



KERRY DEAF RESOURCE CENTRE

KDRC provides services to Deaf and hard of hearing people at county level and contributes to national issues of equality, access and rights.

Charity No: **CHY20854**

4 Gas Terrace
Tralee
Co. Kerry

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MEETING WITH SENATORS ON THE IRISH SIGN LANGUAGE (ISL) BILL



Last week, our Manager Willie White had the privilege of being invited to a meeting with Senator Jerry Buttimer & Senator Tim Lombard to talk about the official recognition of Irish Sign Language (ISL).

The meeting was organised by the Cork Deaf Association (CDA) & included Gerrie O'Grady, Susan O'Callaghan & Andrew Geary from CDA, Linda Rankin from Cork Deaf Enterprises (CDE), Graham O'Shea from Cork Deaf Club (CDC),

Dr. John Bosco Conama from the Centre for Deaf Studies (CDS) in Trinity College & Willie who represented our service.

Willie says 'It was great to hear from the Senators that the Government & Minister Mc Garth fully support the Bill. They believe once amendments are drafted & have Cabinet approval, there will be no delays in the remaining stages being brought before the Seanad for approval. Thereafter, while further work will still need to be done, the Senators are optimistic that legislation will eventually be enacted.

Our service would like to thank Gerrie O'Grady (CDA) for organising the meeting & for inviting Willie to attend. Our thanks also to Catherine White for her interpreting work.

LETTER FROM SENATOR JERRY BUTTIMER- HEAD OF SENATE

During the meeting, Senator Jerry Buttimer presented a letter which gave details on the Government's position on the Irish Sign Language Bill.

"I have been advised that Minister McGrath's officials in the Department of Justice have put their thoughts on various Government amendments to Senator Daly's Bill on paper and they are with the Department of Social Protection and the Department of Communications for comments/observations.



It is hoped that Minister McGrath will be in a position to bring the Memo to Government soon. After that, and depending on Government approval, the amendments go to the Attorney General's office for formal drafting. This process is likely to take some time but I am assured that it is a priority for the Minister and the Department. The legislative process can be long and drawn out sometimes and I appreciate that can be frustrating. However, there is no point in rushing a Bill through the Oireachtas without proper scrutiny to make sure that eventual legislation enacted is workable and provides the support and protections to the people it is to assist.

I can say however, that once the amendments are drafted and have Cabinet approval, there will be no delay in the remaining stages being brought before the Seanad for its approval. It is my hope that this will happen in April/ May.

Given the support for this bill across the house I do not see why there would be a delay once it reaches the Seanad. I hope this is done in a timely and efficient manner.” Jerry Buttimer- Leader of Seanad Éireann.

ARTICLE IN EVENING ECHO ON MEETING WITH SENATORS



We were delighted to see that the Evening Echo featured an article in their newspaper about the meeting. The article was entitled ‘**Sign language bill to go ahead**’

‘A Bill that will enshrine Irish sign language as native and independent will go through the Seanad in the coming months.

Representatives of the deaf community in Cork and Kerry met with Fine Gael senators, Jerry Buttimer and Tim Lombard, on Monday, to outline the status of the bill.

When enacted, the bill will also ensure access for deaf people to public services and information, and ensure the registration and regulation of ISL interpreting services.

The ISL bill has been drawn up by Fianna Fáil senator, Mark Daly, and amendments to it are currently being considered. It is expected the amendments will shortly go to the attorney general's office, before Cabinet approval is sought.

Senator Buttimer told representatives of the Cork Deaf Association, the Cork Deaf Enterprises, the Cork Deaf Club and the Kerry Deaf Resource Centre that it is anticipated that the bill could go before the Seanad in April or May.

Director with the Cork Deaf Association and Cork Deaf Enterprises, Andrew Geary, said “Everyone hopes that the legislation for the Irish deaf community will lead to true equality, education, and employment. A lot of the deaf community do not feel they are being cherished equally.

Senator Buttimer said: “It was a very good engagement with members of the deaf community. Many interesting and genuine points were raised by members, with passion and conviction.”