

SENATOR ALEX WHITE

Keeping in touch
JANUARY 2011



A new year is an occasion for reflection, and an opportunity to look forward to a better, brighter future.

Building a real republic should be our new year's resolution for 2011. And it can be achieved. We can make a start by radically reforming how the political system works, or doesn't work.

We in the Labour Party launched the new year with a comprehensive programme containing 140 proposals for reform of the Oireachtas, and of the workings of the government and the civil and public service. You can read a short summary of these proposals at the back of this leaflet, or get more detail in the 'Labour Policy' section at www.alexwhite.ie.

Ireland faces huge challenges in the coming period, requiring steady and resolute leadership. But more than anything, these challenges will require the engagement of the people - the citizens of this republic. The forthcoming election will be an opportunity to choose a new government, which we badly need. Let it also be an opportunity to begin a true transformation of our public life and our politics.



The change we need must not just be the work of politicians. It must in a real sense be the work of the citizens of this country as well.

As I said, building a new republic should be our new year's resolution for 2011.

Happy new year!

Alex White


Labour

You may like to know that I recently launched a new interactive website at www.alexwhite.ie. I'm delighted to see that the site has been visited by very many people who are interested in what I have been doing and saying in Seanad Eireann and on the media. You can follow these statements and speeches on my blog, which can be accessed through the site, or by going directly to <http://senatoralexwhite.wordpress.com/>

The website is also a great source of information about the policies of the Labour Party. Please contact me at any stage if you would like to discuss any of these policies, or if you would like me to pursue any issue on your behalf.



My work in the Seanad

The Seanad normally sits from Tuesday to Thursday. Each day begins with the Order of Business – an hour-long period where Senators may raise matters of current public concern. In the past number of months I have raised such issues as the banking crisis, the children's rights referendum, the reports into clerical abuse, public service reform and the future of the Seanad.

As well as being Leader of the Labour Group in the Senate, and my Party's national Spokesperson on Children, I deal with Finance, European Affairs and the Gaeltacht. This has involved detailed work and contributions on the following legislation during the past year:

- Child Care (Amendment) Bill 2009
To extend care and services to protect vulnerable children
- Finance Bill 2010
The legislation required to enact the Budget from 2009
- Central Bank Reform Bill 2010
Changes and enhances the powers available to the Central Bank
- Construction Contracts Bill 2010
To amend the way in which construction companies are paid
- Euro Area Loan Facility Bill 2010
To facilitate the EU bailout of Greece
- Adoption Bill 2009
Established the Adoption Authority of Ireland and provided for matters relating to adoption
- Údarás na Gaeltachta (Amendment) Bill 2010
Changed the manner the Údarás is elected
- European Financial Stability Facility Bill 2010
Guaranteed Ireland's participation in the European Financial Stability Facility

- Civil Partnership Bill 2009
Provided recognition for same-sex couples
- Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest (No. 2) Bill 2010
Dealing with public service pensions and the minimum wage
- Credit Institutions (Stabilisation) Bill 2010
Provided for the EU-IMF bailout of Ireland

In addition to this, I am currently a member of the Joint Committee on the Constitution and the Joint Committee on European Scrutiny. Previously I was a member of the Joint Committee on the Constitutional Amendment on Children, which produced a report last February advocating a referendum on children's rights. I am a member of the Seanad Committee on Procedures and Privileges as well as the Committee on Members' Interests.

Labour Spokesperson on Children

In this capacity I am in regular contact with interested groups and NGOs such as Barnardos, the Children's Rights Alliance, Focus Ireland, Start Strong, the ISPCC, Educate Together and the National Youth Council, amongst many others.

Expenses and attendance record

You can find details of my attendance and expenses payments under 'Meet Alex' at www.alexwhite.ie. According to the independent website kildarestreet.com/ I made 108 spoken contributions during the course of the Senate's 95 sittings last year.



With locals and other public reps for carbon-cutting cycle along the Dodder and [left] at Ballyroan Harvest Fayre.

'New Government, Better Government: Fixing a Broken System'

Labour's 140 proposals to transform Government, Politics and the Public Service

With Brendan Howlin TD, author of reform document



We urgently need to restore public confidence in our democratic system.

Labour has 140 separate proposals to change the Constitution, the law, and the structure of government to transform the way public business is done.

Amongst our proposals are:

- A Constitutional Convention that would review Bunreacht na hÉireann and draft real reforms within a year
- 50 per cent increase in Dáil sitting days, including sitting on Fridays
- Establish a citizens petition system to the Dáil
- Establish an Independent Fiscal Advisory Council
- Abolish the Seanad
- Introduce robust Whistleblowers legislation
- Establish an Office of Public Service Reform
- Significantly extend the Freedom of Information Act

You can view the full document ('Better Government') under the Labour Policy tab at www.alexwhite.ie.

What are Labour's policies?

If you are interested in finding out more about Labour's policies - on the economy, investment, jobs, health, education and much more, please visit my new website www.alexwhite.ie and go to 'Labour Policy'.



STAY IN TOUCH
www.alexwhite.ie

Senator Alex White

Seanad Eireann, Leinster House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2
Constituency Office: 1 Main Street, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14
e-mail: alex.white@oir.ie phone: 01 618 3972

Our team in Dublin South

