SAME-SEX MARRIAGE REPORT SUBMITTED TO GOVERNMENT BY CONVENTION ON THE CONSTITUTION

Tuesday, 2nd July, 2013: The Convention on the Constitution has laid the report of its third plenary meeting in the library of the Houses of the Oireachtas. The report recommends amending the Constitution to provide for same-sex marriage.

The meeting on same-sex marriage attracted a record number of submissions from the public. Over one thousand submissions lodged by citizens, advocacy groups and representative organisations were considered by the Convention as part of the debate.

Throughout the weekend, Convention members heard presentations from legal and academic experts, engaged in roundtable discussions, participated in question and answer sessions, listened to advocacy group presentations and ultimately balloted on whether the Constitution should be amended to allow for same-sex marriage.

The report shows a very strong majority of 79% favoured amendment of the Constitution to provide for same-sex marriage. Similarly, a strong majority of 78% favoured directive or mandatory wording in the event of such an amendment going ahead, meaning that the State should be obliged to enact laws providing for same sex marriage.

The report also outlines how 81% of members recommended that, in the event of changed arrangements in relation to marriage, the State shall enact laws incorporating the necessary changed arrangements in regard to the parentage, guardianship and upbringing of children.

This third report by the Convention contains the deliberations from its meeting which was held on 13th and 14th April, this year.

The Government has committed to responding to the various recommendations of the Constitutional Convention within four months of the publication of its reports and will arrange a full debate in the Houses of the Oireachtas in each case. In the event that the Government accepts a recommendation that the Constitution be amended, it will include a timeframe for the holding of the referendum

Mr Tom Arnold, Chairman of the Convention on the Constitution, said: "I am pleased to formally submit to the Houses of the Oireachtas the report of the Convention on the Constitution dealing with same-sex marriage. This report is the culmination of a rigorous process which was marked by a high level of public engagement, thoughtful and respectful contributions, and a thorough examination of the issues surrounding these recommendations."

"The outcomes contained in this report prove that constitutional issues which are often perceived as emotive and sensitive can be addressed in a fair, transparent and responsible

manner. I would like to highly commend and thank all of the Convention members for their commitment to this process. Also, I would like to extend my thanks to all of the citizens who made their views known with submissions to the Convention – their contributions were a vital part of our debate on the matter"

"The Convention is designed to allow citizens to engage and interact with a range of constitutional issues in a proactive and meaningful way. I am satisfied that this report is a strong endorsement of this innovative approach to constitutional reform."

The full report can be accessed <u>here</u>.

ENDS

For more information, please contact:

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Notes to the Editor:

	Yes	No	No opinion
Should the Constitution be changed to allow for civil marriage for same sex couples?	79	19	1

If the Constitutional Convention votes in favour of change, what form should this amendment take?	Mark X in ONE box
The amendment should be <u>permissive</u> (e.g., 'the State <u>may</u> enact laws providing for same sex marriage')	17
The amendment should be <u>directive</u> (e.g., 'the State <u>shall</u> enact laws providing for same sex marriage')	78
No opinion	1

	Yes	No	No opinion
In the event of changed arrangements in relation to marriage, the State shall enact laws incorporating necessary changed arrangements in regard to the parentage, guardianship and upbringing of children.	81	12	2

Constitutional Convention

The Convention on the Constitution was established by Resolution of both Houses of the Oireachtas. Its purpose is to consider and deliberate on eight separate matters on which it will make recommendations [as possible future amendments to the Constitution] and report to the Houses of the Oireachtas.

For its part, the Irish Government has undertaken to respond to the Convention's recommendations within four months by way of debates in the Oireachtas and where it agrees with a particular recommendation to amend the Constitution, to include a timeframe for a referendum.

The Convention is to complete its work within 12 months. Each topic will be deliberated at a weekend meeting of the Convention. Proceedings are livestreamed at www.constitution.ie