

**Dáil General Election 8 February 2020**

**Report by the Standards in Public Office Commission  
to the Ceann Comhairle  
pursuant to the Electoral Act 1997, as amended**



**Coimisiún um Chaighdeán in Oifigí Poiblí  
Standards in Public Office Commission**

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## Table of Contents

Foreword .....	2
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	3
Chapter 2: The 33 <sup>rd</sup> Dáil General Election .....	5
Chapter 3: Disclosure of donations by unsuccessful candidates .....	7
Chapter 4: Election spending by candidates and political parties .....	11
Chapter 5: Reimbursement of candidates' election expenses .....	16
Chapter 6: "Other Person" activity at the election .....	17
Chapter 7: Publishing of donation statements and election expenses statements.....	18
Chapter 8: Suggested amendments to the legislation .....	19
Fast Facts .....	20
Appendix.....	21

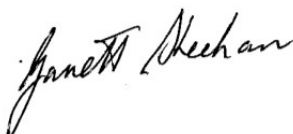
## Foreword

I am pleased to furnish this report to the Chairman of Dáil Éireann (Ceann Comhairle) in accordance with the provisions of section 4(1) of the Electoral Act 1997, as amended (the Act). The donation statements/statutory declarations referred to in the report were furnished to the Standards in Public Office Commission (the Commission) pursuant to section 24 of the Act while the certificates of monetary donations/statutory declarations and statements from financial institutions were furnished pursuant to section 23B of the Act. The election expenses statements were furnished pursuant to section 36 of the Act.

Detailed information about the requirements of the legislation, relating to:

- disclosure of political donations,
- limits on the values of donations which may be accepted,
- prohibited donations,
- limits on election spending, and
- reimbursement of election expenses to qualified candidates

is contained in the Guidelines for the General Election to the 33rd Dáil 2020 which are available on [www.sipo.ie](http://www.sipo.ie).



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Garret Sheehan  
Chairperson  
Standards in Public Office Commission

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Section 4(1) of the Act provides that the Commission may, where it considers it appropriate to do so, furnish a report to the Ceann Comhairle on any matter arising in relation to donation statements and election expenses statements furnished to it under the Act. In accordance with section 4(5) of the Act, the report must be laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas.

The 32nd Dáil was dissolved on 14 January 2020 and polling for the general election to the 33rd Dáil took place on 8 February 2020. Five hundred and thirty-one candidates contested the election.

In accordance with the provisions of Part IV of the Act, unsuccessful candidates at the general election were required, within 56 days after polling day (i.e., by 4 April 2020), to furnish to the Commission a donation statement, certificate of monetary donations, statutory declaration and, where applicable, a statement from a political donations bank account. Details of all donations with a value greater than €600 received by unsuccessful candidates in relation to the election were required to be disclosed.

Elected candidates at the election are required, as members of Dáil Éireann, to furnish an annual donation statement and accompanying documentation to the Commission by 31 January each year. The donation statements to be provided to the Commission in respect of 2020 by members of Dáil Éireann must include details of any donations received by them during 2020 in relation to the election. These statements were required to be provided to the Commission by 31 January 2021. A separate report on donations received by TDs, Senators and MEPs will be published by the Commission in due course.

Part V of the Act provides that the election agent of each candidate at a Dáil general election, whether elected or not, is required to furnish an election expenses statement to the Commission within 56 days after polling day (i.e., by 4 April 2020). The election expenses statement must include details of all expenses incurred and payments made by the election agent on behalf of the candidate at the election.

An election expenses statement is also required from the national agent of each political party with candidates contesting the election and from "other persons" who incurred election expenses.

The Commission recognised the challenges for candidates and election agents in meeting their statutory obligations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the Commission had no authority to change the statutory deadline of 4 April 2020, it wrote to all candidates and election agents on 25 March 2020 advising that, where it was not possible to have a statutory declaration witnessed, an unwitnessed declaration could be submitted with the return as an interim measure. The Commission further advised in its letter that persons subject to the Act should make best efforts to meet deadlines and that a hard copy of the witnessed declaration should be submitted to the Commission as soon as circumstances allowed.

The processing of election returns from the 2020 general election took longer than usual and the publication of this report is later than hoped for by the Commission. This is due to several contributing factors, not least of which was the role of the pandemic. In addition to delays in having declarations witnessed, the pandemic also impeded election agents trying to access necessary expenses documentation from suppliers closed during lockdown, leading to delays in providing complete returns. Other factors included: the overall volume and complexity of work, the Commission's long-standing practice of working with candidates/agents to perfect returns before they are finalised and laid before the Oireachtas, resource constraints as Commission staff also oversee compliance with three other Acts, the resource impact of prosecutions related to non-compliance with the Act's obligations, and the continued use of inefficient paper-based systems, which remain in place pending the establishment of an electoral commission.

While not all of these issues are within the Commission's control, the Commission is examining where efficiencies may be identified or supports needed to address issues within its power, and to that end will consult with stakeholders in the coming months.

## Chapter 2: The 33<sup>rd</sup> Dáil General Election

The general election to the 33<sup>rd</sup> Dáil took place on 8 February 2020.

Shortly after polling day was announced, the Commission published election guidelines for candidates, election agents, national agents, publishers, third parties and other persons. The purpose of the guidelines was to inform prospective candidates of the obligations they would take on if they chose to run, and to assist candidates to comply with their obligations under the Act. The guidelines for candidates and agents covered the acceptance and disclosure of political donations, prohibited donations, political donation accounts, election spending and reimbursement of election expenses to qualified candidates. Separate guidelines covered rules applying to the national agents of political parties, third parties and other persons seeking to campaign, as well as publishers of advertising material.

Candidates and election agents were invited to meet with members of the Commission Secretariat if they wished to discuss their obligations under the Act.

### Rules regarding donations

<b>Political donations account</b>	On receipt of a donation of <b>€100</b> a political donations account must be opened (if not already in place) by a candidate.
<b>Cash donations</b>	<b>€200</b> is the maximum cash donation that may be accepted by a candidate from a donor in any calendar year.
<b>Corporate donors</b>	<b>€200</b> is the maximum donation that may be accepted by a candidate from a corporate donor in any calendar year unless the corporate donor is registered in the Register of Corporate Donors maintained by the Commission.
<b>Individual donors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>€1,000</b> is the maximum donation that may be accepted by a candidate in a particular year from an individual or registered corporate donor.</li><li>• All donations received by a candidate exceeding <b>€600</b> must be disclosed on the Donation Statement.</li></ul>
<b>Multiple Donations</b>	Where a donor makes a donation to two or more recipients (multiple members of the same party or to one or more party members and the party itself), the aggregate value of which exceeds <b>€1,500</b> , he/she is required to submit a donation form to the Commission under section 24(1)(a).

<b>Prohibited donations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anonymous donations exceeding <b>€100</b> are prohibited.</li> <li>• Foreign donations, of any value, cannot be accepted from outside the island of Ireland, other than from an Irish citizen or from a business outside the island of Ireland unless it maintains an office on the island of Ireland from which at least one of its principal activities is directed.</li> </ul>
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### Relevant dates and expenditure limits

14 January to 8 February 2020 (inclusive)	Election Period
€45,200 €37,650 €30,150	Spending Limit for a 5 seat Constituency Spending Limit for a 4 seat Constituency Spending Limit for a 3 seat Constituency
24 March 2020	Claims for payment of election expenses, from suppliers, must be received by the election agent by this date
4 April 2020	Date by which all Election Statements must be furnished to the Commission (applies to successful and unsuccessful candidates).
4 April 2020	Date by which unsuccessful candidates must furnish to the Commission their donation statements, certificate of monetary donations and bank statements.
31 January 2021	Date by which all TDs (i.e. successful candidates in the election) must furnish to the Commission their annual returns, including donation statements, certificate of monetary donations, and bank statements.
€8,700	Maximum amount of reimbursement of allowable election expenses that a qualifying candidate may claim.

## Chapter 3: Disclosure of donations by unsuccessful candidates

### 3.1 Donation statements and certificates of monetary donations received from unsuccessful candidates

Unsuccessful candidates must furnish a donation statement to the Commission within 56 days after polling day, i.e. 4 April 2020. The donation statement must give details of all donations received in relation to the election with a value greater than €600.

A certificate of monetary donations must also be supplied to the Commission within the same timeframe, certifying that all monetary donations received were lodged to the candidate's political donations account and that all amounts debited from the account were used for political purposes.

The certificate of monetary donations and donation statement must be signed by the candidate and accompanied by a statutory declaration and/or statement from a financial institution.

### 3.2 Donations disclosed

In accordance with section 4(1) of the Act, the Commission considered the donation statements provided by each of the unsuccessful candidates at the election.

While candidates may also receive donations of lesser amounts, only those above the statutory declaration threshold fall to be disclosed to the Commission. The amounts set out in this report, therefore, only reflect donations received that were above the declaration threshold, and are not an accounting of all donations received.

Declarable donations disclosed by the unsuccessful candidates at the election amounted to €111,282 as summarised in the following table.



Table 1: Declarable donations disclosed by unsuccessful candidates

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Number of donations</b>	<b>Value of donations €</b>	<b>Donations returned to donors €</b>
Ahern, Ciarán	Labour Party	1	1,000	—
Bailey, Carly	Social Democrats	5	5,000	—
Blake, Jennifer	Social Democrats	2	2,024	24
Bogue, Lorna	Green Party	1	1,000	800
Burton, Joan	Labour Party	1	950	—
Bree, Declan	Independents 4 Change	2	1,750	—
Byrne, Helena	Renua	1	1,000	—
Byrne, Malcolm	Fianna Fáil	1	1,000	800
Cahillane, Mary*	Solidarity-People Before Profit	4	3,855	655
Cassells, Shane	Fianna Fáil	1	1,000	—
Conroy, Caroline	Green Party	1	1,000	—
Coppinger, Ruth	Solidarity-People Before Profit	6	6,000	800
Cummins, John	Fine Gael	1	1,000	—
D'Arcy, Michael	Fine Gael	3	3,000	—
Daly, Joe	Solidarity-People Before Profit	1	1,000	—
Doyle, Andrew	Fine Gael	1	1,000	—
Doyle, Suzanne	Fianna Fáil	1	2,770	2,770
Fay, Sandra*	Solidarity-People Before Profit	4	3,000	150
Gallagher, Robbie	Fianna Fáil	1	858	—
Goldsboro, Imelda*	Fianna Fáil	1	1,000	800
Hackett, Pippa	Green Party	1	1,000	800
Hannon, Connor	Aontú	2	1,544	—
Hayes, Alan	Non-Party	6	5,000	—
Healy, David*	Green Party	4	4,000	1,600
Heavin, Louise	Green Party	2	2,000	1,600
Humphreys, Kevin	Labour Party	1	1,000	—
Hynes, Denis	Labour Party	1	950	—
Kavanagh, Peter	Green Party	1	650	450
Kelleher, Terry	Solidarity-People Before Profit	2	1,011	87
Martin, Vincent P	Green Party	1	1,000	800

McCabe, Sean	Green Party	5	4,782	—
McCarthy, Lettie	Labour Party	3	2,950	800
McClellan, Caitriona	Fianna Fáil	1	750	550
McConnell, Niall	Non-Party	1	1,000	—
McHugh, Saoirse	Green Party	2	2,000	800
Moore, Ronan	Social Democrats	1	1,000	—
Moynihan, Rebecca	Labour Party	2	1,600	—
Mulligan, Eddie	Fianna Fáil	4	4,000	800
Mulvany, Bernard	Solidarity-People Before Profit	1	1,000	—
Murphy, Tony*	Non-Party	3	3,000	2,400
Ó Fallamháin, Daithí	Irish Freedom Party	1	1,000	—
Ó Laoghaire, Con Óg	Irish Freedom Party	1	605	—
Ó Maoláin, Aéngus	Social Democrats	1	950	—
Ó Tuathail, Niall	Social Democrats	3	2,750	—
O'Brien, Michael	Solidarity-People Before Profit	3	1,650	144
O'Brien, Paul	Labour Party	1	1,000	—
O'Connell, Juliet	Labour Party	2	2,000	—
O'Connell, Kate	Fine Gael	1	1,000	—
O'Connor, Charlie	Fianna Fáil	2	1,000	800
O'Driscoll, Pa	Fine Gael	1	1,000	—
O'Hara, Bernadette	Non-Party	2	2,000	—
O'Malley Dunlop, Ellen	Fine Gael	3	3,000	—
O'Sullivan, Jan	Labour Party	1	750	—
Parker, Dom	Solidarity-People Before Profit	2	660	—
Phillips, Bernadette	Non-Party	1	762	—
Reilly, James	Fine Gael	1	1,000	800
Ryan, Michael*	Aontú	2	2,000	800
Scallan, Ben	Irish Freedom Party	1	712	—
Sweeney, Mary T.	Aontú	3	3,000	—
Tuffy, Joanna*	Labour Party	1	1,000	800
Wall, Mark	Labour Party	1	1,000	—
Ward, Barry	Fine Gael	1	1,000	—
Waters, John	Non-Party	1	1,000	—
Zappone, Katherine	Non-Party	1	1,000	—
<b>Total</b>			<b>111,282</b>	<b>20,830</b>

\*Denotes the excess donation value has not been returned as of 15 November 2021

Sections 23A(1)(i) and (ii) of the Act provide that, where a donation exceeding the permissible limit is received, then the donation must be returned to the donor or, if it is a monetary donation, the part of it exceeding the limit must be returned to the donor, within 14 days of receipt. A written record of the return must be kept for the purpose of it being provided to the Commission, if required; or the recipient of the donation must notify the Commission of receipt of the donation within 14 days and remit the donation or the value thereof to the Commission. In the case of a monetary donation, the part of it exceeding the limit must be returned or remitted.

A number of unsuccessful candidates in the election received excess donations, generally where their political party had not registered as a corporate donor and was therefore prohibited from making a donation in excess of €200. Where a donation was received from an unregistered donor, including a political party, in excess of the allowable amount, the candidate was informed of the issue and advised to return or remit the excess amount.

The table in the Appendix summarises the donations declared by these candidates.

## Chapter 4: Election spending by candidates and political parties

### 4.1 Definition of election expenses

Section 31(1) of the Act provides that election expenses are those and only those set out in paragraph 1 of the Schedule to the Act, which are incurred on the provision of property, goods or services for use at the election during the election period (14 January – 8 February 2020) in order to:

- promote or oppose the interests of a political party or the election of a candidate, or a political group formed in accordance with the rules of procedure of the European Parliament; or
- present the policies of a political party or the comments of a political party on the policies of another political party or a candidate at the election; or
- promote or oppose, directly or indirectly, the election of a candidate at the election or to solicit votes for or against a candidate at an election; or
- present the policies of a candidate or the views of a candidate on any matter connected with the election or the comments of a candidate on the policies of a political party or another candidate at the election, or
- otherwise influence the outcome of the election.

The provision during the election period of property, goods or services, free or below cost, used at the election, is regarded as an election expense and must be accounted for at its full commercial price, less any normal or general discount which may be available.

### 4.2 Spending limits

The statutory spending limit for the election was €45,200 for the five-seat constituencies, €37,650 for the four-seat constituencies and €30,150 for the three-seat constituencies.

The statutory spending limit for each candidate is inclusive of VAT. The statutory limit represents the maximum spending allowed on a candidate and includes all spending by the election agent and a political party (both head office and local organisation) on a candidate. No separate or additional spending by a political party on a candidate over and above that which has been assigned to the party by the candidate is allowed.

### 4.3 Election period

The spending limit at the election applies to all expenses incurred and payments made in providing property, goods or services which are used for electoral purposes during the "election period". Section 31(3)(a)(i) of the Act provides that the election period at the election is from the date of the dissolution of the Dáil to polling day, both dates included. The election period at the election was from 14 January 2020 to 8 February 2020.

#### 4.4 Election Expenses Statement

Election expenses statements and statutory declaration forms were required from the election agents of each candidate who contested the election within 56 days of polling day (i.e. by 4 April 2020).

An election expenses statement and statutory declaration was also required by the same deadline from national agents of all the political parties that had candidates contesting the election.

#### 4.5 Persons referred to Director for Public Prosecutions

Failure to furnish to the Commission a donation statement, certificate of monetary donations or a statement from a financial institution by the statutory deadline is an offence.

Failure to furnish an election expenses statement and statutory declaration to the Commission by the statutory deadline is also an offence.

Where the Commission is of the view that a contravention of the Act has occurred, it may refer the matter to the Director for Public Prosecutions (DPP). Following the general election, the Commission referred 25 files to the DPP for failure to submit the relevant statutory documentation by the statutory deadline.

#### 4.6 Reported expenditure at the election

Details of expenditure declared at the election may be viewed in the tables that follow. Totals may not match due to rounding.

Table 2: Overview of reported expenditure at the election

<b>EA/Candidate expenditure</b>	<b>National Agent/Party expenditure on candidates</b>	<b>National Agent/Party expenditure nationally ("National Spend")</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>
<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>
4,610,494	866,568	1,859,661	<b>7,336,723</b>

Table 3: Overall reported expenditure at the election by political party (including national party expenditure and candidate expenditure)

<b>Political Party</b>	<b>EA/Candidate expenditure</b>	<b>National Agent/Party expenditure on candidates</b>	<b>National Agent/Party expenditure nationally ("National Spend")</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>
	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>
Aontú	71,446	98,786	435	<b>170,667</b>
Fianna Fáil	1,156,967	414,168	640,915	<b>2,212,050</b>
Fine Gael	1,129,491	191,481	850,679	<b>2,171,651</b>
The Green Party	238,909	53,859	24,040	<b>316,808</b>
Independents 4 Change	35,714	—	—	<b>35,714</b>
Irish Democratic Party	2,080	—	—	<b>2,080</b>
Irish Freedom Party	30,223	1,727	—	<b>31,950</b>
The Labour Party	345,010	23,946	112,111	<b>481,067</b>
National Party	12,115	17,275	123	<b>29,513</b>
Non Party	729,907	—	—	<b>729,907</b>
Renua Ireland	9,742	—	1,620	<b>11,362</b>
Sinn Féin	474,321	38,637	184,491	<b>697,449</b>
Social Democrats	174,879	26,134	39,477	<b>240,489</b>
Solidarity - People Before Profit	196,648	556	5,770	<b>202,975</b>
United People	—	—	—	<b>—</b>
The Workers Party	3,041	—	—	<b>3,041</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,610,494</b>	<b>866,568</b>	<b>1,859,661</b>	<b>7,336,723</b>

Table 4: Breakdown of reported national expenditure by political party

Political Party	Advertising	Publicity	Posters	Other Material	Office & Stationery	Transport & Travel	Market Research	Campaign Workers	Total €
Aontú	—	250	—	185	—	—	—	—	435
Fianna Fáil	174,924	94,905	215,326	38,754	60,283	13,283	30,258	13,182	640,915
Fine Gael	284,612	209,367	130,514	40,103	2,860	14,980	92,383	75,861	850,679
The Green Party	2,114	11,233	3,797	6,479	75	342	—	—	24,040
Independents 4 Change	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Irish Democratic Party	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Irish Freedom Party	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
The Labour Party	17,884	68,954	10,715	3,661	4,832	1,614	—	4,449	112,111
National Party	—	—	—	123	—	—	—	—	123
Renua Ireland	268	1,351	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,620
Sinn Féin	53,209	19,835	76,980	5,020	445	1,667	27,337	—	184,491
Social Democrats	2,460	6,671	—	10,035	5,753	1,187	—	13,370	39,477
Solidarity - People Before Profit	494	210	—	4,714	—	352	—	—	5,770
United People	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
The Workers Party	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<b>Total</b>	<b>535,964</b>	<b>412,777</b>	<b>437,332</b>	<b>109,074</b>	<b>74,248</b>	<b>33,426</b>	<b>149,978</b>	<b>106,861</b>	<b>1,859,661</b>

Table 5: Breakdown of expenditure by political parties on candidates

Political Party	Advertising	Publicity	Posters	Other Material	Office & Stationery	Transport & Travel	Market Research	Campaign Workers	Total €
Aontú	—	—	65,750	13,827	19,210	—	—	—	98,786
Fianna Fáil	75,284	3,943	131,963	178,583	17,608	7,096	—	—	414,477
Fine Gael	25,770	26,432	48,692	81,265	8,583	738	—	—	191,481
The Green Party	40,668	100	4,214	8,877	—	—	—	—	53,859
Independents 4 Change	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Irish Democratic Party	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Irish Freedom Party	—	—	—	1,727	—	—	—	—	1,727
The Labour Party	3,266	—	7,409	13,271	—	—	—	—	23,946
National Party	—	—	9,618	7,657	—	—	—	—	17,275
Renua Ireland	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sinn Féin	123	—	5,523	30,889	—	2,102	—	—	38,637
Social Democrats	—	—	1,759	24,375	—	—	—	—	26,134
Solidarity - People Before Profit	—	—	—	566	—	—	—	—	566
United People	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
The Workers Party	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<b>Total</b>	<b>145,111</b>	<b>30,474</b>	<b>274,927</b>	<b>361,037</b>	<b>45,402</b>	<b>9,935</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>866,887</b>

Table 6: Breakdown of reported expenditure by candidates

Political Party	Advertising	Publicity	Posters	Other Material	Office & Stationery	Transport & Travel	Market Research	Campaign Workers	Public Funds	Total €
Aontú	14,400	1,030	11,637	32,739	3,416	4,446	-	3,779	-	71,446
Fianna Fáil	292,800	28,666	416,206	295,709	73,546	24,009	6,458	6,548	13,025	1,156,967
Fine Gael	220,569	65,979	422,110	325,719	45,316	31,286	371	8,940	9,201	1,129,491
The Green Party	66,211	14,176	61,126	83,977	1,929	3,353	477	4,426	3,234	238,909
Independents 4 Change	5,559	-	11,229	16,822	773	908	-	423	-	35,714
Irish Democratic Party	-	-	1,007	1,073	-	-	-	-	-	2,080
Irish Freedom Party	3,426	-	8,212	17,225	6	1,355	-	-	-	30,223
The Labour Party	93,499	7,581	142,774	88,083	8,631	3,453	-	-	990	345,010
National Party	9,923	431	541	985	-	235	-	-	-	12,115
Non Party	177,098	29,164	198,882	247,424	23,901	37,852	208	10,569	4,808	729,907
Renua Ireland	2,108	-	429	7,045	-	160	-	-	-	9,742
Sinn Féin	103,916	4,146	196,846	139,713	20,572	8,935	-	194	-	474,321
Social Democrats	31,387	1,172	61,866	72,003	3,680	3,428	-	1,343	-	174,879
Solidarity - People Before Profit	12,833	623	74,855	101,532	1,977	2,835	-	475	1,518	196,648
United People	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
The Workers Party	925	-	550	1,566	-	-	-	-	-	3,041
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,034,654</b>	<b>152,968</b>	<b>1,608,270</b>	<b>1,431,614</b>	<b>183,747</b>	<b>122,255</b>	<b>7,514</b>	<b>36,697</b>	<b>32,776</b>	<b>4,610,494</b>



## Chapter 5: Reimbursement of candidates' election expenses

In order to qualify for a reimbursement, a candidate must either:

- have been elected at the election, or
- if not elected, have exceeded one quarter of the quota at any stage of the counting of votes.

The maximum amount that may be reimbursed to qualified candidates at a Dáil General Election is €8,700. Candidates who qualified for a reimbursement were eligible, therefore, to receive the lesser of that amount or the actual amount of election expenses incurred on their behalf at the election.

The Commission is required under section 21(d) of the Act to certify to the Minister for Finance that a candidate is eligible for a reimbursement of his/her election expenses. It is the practice of the Commission not to issue an application form for reimbursement of election expenses to a qualified candidate until such time as all matters relating to the completion of his/her statutory returns have been finalised.

At the election, a total of 319 candidates qualified for reimbursement of election expenses. To date, more than €2.5 million has been paid by the Exchequer to 315 of the 319 candidates who qualified for a reimbursement of election expenses. Queries remain outstanding on four of the returns provided by qualifying candidates. The Commission cannot order any reimbursement until it has received satisfactory responses to its queries.

Table 7: Reimbursements approved

Number of qualified candidates	Number of reimbursements issued	Total value of reimbursements issued to date
319	315	€2,548,827

## Chapter 6: “Other person” activity at the election

The Commission produced guidelines which set out the requirements attaching to "other persons" at the election which were published on the website of the Commission. An “other person” is a person who intends to incur expenses at the election to promote or oppose a candidate or a political party. Candidates, their election agents or national agents of political parties are not regarded as “other persons”.

As required under section 31(7) of the Act the following people notified the Commission in advance of their intention to incur election expenses:

- Enoch Burke,
- Josiah Burke, and
- Pro Life Campaign.

Every person who incurred election expenses pursuant to section 31(7) of the Act was required to furnish an election expenses statement to the Commission by 4 April 2020. Expenses totalling €39,040 were disclosed by those "other persons" who furnished an election expenses statement. Details of the expenses incurred are shown in table 8.

Table 8: Expenditure by other persons

<b>Name</b>	<b>Expenditure amount €</b>
Enoch Burke	633
Josiah Burke	1,062
Pro Life Campaign	37,345
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,040</b>

## Chapter 7: Publication of donation statements and election expenses statements

In accordance with section 24(7)(a) of the Act, an electronic copy of each donation statement received by the Commission from unsuccessful candidates at the election has been laid before each House of the Oireachtas.

In accordance with section 37(1) of the Act, a copy of each election expenses statement provided to the Commission in relation to the election, and which the Commission is satisfied has been correctly completed, has been laid before each House of the Oireachtas.

The donation statements and election expenses statements are available on the Oireachtas website at [www.oireachtas.ie](http://www.oireachtas.ie) and on the Commission's website at [www.sipo.ie](http://www.sipo.ie).

Section 73 of the Act requires the donation statements and election expenses statements received by the Commission, together with relevant invoices, receipts or vouchers, to be made available for public inspection at its offices at 6 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, D02 W773. In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission's offices are closed to callers. Once restrictions are lifted, in-person inspection will resume. It is advised to ring ahead to ensure the office is open to callers. Where it is not possible to provide for in-person public inspection, copies can be made available on application to the Commission via email at [info@sipo.ie](mailto:info@sipo.ie) or by telephone at (01) 639-5666.

## Chapter 8: Suggested amendments to the legislation

In administering the provisions of the Electoral Act, the Commission has identified a number of amendments to the Acts that, if implemented, would enhance, clarify or strengthen the Act. Amendments proposed by the Commission are included in its annual reports, and may be viewed there. However, the Commission wishes to highlight the following in particular, which have been proposed previously:

1. The proposed establishment of an Electoral Commission, as envisaged in the forthcoming Electoral Reform Bill, should prompt a complete review of the legislation. The Electoral Commission should have a statutory role to review the operation of the Act and report on its findings.
2. Notification of a change of election agent must be routed through the Returning Officer for the constituency. This causes an unnecessary level of bureaucracy for all concerned and can delay the Commission in finalising election expenses statements which have not been completed by the notified election agent. The Commission considers that it would be preferable if candidates were required to notify the Commission directly of the appointment or change of an election agent.
3. The Commission is concerned that "front-loading" of campaign expenditure undermines the effectiveness of the expenditure limits and may create the perception that accounting for expenditure at elections is little more than a paper exercise. The Commission considers that expenditure on goods, property or services used for electoral purposes in the two to three months leading up to a formal election call could reasonably be construed as intended to elicit support at the election for a candidate or political party and should be included in the reporting of expenses.

## Fast Facts

- Fianna Fáil was the biggest election spender €2,212,050 (1.8% more than the next highest party, Fine Gael, with €2,171,651).
- Overall spend in general elections continues to fall. It was down 13% from 2016 to €7,336,723.
- Donations declared by candidates declined slightly from the last general election. Donations declared in 2020 totalled €111,282, down from €112,320 in 2016. This reflects a continued downward trend over the past decade. This year's declared donations are approximately 61% lower than the 2011 total of €285,618.
- Over €2.5m has been reimbursed to qualified candidates.
- The Constituency with the biggest candidate/election agent spend was Tipperary (€247,258).
- The Constituency with the biggest national agent spend was Dublin South-West (€41,698).
- The Constituency with the biggest combined spend was Tipperary (€260,951).

## Appendix

### Excess donations by unsuccessful candidates

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Donor</b>	<b>Details</b>
Blake, Jennifer	Social Democrats	Limerick City	Mark Sugrue	€1,024 received €24 excess returned
Bogue, Lorna	Green Party	Cork South-Central	Green Party	€1,000 received €800 excess returned
Byrne, Malcolm	Fianna Fáil	Wexford	Fianna Fáil Wexford	€1,000 received €800 excess returned
Cahillane, Mary	Solidarty- People Before Profit	Limerick City	Socialist Party	€855.22 received  Awaiting confirmation that the excess amount was returned *
Coppinger, Ruth	Solidarty- People Before Profit	Dublin West	Socialist Party	€1,000 received €800 excess returned
Doyle, Suzanne	Fianna Fáil	Kildare South	Fianna Fáil Kildare CDC	€2,770 received €2,770 excess returned
Fay, Sandra	Solidarty- People Before Profit	Dublin South-West	Socialist Party	€350 received  Awaiting confirmation that the excess amount was returned*
Goldsboro, Imelda	Fianna Fáil	Tipperary	Fianna Fáil Tipperary	€1,000 received  Awaiting confirmation that the excess

				amount was returned*
Hackett, Pippa	Green Party	Laois-Offaly	Green Party	€1,000 received €800 excess returned
Healy, David	Green Party	Dublin Bay north	Green Party Green Party	€1,000 received (received 2019) €1,000 received (received 2020)  Awaiting confirmation that the excess amount was returned*
Heavin, Louise	Green Party	Longford-Westmeath	Green Party Green Party	€1,000 received (received 2019) €800 excess returned  €1,000 received (received 2020) €800 excess returned
Kavanagh, Peter	Green Party	Dublin Mid-West	Green Party	€650 received €450 excess returned
Kelleher, Terry	Solidarty- People Before Profit	Dublin Fingal	Socialist Party	€287.33 received €87.33 excess returned
Martin, Vincent P.	Green Party	Kildare North	Green Party	€1,000 received €800 excess returned
McCarthy, Lettie	Labour Party	Dublin Rathdown	Labour Party	€1,000 received €800 excess returned
McClellan, Caitríona	Fianna Fáil	Dublin Mid-West	Fianna Fáil Dublin Mid-West CDC	€750 received €550 excess returned

McHugh, Saoirse	Green Party	Mayo	Green Party	€1,000 received €800 excess returned
Mulligan, Eddie	Fianna Fáil	Waterford	Fianna Fáil CDC	€1,000 received €800 excess returned
Murphy, Tony	Non - Party	Dublin Fingal	Ballymaguire Foods Limited  Sherry Fitzgerald Cumiskey  Tierney Kitchens	€1,000 received  Awaiting confirmation that the excess amount was returned*  €1,000 received  Awaiting confirmation that the excess amount was returned*  €1,000 received  Awaiting confirmation that the excess amount was returned*
O'Brien, Michael	Solidarty- People Before Profit	Dublin Bay North	Socialist Party	€343.66 received €143.66 excess returned
O'Connor, Charlie	Fianna Fáil	Dublin Mid-West	Fianna Fáil Dublin Mid-West CDC	€1,000 received €800 excess returned
Reilly, James	Fine Gael	Dublin Fingal	Country Crest	€1,000 received €800 excess returned



Ryan, Michael	Aontú	Limerick City	Limerick Pro-Life	€1,000 received  Awaiting confirmation that the excess amount was returned*
Tuffy, Joanna	Labour Party	Dublin Mid-West	Labour Party	€1,000 received  Awaiting confirmation that the excess amount was returned*

*\*Denotes status as at 15 November 2021*