election, women made up 15% of the party's overall candidates and 21% of non-incumbent candidates.

Since the 2009 and 2011 elections many electoral areas currently have no incumbent Fianna Fáil elected representative.

The Taskforce believes that this presents an unprecedented opportunity for the party to ensure a much greater representation of women among its candidates.



Fianna Fáil's Gender Equality Action Plan 2004-2014

In the past, the main mechanism for promoting female participation in Fianna Fáil was through the National Women's Forum and constituency women's fora.

Seats were reserved on the party's National Executive for representatives of the National Women's Forum. The party also had a Women's Officer in Fianna Fáil Headquarters for a period, financed by EU funding.

In 2003, Fianna Fáil carried out a comprehensive Gender Equality Audit. A steering group was appointed to oversee the process with independent academic consultants at the Centre for the Advancement of Women in Politics at Queens University, Belfast.

Based on the audit results, a Gender Equality Action Plan for the period from 2004 to 2014 was produced, containing a range of measures designed to support women members' participation within the party and within elected politics.

The Action Plan included the following targets:

- By 2006, women were to comprise one third of all delegates to Comhairlí Ceantair, Comhairlí Dáilceantair and selection conventions.
- Women were to comprise 25% of the party's local election candidates in the period 2008-2010 and 33% in the period 2012-14.
- Women were to also to comprise 20% of the party's general election candidates in the period 2006-2008 and 30% in the period 2010-12.

In order to assist in the achievement of these targets, the Action Plan committed the party to:

1. Establishing an Equality Task Force to monitor progress and oversee the implementation of measures and actions as recommended in the Gender Equality Audit Report.
2. Devolving responsibility for gender equality within the organisation to the Director of Organisation within each CDC. Each director was to be tasked with carrying out a comprehensive gender audit within their constituency on an annual basis and reporting these findings to the organization department in party headquarters.
3. Each Director was also being charged with facilitating equal opportunities within: (a) the CC and CDC officers, (b) as convention delegates, (c) membership of the Ard Comhairle and (d) nominees to candidate selection conventions.
4. Reviewing selection rules and procedures to ensure that selection practices achieve the highest equal opportunity standards.
5. Monitoring and coordination by the organisation department of training and support measures for Directors of Organisation on equality issues.
6. The Organisation Department devising and implementing training and support programmes (for example on public speaking, presentation and media skills etc) for women considering going forward for political office.

7. The Organisation Department devising and implementing a Mentor Scheme for women wishing to develop political careers.
8. The Equality Taskforce reporting to each Ard Fheis on progress achieved in meeting the above targets.

Adoption of the Gender Equality Action Plan 2004-2014 & resultant changes in party rules:

The Gender Equality Action Plan was discussed at the 2005 Ard Fheis and a series of changes were made to the party's Corú agus Rialacha with a view to achieving the targets set out in the plan.

These included quotas for delegates to Comhairlí Ceantair and to selection conventions. It was also agreed that a new committee of 20 would replace the committee of 15 elected to the National Executive at each Ard Fheis and that 10 of the 20 seats were to be reserved for women.

The role of the party's women's groups was also discussed and concerns were expressed that having separate fora for women had served to marginalise women within the party.

The Ard Fheis agreed to disband the women's groups and instead adopt a 'gender mainstreaming' approach, with internal quotas as above.



Implementation Status Of The Targets Set Out In The Gender Equality Action Plan 2004 – 2014

An interim review of the Gender Equality Action Plan 2004-2014 was carried out in 2010.

The review found that progress on the targets set out in the 2004 Gender Equality Action Plan had so far been very limited and that most targets had not been met.

Progress Regarding Gender Balance Among Party Officers:

- By 31 December 2009, women made up 26% of cumainn delegates to Comhairlí Ceantair.
- The Percentage of Constituency Officers (Secretaries or Chairs) was just over 31%. However, as noted earlier, the proportion of female secretaries was far higher than the proportion of chairpersons.
- 30% of the members of National Executive were female. This included half of the members of the Committee of Twenty, in line with the quota provided for in the 2004 strategy.

Progress Regarding Gender Balance Among Candidates:

- 19% of our candidates in the 2009 local Elections were female.
- 15% of the party's candidates in the 2011 general election were female, up slightly from 13% of our candidates in 2007, but just half of the target of 30% set in the Action Plan.

Progress Regarding Support Measures:

Recommendations 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7 in the 2004 Action Plan regarding support measures have not been progressed to date. In addition, by agreement there was no Equality Taskforce in place between 2005 and 2011 to monitor progress on the Action Plan.

However changes were made in candidate selection processes for the 2009 local elections, as outlined in Appendix 3.

Overall, the 2009 review of the Gender Equality Action Plan found that it had had the effect of increasing women's involvement in the party in some areas, while having little appreciable effect in others.

Concerns Raised In The Independent Interim Review Of The Gender Equality Action Plan 2004 - 2014

Lack Of Female Chairpersons And Vice-chairpersons:

The independent interim review of the Gender Equality Plan 2004-2014 expressed concern about the low level of female Chairpersons and Vice Chairpersons at all levels of the party.

According to the report, “Where the effects have been positive for gender equality, such as in women’s holding of secretary positions, it is likely that this has been facilitated by the fit between the duties of this position and the general perception among party members (two thirds of whom are male) that women are ‘suited’ to this position. Positions of status and visibility that confer recognition as a political leader on the individual office holder, such as chairperson (and at CDC level, vice-chairperson), are overwhelmingly dominated by male members of the party.”

The report contended that “this monopoly of political power by men has serious consequences for women’s political opportunities, and therefore, for gender equality, in Fianna Fáil.

One of the long-term consequences is to prevent women from gaining credibility within the organisation as potential candidates. If women are continually perceived as supporters rather than leaders, and excluded from leadership positions as a result, they face a much harder task in gaining acceptance as a credible (potential) political representative than do men.

Some women members in turn internalise this unequal gender order and do not consider themselves, or other women, as leaders of the party in their locality or as possible nominees for electoral politics. Consequently there is a real lack of female role models within the party who have not come from political backgrounds and this trend is set to continue.”

A Masculinist Party Culture:

Women who were interviewed by the researchers for the interim review also complained that the party culture is a significant obstacle to greater female participation.

According to the researchers, “The interviews undertaken in connection with this review reflect a frustration at the masculinist, and sometimes overtly sexist, culture within the party that marginalises women, their interests and their perspectives on politics.

This mind-set, which sees politics as a male activity, means that few women get through the competition for candidate selection.” The report pointed out that this mind-set is not held by all men and indeed it is held by some women.

It further stated that the most supportive proponents of gender equality can be found among some men in the party.

This finding reflects a consistent theme in academic research, as reflected in the All-Party Oireachtas Committee report that cultural obstacles often present a major barrier for women in political life, both in terms of how other members view their potential and often in terms of how they view their own prospects.

It is worth noting that sometimes the cultural barriers that inhibit greater participation are only inadvertent but other members may not even be conscious of them.

The interim report on the 2004 Plan also noted that not all of the female interviewees believed that women have additional obstacles to overcome to be considered equal with men.

However, they reported that “It is a sad fact that one of our interviewees felt it necessary to put having a family on hold until she makes it in her political career; and another interviewee remarked that she could not have contested an election if her children had been younger. These deep emotional issues are ones that men, in general, do not have to face in the same stark way.”

As we seek to develop a new plan to advance gender equality within Fianna Fáil, it is important to acknowledge the obstacles that some of our female politicians feel that they have had to confront and be conscious of such obstacles may be holding back high quality women from putting themselves forward as candidates for the party.

Other obstacles to greater female participation reported in the interim review related to more general issues such as the openness of cumann meetings and the relevance of the issues discussed. It is important to note that these issues can inhibit greater participation by members of both genders and are being addressed by the party’s overall renewal programme, as will be discussed later.



APPENDIX 1 – MEMBERSHIP, REMIT & OBJECTIVES OF THE TASKFORCE

Membership Of The Taskforce:

Dáil Group Representative - **Deputy Eamon Ó Cuív***

Seanad Group Representative - **Senator Averil Power** (Chairperson)

National Executive Representative - **Cllr. Mary Hoade**

Councillors' Representative - **Cllr. Mary Fitzpatrick**

Former Senator & General Election Candidate – **Lisa McDonald**

Ógra Representative – **Conor King**

Ex Officio Members - **Sean Dorgan**, Fianna Fáil General Secretary and **Aidan O’Gorman**, Fianna Fáil National Organiser

Independent business person – **Mark Ryan**, Ireland Country Director, Accenture

Independent academic - **Fiona Buckley**, lecturer in gender equality, University College Cork

Kim Murphy, Head of the Fianna Fáil Research Office.

*Stepped down from the taskforce in March 2012 upon his resignation as Deputy Leader

Remit And Objectives Of The Taskforce:

The membership of the taskforce was made up of elected representatives, at both local and national level, representatives from the National Executive and Ógra Fianna Fáil, party officials and independent advisors from the business and academic spheres. See Appendix 1 for more details.

It was tasked by the party leader Micheál Martin TD with developing an Action Plan to increase female participation at all levels of the Fianna Fáil party and ensure that more Fianna Fáil women are elected as public representatives.

The Taskforce was informed by the party leader that Fianna Fáil is committed to:

- Ensuring that at least 33% of our candidates in the 2014 local elections are female, as per the target set in the Gender Equality Action Plan 2004-2014 and
- Meeting the requirements of the Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Act 2012 in respect of the next and subsequent general elections. The Act provides that political parties may have their public funding reduced by up to half if they do not have at least 30% women and 30% men candidates at the next general election.

APPENDIX 2 – CONSULTATION PROCESS UNDERTAKEN BY THE TASKFORCE

Submissions were sought from party members through a number of different channels.

A special article outlining the work of the taskforce and inviting submissions was included in Cuisle magazine and posted to all members. A call for submissions was included in the party's email newsletter, which is sent to 7,500 members each week. In addition, special sessions on gender equality were held at the 2012 and 2013 Fianna Fáil Ard Fheiseanna.

A presentation was also made to the parliamentary party and the National Executive.

It is now intended that a summary of this report be sent to all members.



APPENDIX 3 – OBSTACLES TO FEMALE PARTICIPATION IDENTIFIED BY THE ALL-PARTY OIREACHTAS COMMITTEE

In October 2009 a report on Women's Participation in Politics was produced by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Affairs. The committee was chaired by former Fianna Fáil TD, Brendan Kenneally.

Main Findings Of The Committee:

- Although women no longer face overt discrimination in their entry to politics, the political culture itself, and the overall masculine image of politics, are powerful barriers to increased female participation.
- There is strong public support for taking action to encourage more women to enter politics.
- The experience in other countries is that change does not happen unless positive action is taken and that the pace of change is dependent on the type of positive action taken.
- Candidate quota legislation should be adopted in Ireland. This should be modeled on that used in France, Belgium and Spain, to oblige each party to impose a maximum limit of the proportion of candidates of any one gender selected to run in elections at local, national and European levels.
- If a political party fails to meet the candidate quota, its public funding should be reduced.
- Such a law should be accompanied by a comprehensive package of reforms to address the 5C's (below) which act as obstacles to greater female representation in politics.

The Obstacles – 5 C's:

According to the All-Party Oireachtas committee, the following five barriers have been identified in international research as presenting considerable challenges for women in politics:

- **Childcare:** women are more likely to have this responsibility.
- **Cash:** women have less access to resources than men.
- **Confidence:** women are less likely to go forward for selection.
- **Culture:** a gendered culture is prevalent in all political parties.
- **Candidate selection procedures:** the processes by which political parties select candidates poses a significant obstacle to women's political participation

APPENDIX 4 – LESSONS FROM THE CORPORATE WORLD

As discussed earlier, research from the corporate world demonstrates that companies with gender diverse workforces and management teams are more successful.

Smart companies have, therefore, put in place initiatives to attract, retain and promote high quality women and to address the traditional obstacles to greater female participation at management level.

The Taskforce was fortunate to have the participation of Mark Ryan, Ireland Country Director at Accenture, a company that has won several awards for empowering its female employees. Dr. Anita Sands, Group Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer for UBS Wealth Management Americas, also provided ideas and suggestions based on her own experience as one of the most successful Irish businesswomen in the United States.

The firsthand experience of both of these business leaders helped us to gain an appreciation of the challenges that companies have faced in promoting gender equality in the workplace and how some firms have overcome these.

The Traditional Obstacles To Women In Business

Traditionally women have been significantly represented at management level. This has been true even of companies with balanced intakes at initial recruitment level.

Beveridge, Nott, and Stephen emphasise that theories of ‘equality’ and ‘equal treatment’ in reality have resulted in making men the ‘standard against which women are measured’.

According to McKinsey & Company, in the business world this has translated into a ‘dominant model’ that values ‘unfailing availability and total geographic mobility at all times’ and does not consider the “double burden” of domestic responsibilities and career demands that many women must cope with.

McKinsey and Company conducted a study on women and men who had achieved considerable success in the corporate world. While both groups put their career ahead of their families, ‘the choice between professional success and work-life balance...has more consequences for women, who might have to pay a higher price for success than their male counterparts.

This higher price manifested itself in the fact that fifty-four per cent of women surveyed did not have children, compared to just twenty-nine per cent of the men. In addition, thirty-three per cent of the women were single, compared to eighteen per cent of the men. In effect, the ‘double burden’ has a pervasive effect on women’s success in the corporate world, as well as influencing choices pertaining to their family life.

Many companies have traditionally struggled to retain female employees because women felt that it was impossible to successfully combine their commitments at home and in the workforce. Research by Hakim found that the majority of women would prefer to strike a balance between the demands of work and the demands of domestic life as they considered that they were dedicated neither entirely to their career, nor to their family.

However, within the dominant business model, women often face a difficult decision between the two. As a result, according to a 2008 European Commission’s report on female employment in Ireland, the full-time employment rate for women between the ages of 25 and 54 with children under the ages of 16 is just twenty-two per cent.

Those that stay in the workplace also lose out. By taking career breaks, maternity leave, or leaving employment for a significant period, women often lack a sustained career portfolio. This can hamper them in competitions against male colleagues for promotions.

The gender imbalance in corporate Ireland as a whole is most stark at the highest levels. While women make up more than 50% of college graduates, the European Commission has reported that they account for just five to six per cent of directors on corporate boards in Ireland.

Smart Companies Have Pioneered Change

Cognisant of the fact that gender equality is good for the bottom line; smart companies have put in place initiatives to attract, retain and promote high quality women and to address the traditional obstacles to greater female participation at management level.

One such company is Accenture and the Taskforce was as mentioned already fortunate to benefit from the expertise of its Ireland Country Director Mark Ryan.

Accenture has won several awards for successfully developing and implementing initiatives to retain female employees and to increase the proportion of women in leadership positions within the organisation.

The company's 'Accent on Women' programme involves a range of measures across four key headings:

- Mentoring and coaching
- Maternity and parenting
- Executive leadership
- Networking and sharing

Employees are also facilitated to work from home, a facility that benefits both men and women but can be particularly beneficial to women who are trying to balance work and family commitments.

While Accenture traditionally had no difficulty achieving a good gender balance among its graduate intake, it had struggled to retain female employees.

This was reflected in a significant under-representation of women at management level.

Implementing a proactive gender equality strategy has delivered major benefits for the company and a significant improvement in the proportion of female managers.

Mentoring has formed an important part of that strategy.

Mentors, who are experienced people who have attained leadership positions, provide an invaluable source of advice and support for more junior employees and help them to develop a career path in line with their interests and ambitions.

APPENDIX 5 –SUPPORTS AVAILABLE TO FIANNA Fáil WOMEN FROM OTHER GROUPS

The 'Women for Election' organisation has received philanthropic funding specifically to provide training and practical supports to women considering running for public office. See below for more details on their programmes.

A number of organisations are lobbying for greater female participation in public life, including the 50:50 group and the National Women's Council of Ireland, the representative body for 160 women's groups across Ireland.

There are also some regional and local projects focused on women's political awareness and/or participation, such as Longford Women's Link, the Women's Manifesto groups and the Women in Public Life initiative in Donegal.

Involvement in these groups could provide invaluable opportunities for networking and support for female candidates.



The 'Women For Election' Organisation

Women for Election is a non-partisan organisation whose vision is of an Ireland with balanced participation of women and men in political life. Their mission is to inspire and equip women to succeed in politics.

The organization offers a tailored training and support programme to women seeking to enter public life; and provides and facilitates a cross-party network of political women, committed to equal representation of women and men in Irish politics. They have received funding from Social Entrepreneurs Ireland to provide training and practical supports for women who are considering running for election.

Their training days have attracted women who are active in parties and those who have no party political involvement so far but who are hold leadership roles in other organisations such as trade unions, business networks, community groups, NGOs and universities.

Their 'Inspire, Equip, Inform' core programme provides high quality political training focused on supporting women to win. The training is delivered by a variety of experts and covers all aspects of political campaigns, including building committed campaign teams, effective planning and administration, fundraising and budgeting, message development, presentation skills and managing the media.

Each participant also has access to ongoing support, formal (webinars, alumni events) and informal (peer support, advice), to guide them in their decision to run for office and ultimately in organising their election campaign.

APPENDIX 6 - FIANNA FáIL CANDIDATE SELECTION PROCEDURES

Candidate Selection Procedures Used By Fianna Fáil 1997-2011:

Since 1997, Fianna Fáil has adopted a strategic approach to candidate selection. “Tight tickets” (less candidates) were selected to maximise the impact of the party’s vote. Geographical considerations were then a secondary, though still important consideration. Pre 1997 it was common for a “sweeper” candidate be selected in constituencies to ensure that all areas of the constituency would have a Fianna Fáil candidate to vote for in the hope that transfers would then come back to the main candidates. In recent years the transfer rate between candidates from the same party has fallen as people have become less committed to a single party and more likely to support an individual candidate. It has become increasingly the norm to only select the number of candidates that have a genuine chance of being successful in the election.

In General Election 2011 a “traditional” convention was used as the means of selecting candidates. Each registered unit of the party was entitled to select 3 delegates to the convention. Each delegation must include at least one man and one woman. In many constituencies, there was no competition at convention stage for the 2011 general election and at the close of nominations all nominated candidates were deemed selected.

For the 2009 local elections a candidate selection system incorporating an interview procedure was utilised. Nominations were opened in the usual manner. At close of nominations all nominees were invited to meet with an interview committee made up of experienced party officers from outside their area. Nominees were asked to prepare a proposal in support of their candidacy, outlining where and how they felt they could gain the most support in the election campaign. Outgoing councillors were automatically selected. Local party officers and public representatives were consulted as to the best candidate strategy to adopt in their area and asked for their opinion on potential candidates. A national candidate selection committee then selected the candidates based on the interview results and feedback received.

The 2007 General Election utilised the selection convention in its traditional format. In some constituencies the National Constituencies Committee exercised its authority to put additional candidates on the ticket. In a small number of constituencies no convention took place. In this case the National Constituencies Constituency made a recommendation to the Party’s Ard Chomhairle.

Conventions were also used for the 2004 Local Elections, with regional constituencies committees empowered to add candidates to the ticket where it was felt this strategy would be in Fianna Fáil’s interest.

The ‘One Member One Vote’ System:

The 2012 Ard Fheis approved the adoption of a One Member One Vote system for future selection conventions.

OMOV will work as follows:

1. Each Member of Fianna Fáil would be required to register annually with the party.
2. Every paid up member of at least 12 months standing would be entitled to nominate a candidate to convention and also to vote at the convention.
3. The National Executive will retain the authority to decide on the number of candidates to be selected, to designate a particular strategy be adopted or to add an extra candidate. Such powers will only be utilised following consultation with the local organization.

APPENDIX 7 - OPTIONS FOR COMBINING THE NEW LEGISLATED QUOTA WITH IRELAND'S PR-STV SYSTEM

In their 2012 paper, 'The Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Act 2012:

Redressing the gender imbalance of Irish politics', Fiona Buckley and Claire McGing propose the measures below for ensuring that parties select sufficient female candidates to meet the new legislated quota.

The Taskforce believes that the Implementation Group recommended in this plan should be tasked with developing a strategy to pair the One Member One Vote system with the party's responsibilities under the Political Funding Act 2012. The Group should also recommend the selection process to be used in order to achieve the party's own 33% commitment for the 2014 local elections.

The objective should be to protect internal party democracy while also ensuring that our gender equality commitments are met.

The Taskforce does not see these two goals as mutually exclusive. Indeed, we believe that it is worth noting that

Fianna Fáil has frequently applied geographical quotas in the selection of its candidates for local and national elections and held separate conventions for different areas within the one Dáil constituency.

Options Proposed By Buckley and McGing:

- *Gender directives*: the logic of geographical selection directives could be used to promote more women candidates. To avoid any potential conflict with local party members, notice of a gender directive should be given as far as possible in advance of the selection convention. If no woman comes through on the convention vote, the female candidate with the highest vote should be formally ratified in place of the successful male with the lowest vote.
- *All-women shortlists*: these could be introduced at the pre-selection convention (aspirant) level to ensure that the number of potential women candidates increases. Only women would be eligible to contest conventions in specific constituencies, which could be decided by the party at a regional or central level.
- *Twinning lists*: in terms of twinning lists, Irish political parties should look to the experiences of the Labour Party in the Scottish Parliament elections of 1999 (and subsequent years). To resolve the problem of combining quotas with single-member districts, the Labour Party 'twinned' two constituencies for selection conventions, which taken together would nominate one man and one woman.
- *Minimum candidate lists*: parties could take it upon themselves to implement a minimum candidate gender rule. If they run two or more candidates in a given constituency, they should aim to have *at least* one female and male candidate.
- *Open constituencies*: parties could aim to run women candidates in a majority of constituencies where they currently have no Dáil representation or where the incumbent TD is retiring.
- *Add-on candidates*: if the Executive Council decides to add candidates to lists already selected at a local level, parties could aim to ensure that at least 50 per cent of these nationally are female.



SENATOR **AVERIL POWER**

Seanad Éireann, Leinster House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2

☎ 01 6183156 ✉ averil.power@oireachtas.ie 🌐 www.averilpower.ie

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