



Ancient Order of
HIBERNIANS
IRISH • CATHOLIC • AMERICAN

Ohio State Board

Newsletter

October 2023

Volume 5 Issue 10

President's Message



Brothers,

I hope this message finds all of you well. Please mark your calendars for Saturday, November 4, 2023, for an Ohio AOH State Board meeting at Tara Hall in Columbus. A definitive time will be sent out in an email later this month. One of the things we need to improve on is attendance at our State Board meetings. There seems to be an apathy in Ohio regarding the State Board. The State Board is meant to be a buffer between the National Board and the Divisions and a place where the local Divisions can be heard. The past several State Board meetings have been sparsely attended and several of the Divisions did not even submit a report. Some of the things that we as the State Board do to make attending easier is:

- State Board meetings are usually held in Columbus to make it central for the whole State.
- The meeting times are usually on Saturday around noon to allow people travel time.
- State Board meetings are usually only held twice a year.

For our upcoming State Board meeting, I would like to incorporate some additional fun into the event. Several times a month, there is live music at Tara Hall. On Friday, November 3, there will be such an event. Why not come down on Friday and enjoy some fellowship with your Ohio AOH Brothers? There are several options for hotels

Continued on Page 2

Chaplain's Comments



Brothers, as many of you know, there is a proposed amendment on the Ohio ballot this November that is threatening the health and safety of woman, the rights of parents and the lives of unborn children, so it is imperative that I write about social justice and what it means to us as

Hibernians. With the Supreme Court ruling that the federal government will leave abortion rights up to the states, there has been a backlash to the anti-abortion laws of many states that went back into effect after the decision.

The far-right movement has been gaining initiative and support and proposed Issue 1. They are using language under the auspices of *The Right to Reproductive Freedom with Protections for Health and Safety* which contains language that will allow abortions to be performed up to the ninth month of pregnancy. There is nothing reproductive about it! Furthermore, it says, *the state will not directly or indirectly, burden, penalize, prohibit, interfere with, or discriminate against either an individual's voluntary exercise of this right.* This includes not telling a woman of the health and safety risks associated with an abortion making it less safe and possibly life threatening. It also includes language protecting an "individual's right to privacy about having an abortion, it states, *Every individual has a right to make and carry out one's own reproductive decisions,* which will allow anyone of any age to have an abortion, including minors, without their parent's knowledge or consent.

This fervor promoting the Right to Reproductive Freedom is creating a solid voting base in opposition to the Right to Life. They are coming out in force this November to reverse the state laws that are in place that protect the sanctity of life and the family.

On Social Justice, Pope John Paul II said, "What is at stake is the dignity of the human person, whose defense and promotion have been entrusted to us by the creator". *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 47. We, therefore, have an

Continued on Page 2

President's Message, cont.

within a two mile radius of Tara Hall. Brothers, to move the Ohio AOH forward, we need all of your input. Please have a representative from your Division or County Board available to attend. More information will be forthcoming via email.

A quick congratulations and thank you to our State Chaplain/Spiritual Director Deacon Bruce Dobbins. He was recently featured in the Northeast Ohio Catholic Magazine regarding his appointment as our State Chaplain/Spiritual Director.

“Deacon Bruce E. Dobbins was appointed state spiritual director of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, effective immediately. This appointment is in addition to his assignment as permanent deacon, Our Lady of Grace Parish, Hinckley and as Chaplain of the Irish Brigade Div. #1 in Medina County.”

Thank you Deacon Dobbins!

Brothers, as always, please contact me with any questions or concerns.

In Motto,

Denny

Chaplain's Comments, cont.

obligation as Catholics to ensure the sanctity of life is upheld and that we use our gifts, our time and our talents to encourage others to live the Gospel message of life. The respect for the dignity of life is a gift of love. It was given to us by God as we were created out of His love and entrusted to share it with our fellow man. The Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraph 1930 states, *Respect for the human person entails respect for the rights that flow from his dignity as a creature. These rights are prior to society and must be recognized by it.* It is talking about Natural Moral Law as it applies to our existence. We have a right and an obligation to protect life, from conception to natural death and encourage others in society to do the same. As man makes up society and creates its laws and norms, we must fervently promote the Gospel of life until society sees the error of its ways, turns away from the culture of death, and a culture of life becomes the norm.

One way we do this is by voting for elected officials that have similar ideas, have shown themselves to hold true to their beliefs, and perform their duties as an elected official in accordance with the social teachings we find in the Gospels. We can also vote against laws that are unjust and promote a culture of death, as Issue 1. We can also fulfill our obligation by speaking to our family members, friends, co-workers and fellow parishioners about protecting the sanctity of life; from conception to natural death. We can encourage them to get out and vote this November. We can encourage them to get out and vote for life!

We live in a culture that promotes death. We see how fervently it opposes life. We live in a “throw away”

culture that is promoting discarding an unborn child because it is inconvenient, unwanted consequence of some woman's actions and our society does not encourage taking responsibility for one's actions but encourages everyone to not worry about the consequences of their actions and just get rid of them.

Unfortunately, this is the world we live in, but we do not need to sit idly by and watch it happen. We can promote life in the discussions we have with others. We can promote life by participating in Right to Life events. We can promote life by researching and learning about political candidates and voting for those who promote life, as well. We can promote life by encouraging others to do the same. We can continue to promote life through the Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity that we display as Hibernians.

Brothers, use what little time we have left before the vote in November to promote a culture of life and show others how much this means to you by voting and hopefully, together we can make sure Issue 1 gets defeated.

God Bless,

Deacon Bruce



2023 - 2025 Officers

Chaplain	Deacon Bruce Dobbins brunomusarra@yahoo.com
President	Dennis Parks dparks121@yahoo.com
Vice President	Bruce McPherson hilliardmcpherson@gmail.com
Secretary	Pete Chrystal pvchrystal59@gmail.com
Treasurer	Greg Brown Gbrownshamrock@yahoo.com
Director	John Myers johnmyers216@gmail.com
Director	Chris Schulte crpschulte@gmail.com
Past President	Bob Harper harper.bg@pg.com
National President	Daniel J. O'Connell djoconnell@ysu.edu
National Catholic Action	Patrick J. Lally lally8404@hotmail.com
National Project St. Patrick	Ron Hagan rhagan@hagancpa.com
National Deputy Organizer	Joseph M. Casey qualityjoecasey@yahoo.com
National Oversight Committee	Dennis Parks dparks121@yahoo.com

OHIO DIVISIONS

<u>County</u>	<u>Division President</u>
Clermont	Douglas Gerrard dpgerrard@aol.com
Cuyahoga Board	Ben Neylon BNeylon@yahoo.com
Cuyahoga #2	Charles O'Neill oduffy317@aol.com
Cuyahoga #3	Robert Mullin bobbymulls@yahoo.com
Franklin #1	Bruce McPherson hilliardmcpherson@gmail.com
Hamilton #1	Christopher Schulte crpschulte@gmail.com
Lucas	Robert McMahon aohjohnpkellydivision@gmail.com
Mahoning #6	Ray Kelly IV aohrpk@gmail.com
Medina	Joe Gill wildirishjoe@icloud.com
Montgomery	Art Gannon artgannon@aol.com
Stark #1	Tom Fickes fic1424@aol.com
Summitt Board	Jim Meszaros meszi01@neo.rr.com
Summit #2	Dale Norris danorris64@gmail.com
Summit #3	Michael Namsick mpnamsick@gmail.com
Trumbull	Marty McQuaide emcqu@aol.com
Washington	Will Rathbone Willrathbone@gmail.com

Appointed Officers

Catholic Action	Patrick Lally	lally8404@hotmail.com
Pro Life	Dave Manley	ruthannanddavid@gmail.com
FFAI	Patrick Williams	karimcwilly@gmail.com
PEC	Mike Cosgrove	spartika11@gmail.com
Project St. Patrick	Chris Schulte	crpschulte@gmail.com
Missions & Charities	Chris Konik	chriskonik@mindspring.com
Organizer	Joe Casey	qualityjoecasey@yahoo.com
Historian	Mike Finn	FCoolavin@aol.com
Veterans Affairs	Vacant	
Immigration	John Myers	johnmyers216@gmail.com

Newsletter News

Just a reminder. If you have information for our monthly newsletter, please send it as an attachment to an e-mail to Editor, Jim Casey at

jjcasey973@gmail.com

The **deadline** for articles is the **24th of the month.**

**AOH Sean MacBride Humanitarian Award
Ancient Order of Hibernian President Testimonial
Youngstown Ohio October 13-14, 2023**

Hibernians and Friends,

Join the Celebration on the Campus of Youngstown State University

You are invited to participate in the 2023 AOH National President's Testimonial and the AOH Sean MacBride Humanitarian Award Weekend. Celebrate the success of President O'Connell's leadership throughout his time on the national board.

Package Price \$215

Friday Reception Only \$80

Saturday Dinner Only \$165

Seats are limited so please let us know if you plan to attend by contacting Laurie and Dan Brinker at:

AOH.MacBride@gmail.com

Reserve your seat today. Only 150 seats available.

Rooms are available at the Youngstown Doubletree for \$135 + Tax.

Book your room today:

Contact: Laurie and Dan Brinker

AOH Testimonial Chair

Email address: AOH.MacBride@GMAIL.COM

Former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern Honored by AOH

In the 25th year of the Good Friday Agreement, former Taoiseach Ahern will receive The Ancient Order of Hibernians Sean MacBride Humanitarian Award. Bertie served three five year terms as Taoiseach and was a signatory of the GFA.

Learn more about Bertie Ahern before you meet him in Youngstown Ohio on October 13 and 14 by visiting [Bertie Ahern Website](#).

[View As I Remember It: Bertie Ahern & The Good Friday Agreement – Podcast From 22 Feb 2023](#)



Ancient Order of
HIBERNIANS
Irish • Catholic • American



State Organizer's Report

As of this newsletter, we still have 15 outstanding applications, as reported to us by our National Organizing Committee. I sent out a spread sheet to all divisions presidents with open applications and I have heard back from some, but not all. The updated spread sheet will be sent to us soon and I would like to have as many of them closed as possible. As I mentioned last month, I'm certain that, in many instances the applicants never responded and in that case we can either reach out to them again and then eliminate them as open applicants. If you know that the applicants have, in fact joined your division, please let me know and I can have that one removed from the list, as well. I will send out the updated list to affected presidents soon.

Our State Board meeting has been scheduled for November 4th and I would like to have a closed list by then.

Joe Casey, Deputy National Organizer, State of Ohio Organizer



Ohio AOH Missions & Charities

Brothers:

As we continue charitable efforts in our communities and beyond, State President Denny Parks and National President Danny O'Connell have asked that each division complete the Single Event Form and Annual Event Report Form listed below by February 15th (Just happens to be the same date division per capita is due to National.)

Missions & Charities Single Event Form

<https://aoh.com/gobansaer/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Charities-Single-Event-form-1.pdf>

Missions & Charities Annual Event Report Form

<https://aoh.com/gobansaer/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Charities-Annual-Event-form-1.pdf>

Scratching your head? I am there with you. As Ohio AOH Missions & Charities Chair for many years, I never knew these reports existed. Now, how do you get credit for time spent at fundraising efforts? \$31.80 is considered the value of volunteer time per hour. 10 volunteers working for 2 hours = \$636.00. The forms are very straightforward, but please feel to reach out to me directly at chriskonik@mindspring.com with any questions.

On a side note: Statewide, we only have 8 division Missions & Charities Chairs. If your division does not currently have a Chair, let myself or President Parks lend a hand where needed.

Project St. Patrick

PSP has provided assistance to seminarians nationwide and recent support of Ireland's remaining seminary. Consider a division or individual donation.

Click link for PSP forms [Project St Patrick Forms](#) Click link to make [Individual Donations](#) Please send all correspondence to: **National Project St Patrick Chairman Ron Hagan**
7326 State Route 19, Unit 0512, Mt Gilead, OH 43338-9336

In Friendship, Unity and True Christian Charity,

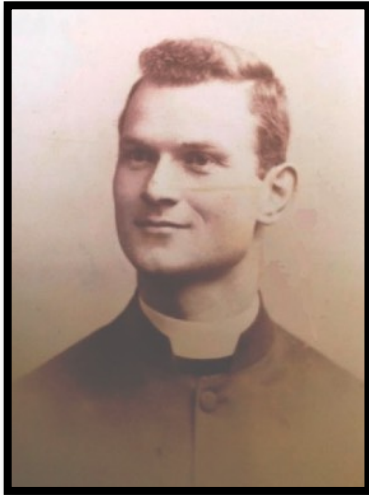
Chris Konik, Ohio AOH Missions & Charities Chair

chriskonik@mindspring.com

State Historian's Report

By: J. Michael Finn, State Historian

Father Paul Francis Kehoe, Farwell to Wexford



Paul Francis Kehoe was born at Moortown, Ballymitty, County Wexford, Ireland on March 2, 1858. Little is known regarding the early years of his life. His religious education was at St. Peter's College, in Wexford, where he began his studies for the priesthood.

During his years at St. Peter's College, Paul Kehoe became interested in Irish politics. As an Irish speaker he was very interested in the promotion of the Irish language. He was also a supporter of the Irish National Land League and its president, Charles Stewart Parnell, who was an elected member of the British Parliament representing Ireland.

When the Land League began in 1879 the Catholic Church in Ireland officially stood in opposition to the League largely due to the League's close association with the Irish Republican Brotherhood (late in the 1880s the Church changed her position on the Land League and was actively advising priests to support the organization).

On Easter Sunday, March 28, 1880 Charles Stewart Parnell made an appearance at Enniscorthy in County Wexford to speak on behalf of a candidate he was supporting in an upcoming election. At Enniscorthy, a riot ensued and Parnell was nearly dragged from the speaker's platform. His clothes were ripped and he was about to be physically assaulted. He was rescued from the angry mob and helped from the platform by a young clerical student. That young student was Paul Kehoe.

Kehoe wrote a letter to the newspaper, *Wexford People* and stated his strong support for the Land League political movement and for Parnell. Because of the Church's opposition to the Land League, the publication of the letter caused the young student difficulty with the college administrator at St. Peter's. Kehoe was given the choice of either going home or transferring to a seminary that prepared priests for the foreign missions. He chose to transfer to All Hallows College in Dublin. Priests from All Hallows were sent to such far away missions as South Africa, India, Australia or the United States.

Father Kehoe graduated from All Hallows College and was ordained to the priesthood in Dublin on Wednesday, June 24, 1885. Father Kehoe was "adopted" by Bishop John Ambrose Watterson of Columbus, Ohio where he would serve the Diocese of Columbus.

It was a clear day in Wexford, Ireland when his ship pulled out of Wexford Bay. Like thousands who left their home in Ireland for America, Father Kehoe was reluctant to leave his native land. He told a friend, "I envy the poorest man in the poorest cabin in Wexford who has not to leave his county."

As the ship pulled out he penned a poem about his feelings at leaving his beloved County Wexford for the unknowns awaiting him in the US. The first verse of his poem *Farewell to Wexford* expressed his feelings:

Continued on Page 7

State Historian's Report, cont.

Upon the vessel's deck I stand,
And watch the shore recede from view;
I see the hills and mountains grand,
The distant spires, the skies of blue.
While speeds the goodly ship away
The burning tears come trickling down.
And deep within my heart I say
Farewell, farewell, sweet Wexford town!

He landed in New York City and made the journey by train to Columbus, Ohio where he arrived in November 1885. There he learned from Bishop Watterson that his assignment would be as full-time Chaplain at the Ohio State Penitentiary.

The massive gray-walled state prison on Spring Street was just about the bleakest, coldest, and darkest place in town. It was the exact opposite of the "mountains grand" and the "skies of blue" of his native Wexford. The assignment must have presented quite a culture shock to the 27 year old Irish priest.

Father Kehoe did not let his surroundings interfere with his job. He celebrated his first Mass as prison chaplain on November 22, 1885. After the Mass, 1,500 convicts and 200 prison officials and visitors assembled in the main hall of the prison to welcome him. Although he was the tenth priest to be assigned to serve at the prison, he was only the second priest in the Columbus Diocese to be given that job on a full-time basis. Several months later, on April 4, 1886 Father Kehoe baptized eleven prisoners at the penitentiary and six days after that he arranged the first Confirmation service ever held at the prison.

Father Kehoe served as prison chaplain for approximately a year until October 2, 1886. He was then assigned as Assistant Pastor at Holy Family parish in Columbus. There he served as chaplain to both the Convent of the Good Shepherd and to Mt. Carmel Hospital. In 1887 Father Kehoe was assigned as Assistant Pastor at St. Lawrence O'Toole Parish in Ironton, Ohio. He served at St. Lawrence from 1887 until early in 1888 when he left the diocese to return to Ireland due to illness (his illness was attributed to lung disease).

Father Kehoe returned to his home in County Wexford, Ireland where he was assigned to various parishes within the Wexford Diocese of Ferns. He continued to experience health problems after his appointment at the parish of Cloughbawn, in the village of Clonroche. His doctor recommended he take a long sea voyage. He made a voyage to New Zealand in 1913. There he stayed with his lifelong friend Bishop Henry William Cleary, also a native of County Wexford and bishop of Auckland, New Zealand.

Upon his return to Ireland in 1916, Father Kehoe resumed his assignment as Parish Priest in the parish of Cloughbawn. Throughout his career as a priest he continued to write poetry. Much of it has been preserved. He was also well known as a historian.

Father Paul Francis Kehoe died at the parish house in Clonroche, County Wexford, Ireland on Friday, October 23, 1931, at the age of 73. He is buried in the Cloughbawn Parish Cemetery.

“O’Donnell Abú”

Proudly the note of the trumpet is sounding
Loudly the war cries arise on the gale,
Swiftly the steed by Lough Swilly is bounding
To join the thick squadrons on Samier’s Green Vale.
On, every Mountaineer, strangers to flight and fear;
Rush to the standard of dauntless Red Hugh.
Bonnaught and Gallowglass, throng from each mountain pass;
On for old Erin, O’Donnell Abú!

Princely O’Neill to our aid is advancing
With many a chieftain and warrior clan.
A thousand proud steeds in his vanguard are prancing,
‘Neath the Borderers brave from the banks of the Bann.
Many a heart shall quail under its coat of mail;
Deeply the merciless foeman will rue,
When on his ear shall ring, borne on the breeze’s wing,
Tyrconnell’s dread war cry, O’Donnell Abú!

Wildly o’re Desmond, the war-wolf is howling,
Fearless the eagle sweeps over the plain,
The fox in the streets of the city are prowling,
All who would scare them are banished or slain.
Grasp, every stalwart hand, hackbut and battlebrand,
Pay them all back the deep debt long due.
Norreys and Clifford well, can of Tyrconnell tell,
Onward to glory, O’Donnell Abú!

Sacred the cause that clan Connell’s defending,
The altars we kneel at, the homes of our sires,
Ruthless the ruin the foe is extending
Midnight is red with the plunderer’s fires.
On, with O’Donnell then, fight the old fight again,
Sons of Tyrconnell, all valiant and true.
Make the false Saxon feel Erin’s avenging steel,
Strike for your country, O’Donnell Abú!

Catholic Action

The month of October still remains within Ordinary Time, the liturgical color being green. On October 19, we commemorate some of the Jesuit martyrs of the American frontier. Since 1973, the Church in the U.S. has observed October as Respect Life Month.

MAJOR SAINTS AND FEAST DAYS

Oct. 2	Guardian Angels	Memorial
Oct. 4	Francis of Assisi	Memorial
Oct. 7	Our Lady of the Rosary	Memorial
Oct. 17	Ignatius of Antioch, Bishop and Martyr	Memorial
Oct. 18	Luke, Evangelist	Feast
Oct. 19	John de Brebeuf, Isaac Jogues and Companions	Martyrs
Oct. 28	Simon and Jude, Apostles	Feast

IRISH SAINTS OF OCTOBER

Oct. 11 Canice, Abbot (c. 515-99)

According to some sources, Canice, also known as Kenneth, was born at Glengiven, and became a monk and priest in Wales under St. Cadoc, at Llancarfan. He traveled to Rome, studied under St. Finian at Clonard, and evangelized in Ireland and Scotland. He was a close friend of Columba, whom he accompanied on a mission to the Picts. Canice may be the founder of monasteries at Aghaboe and Kilkenny in Ireland, and he also left a number of traces in place-names in Scotland.

Oct. 11 Loman of Trim (d.c.450)

Loman, a Briton like St. Patrick, and according to some accounts, his uncle, is said to have accompanied Patrick on his return to Ireland. The party arrived at the mouth of the Boyne River, where Patrick left Loman to watch the boat. Having waited many days in vain, Loman rowed up the river to the ford at Trim, where a chieftain named Fedelmid had a castle. In quick succession, Loman converted Fedelmid's son, Fortchern, Fedelmid's wife, then Fedelmid himself with his household. Fedelmid granted land for a church nearby, and Loman became the first bishop established by Patrick in Ireland.

Oct. 13 Comgan, Abbot (8th century)

Son of a prince of Leinster, he succeeded his father, but was forced to flee to Scotland, where he settled near Skye, built a monastery, and lived an austere life there. He was buried on Iona by his nephew, St. Fillan.

Continued on Page 10

Catholic Action, cont.**Oct. 16 Gall (d. c. 635)**

Gall distinguished himself as a scholar of grammar, poetry, and Holy Scripture under Saints Comgall and Columban at Bangor and was ordained a priest. He was one of twelve disciples who accompanied Columban to the Continent, first evangelizing in France and later in what is now Switzerland. Gall did not accompany Columban when the latter departed for Italy. Some legends have it that this resulted in a falling out between the two that was only healed at the death of Columban, but this may simply be a story to explain their separation. Gall became a hermit, and eventually the famous monastery of St. Gall came to occupy the site of his hermitage. Several stories would seem to indicate that the saint was an avid fisherman. He turned down offers of bishoprics and abbacies to remain a hermit. St. Gall is considered the apostle of Switzerland.

Oct. 21 Fintan, Abbot (d.c.635)

Also known as Munnu, Fintan was a monk of Cluain Inis, spent some time at Iona, and upon returning to Ireland founded a monastery at Taghmon, Wexford, serving as its abbot. He was a firm supporter of the Celtic liturgical practices. He reportedly contracted leprosy late in life.

Oct. 27 Otteran, Abbot (d. 563)

Also known as Odhran, this saint may have been a Briton. He was an abbot in Meath before he left Ireland among the twelve companions who accompanied Columba to Iona. There are some very odd stories about Otteran, perhaps incorporating elements of pagan mythology. Interestingly, the Viking settlers of Waterford chose him as their patron.

Oct. 31 Foillan, Abbot (d.c. 655)

With his two sainted brothers, Fursey and Ultan, he left Ireland for England c. 630, built a monastery at Burgh Castle, near Yarmouth, and evangelized the East Anglians. When his monastery was destroyed by the pagan Mercians under Penda, Foillan and his brother Ultan decided to follow their brother Fursey to Gaul, where they were welcomed by the Neustrian king, Clovis II. Foillan was founder and first abbot of a monastery at Fosses and converted many of the locals. He was murdered by outlaws.

OHIO NEWS OF INTEREST

On August 31, Bishop Edward Malesic of Cleveland issued guidelines for the Catholic schools of his diocese on the thorny issues of gender. The guidelines uphold Catholic teachings and parental rights while also seeking to welcome all interested parents and children. Students will be treated and addressed in accordance with their biological sex and will be expected to dress accordingly as well.

The Ohio March for Life is October 6 in Columbus. Are you planning to attend?

In our November election, it is crucial that we defeat Issue One, to prevent an unrestricted abortion regime in our state. Pray, make sure you are registered to vote, talk with family, friends, co-workers, get to the polls.

Do you have news of your division to report? Please send for inclusion in this report.

Fraternally, Patrick J. Lally lally8404@hotmail.com 330-792-7135

AOH Ohio Pro Life

Brothers,

It is time we all stand up and state clearly and without doubt that abortion is not women's health care, it is murder! The November 7th election is being pushed as women's health and abortion being part of that care. But it is a much bigger picture on the ballot. If passed Issue one will severely restrict parents and possibly eliminate parental consent in dealing with your daughters, and granddaughters medical care as well as remove all state and local health departments regulations with regards to abortion clinics.

If you think this an alarmist statement, let's look at that state to our north. Many of the same group of abortion advocates who worked to get Issue 1 on Ohio's November ballot were successful in getting similar language on the Michigan ballot, known as Proposition 3. It was passed with approximately 53% voting yes. A Year later, according to PROTECT WOMEN OHIO, Michigan has removed all parental informed consent document requirements as well as virtually all limitations to abortion through all 9 months, including partial birth abortion.

Partial birth abortion is performed as the child is about to be born, as the child's head can be seen by the abortionist and a sharp instrument is plugged into the child's skull to collapse the head. There are additional gruesome procedures in dismembering the child. Please remember this child was about to be born alive!

And it gets worse as abortions will be partially funded by Michigan taxpayers, the repeal of requirements for abortion clinics to screen for coercion or to report complications, abuse, etc. leaving victims of domestic violence or trafficking unprotected as all the evidence of a possible crime is destroyed. And finally at this point all state and local basic health and safety regulations have been eliminated.

There is much more but hopefully you can understand the changes Issue 1 will bring to Ohio if passed. PLEASE, PLEASE get involved educating your family, your friends, your neighbors and coworkers. And for those who favor abortion, please remind them abortion is currently legal in Ohio up to and including the beating of the child's heart.

Thank you for your helping defeat issue 1,

David Manley AOH Ohio Pro Life Chair

Mark Your Calendars

State Board Meeting

November 4th

Tara Hall, Columbus

2024 AOH National Convention

Orlando FL, August 7 - 11, 2024

For additional information, See

<https://orlandoirish2024.com/home-1>

FFAI State Chairman's Report

The Legacy Bill is Law, What happens now

Relatives for Justice CEO Mark Thompson. Picture by Hugh Russell



The age old saying "only victims know the true cost of war" is certainly apt as the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill is railroaded through Westminster.

Camouflaged as reconciliation, the bill (now law) is the very antithesis of its disingenuous title. It will create a new body dubbed the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR). This body will be responsible to and directed by the northern secretary of state. It will ultimately be divested of rights and powers ; far from independent.

The bill will cause irrevocable damage to a society ravaged by decades of violence and injustice, further harming victims, adding intergenerational hurts and trauma.

The Legacy Law will embed distrust and prevent confidence in institutions of law and governance. To say that those behind this law care little about the consequences would be generous.

The law prohibits all criminal investigations, inquests, or civil litigation regarding any killings that occurred during the Troubles. It simultaneously provides amnesty to perpetrators through its immunity clauses (an unprecedented act for any so-called democracy; save for tin-pot dictators and despot regimes.) The immunity provisions are ultimately a 'get out of investigation free card'.

The law's twin-track approach has attracted considerable international condemnation ensuring the UK, as a signatory to international treaties and conventions, observes its legal obligations. It was dubbed 'Pinochet plus' by leading law academics. Even codified rights (such as torture and sexual violence) are within the immunity clause.

The law imposes a legal obligation that the ICRIR must grant someone immunity from prosecution when (A) the person has requested such immunity, (B) the person has "provided an account which is true to the best of their knowledge and belief", and (C) where the panel determines the conduct would expose the person to prosecution for one or more serious Troubles-related offenses.

The potential for the law to be weaponized by the UK government, with powers completely vested in a northern secretary, are concerning to say the least. The decades of impunity resulting from poor or perfunctory investigations into state killings and collusion (previously addressed within the courts and through police investigations, inquests and civil litigation) make clear the motivation behind the bill.

Several thousand cases are pending within these arenas, where the focus is placed on all parties to the conflict – republicans, loyalists, and state. Hence the scorched earth policy in terms of law, due process, and the administration of justice. With aims to mitigate reputational damage or narrative change in Belfast courtrooms, the law deliberately shifts any shadows of suspicion cast over the UK government to the victims that were unjustly and unlawfully gunned down by British soldiers.

Continued on Page 13

FFAI State Chairman's Report, cont.

This is where accountability challenges impunity and where the primary intent of the law becomes clearer; particularly when it involves Britain's infiltration of intelligence and collusion with paramilitaries. The argument that the law will encourage those who committed violent crimes (including the UK government and its agencies) to come forward and provide information, is fanciful at best and contrary to the evidence to date. It is purely a smokescreen.

The fact is, the current system is working perfectly well – in fact too well. The only shortcomings in the system are those deliberately generated by the UK government and its agencies. Where they routinely flout court orders to provide information. Where obfuscation has become policy. Where it destroys evidence and fails to trace witnesses/suspects who served in their armed forces.

It exposes why this Tory government abandoned the 2014 Stormont House Agreement on legacy with the Irish government and local parties; an agreement that was human rights compliant and that created a completely independent body which it could not fully control.

This law will be legally challenged, however, it will take time. Time in which many aging relatives of victims will die awaiting truth and justice. This makes it a humanitarian issue. An issue that allows the Irish government to step forward and initiate an interstate case to Strasbourg.

Patrick Williams

Ancient Order of Hibernians Freedom For All Ireland State Chairman, karimcwilly@gmail.com

Division News

Msgr. Donal O'Carroll, Div. #1, Washington Co.

The Division celebrated their 45th Anniversary at the Lafayette Hotel in Marietta on July 23, 2023. We were honored to have Ohio State AOH President Denny Parks in attendance. A great time was had by all. Brother Chip Rogers' granddaughter, Grace Anne, blessed us with singing "The Soldier's Song", the National Anthem of Ireland, in Irish.



President Will Rathbone receives a locally hand made shillelagh from Brother James Farley



Brother James Farley presents a locally made shillelagh to AOH Ohio State President Denny Parks.