

INDEPENDENT SENATOR

*'A Voice for the Voiceless'*

SEANAD ÉIREANN 1989

N.U.I. CONSTITUENCY

**BRENDAN RYAN**

SIMON COMMUNITY

LECTURER IN CHEMICAL ENGINEERING, CORK R.T.C.



VOTE

1

**RYAN,** BRENDAN

# BRENDAN RYAN

Elected to the Seanad in August 1981 and re-elected in 1982, 1983 and 1987.

Born in Athy in 1946, and educated at the C.B.S. Athy, St. Patrick's Seminary, Roscommon and University College, Dublin. Hold a degree in Chemical Engineering. has been Secretary of the Students' Council in U.C.D., President of the Cork Council of trade Unions and Chairman of the Cork Simon Community.

Married to Clare O'Connell and has three Children.

Member of the Teachers' Union of Ireland.

Honorary President of the Cork Simon Community.  
Vice President of the Irish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

Patron of the Irish Anti-Apartheid Campaign.  
Patron of the Irish Nicaragua Support Group.

## **BRENDAN RYAN IS SUPPORTED BY THE CORK, DUBLIN, DUNDALK AND GALWAY SIMON COMMUNITIES.**

The Simon Communities provide homes and companionship for some of the most deprived in our country. In Cork, Dublin, Dundalk and Galway, they run projects for the homeless, ranging from a soup-run with street worker support visiting people sleeping out, through night shelters, to long term residential houses and work projects.

The Simon communities all believe in the need to work actively to bring about change in society so that homelessness and poverty can be eliminated. To this end the campaign for reforms in housing, the prison system, education, health and social welfare.

**THE SIMON COMMUNITIES ALL BELIEVE THAT BRENDAN RYAN'S RE-ELECTION TO THE SEANAD IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THAT CAMPAIGN FOR CHANGE.**

**RADICAL,  
OUTSPOKEN,  
INFORMED,  
CONSISTENT.**

Eight years ago N.U.I. graduates elected me to the Seanad to highlight the issue of poverty and injustice. I have tried to use that opportunity to bring about changes in both thinking and policy.

I have used the Oireachtas not just to highlight often unpopular and unfashionable issues but also to get things done.

With eight years experience behind me I am confident graduates would like it to continue.

I am seeking election as an Independent. I believe that the Independent Group can continue to work together effectively in the Seanad.

I promise nothing to graduates and continue my commitment not to gain financially from membership of the Seanad

I want to continue the work of the last eight years. Compassion and commitment are less in evidence in Ireland today than ever before, The poor, the sick, the old, our children's education all need to be defended. I believe I have proved I can do that job.

**NO ONE EVER GETS A QUOTA ON THE N. U. I. PANEL, THEREFORE THERE ARE NO SAFE SEATS AND THERE CAN BE NO COMPLACENCY.  
EVERY VOTE WILL COUNT.**

Ballot papers must be returned before  
**AUGUST 16th. PLEASE DON'T FORGET**

**BRENDAN RYAN**

## MAKING THINGS HAPPEN

While the Seanad is often only seen as a useful platform for talking about issues, Brendan Ryan's record over the past eight years shows that the Seanad can be used to make things happen.

## HOMELESSNESS

Since his election in 1981 Brendan Ryan has campaigned vigorously on behalf of the Homeless. Since the last election legislation has been introduced which for the first time addresses the problem of homelessness. Local authorities at last have a clear obligation to take account of the homeless in their plans, and are encouraged to make flexible provision for them.

## VAGRANCY

For over a hundred years it was a crime to be homeless in Ireland. Brendan Ryan has campaigned to have this offensive law repealed since he was elected. Since the last election this offensive part of the **Vagrancy Act** has been **repealed**.

On other issues like Social Welfare Appeals and Hospital care for the homeless, on which Brendan Ryan had been campaigning, changes have taken place, either in official thinking or in policy.

**The Seanad is not just a talking shop, it is a place to get things done.**

## TAKING THE INITIATIVE

Brendan Ryan introduced a Freedom of Information Bill in the last Seanad. This was the first time such a Bill was discussed in either house of the Oireachtas.

Brendan Ryan was also the first member of the Oireachtas to endeavour to introduce legislation to compel T.Ds and Senators to disclose their private business interests in a **Register of Members' Interests Bill**.

## KEEPING UP THE PRESSURE

Brendan Ryan has spoken on most major pieces of legislation that have passed through the Seanad. He has also been active on the details of legislation, at committee stage. For instance he opposed, section by section, a Social Welfare bill which contained severe cutbacks on benefit entitlement for pregnant women.

Brendan Ryan has introduced amendments to a large number of government bills, among them the **Rape Bill**, **The Video Recordings Bill**, **The Incitement to Hatred Bill**, **The Housing Bill**, **The Blasket Island Bill**, **the Water Pollution Bill**, **The Fas Bill**, **the Teagasc Bill**, and **the Companies' Bill**.

Brendan Ryan has also supported the introduction by other independent Senators of a **Nuclear Free Zone Bill** and a bill to **Abolish Capital Punishment**.

## **JUSTICE FOR ALL**

Inside and outside the Seanad Brendan Ryan has been outspoken in defending the rights of the excluded and oppressed in our society. He has consistently condemned the systematic humiliation of the unemployed by the welfare system, the campaigns of harassment against travellers, and the cutbacks in health, education, welfare and housing, which have turned Ireland into an increasingly divided society. He has been particularly concerned about the rights of Psychiatric patients and the mentally handicapped.

In order to pursue these issues Brendan Ryan compiled and published a report on the operation of the **JOBSEARCH** scheme in which he assembled the views of the centres for the unemployed around the country. This report illustrated the failure of the scheme to help the unemployed and the fact that it was often used simply to force people off the unemployed register.

Brendan Ryan also prepared and published a report on **SERVICES FOR THE BLIND**.

Brendan Ryan also made submissions to the commission on funding the health services and to the commission on the defence forces.

## **JUSTICE IN THE WORLD**

Because the cause of justice is indivisible Brendan Ryan has always been active on issues of justice round the world. He has campaigned relentlessly on issues such as **Apartheid** and the assault on the people of **Nicaragua**. He has spoken frequently on the increasing international debt crisis, **cutbacks in overseas development aid**, **north south trade etc.** He recently visited the embassy of the People's Republic of China to protest about human rights abuses in that country.

Since development and disarmament are so clearly linked Brendan Ryan has been a vigorous and often controversial critic of arms expenditure and militarism. He has always argued that Irish neutrality is a fundamental issue, both in opposing militarism and in allowing Ireland to play a real role in the defence of justice in the world.

## **FACING THE ISSUES**

Brendan Ryan has been prepared to take a position on every significant issue which has faced Irish society. He has spoken frequently on Northern Ireland, on the rights of prisoners north and south, on the injustices suffered by Irish prisoners in Britain, on extradition, on Church state

relations, and on the economic consensus which has dominated the country for the past two years. He has challenged that consensus by publishing strategies for dealing with economic problems, and by pointing out the human cost paid for some countries' "solutions".

### **An Gaeilge.**

Mar bhall de Comh-Choiste na Gaeilge thug Breandán Ó Riain lán tacaíocht do seirbhis Telefíse Gaeltachta. Tá Muintir na Gaeltachta ar cheann de na mionlachtaí sa tír seo agus seasann Breandán Ó Riain ar son cearta mionlachtaí.

## **FOR THE FUTURE**

### **Brendan Ryan will campaign vigorously to ensure that :**

The assault on the poor of the past two years will be reversed.

The cutbacks in housing which will further oppress the homeless and obliterate the progress of recent years are reversed.

Cutbacks in education which will heighten inequality in Ireland and are both economically and socially disastrous are challenged and overturned.

Our social welfare recipients are treated with the dignity they deserve

The report of the Commission on Social Welfare is kept on the political agenda. Implementation of even its priority recommendations would transform the lives of the poor.

The proposals of the Whitaker Committee on the Penal System are not forgotten.

Adequate legislation and funds are provided for our deprived children, about whom there is much talk, but for whom little is done.

Up to 1992 and beyond, the poor are protected and Irish Neutrality is not compromised.

The cruel values of selfish competition, greed, individualism and indifference, which currently dominate our country are resisted. Our country must be drawn together and this can only be done if the cult of greed and selfishness is resisted.

**Title:** Brendan Ryan: Independent Senator (Election Leaflet)

**Date:** 1989

Downloaded from the Irish Left Archive.

Visit [www.leftarchive.ie](http://www.leftarchive.ie)

*The Irish Left Archive is provided as a non-commercial historical resource, open to all, and has reproduced this document as an accessible digital reference. Copyright remains with its original authors. If used on other sites, we would appreciate a link back and reference to the Irish Left Archive, in addition to the original creators. For re-publication, commercial, or other uses, please contact the original owners. If documents provided to the Irish Left Archive have been created for or added to other online archives, please inform us so sources can be credited.*