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1. This week in the Oireachtas (24-28 September 2012)

<http://www.oireachtas.ie/viewdoc.asp?DocID=21778&&CatID=60>

2. Oireachtas Questions and Debate (17-21 September 2012)

Children's Rights Referendum

Seanad: Order of Business (Wednesday 19 September 2012)

Senator Maurice Cummins: ... The House will consider legislation dealing with the children's rights referendum during the course of the three sitting days in the week after next. I am prepared to give as much time as is needed to debate this very important Bill and trust Members will be satisfied with the allocation...

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/debates%20authoring/debateswebpack.nsf/takes/seanad2012091900003?opendocument#Order%20of%20Business>

Dáil: National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Bill 2012: Second Stage (Resumed) (Continued) (Wednesday 19 September 2012): Deputy Patrick O'Donovan: Before speaking on the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Bill, I refer to the referendum given that the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government is present in the Chamber. I welcome the fact that the referendum is being held on Saturday. ...
<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091900013?opendocument&highlight=referendum>

Dáil: National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Bill 2012: Second Stage (Resumed) (Continued) (Wednesday 19 September 2012): Deputy Seamus Healy: I welcome the opportunity to speak on the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Bill. I am generally supportive of it and expect to be in a position to support it through the Oireachtas. I welcome the announcement in regard to the children's rights referendum and the fact the referendum will be held on a Saturday which will give most people the opportunity to register their position on it. The referendum is a long time coming but, nevertheless, it is welcome.
<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091900018?opendocument>

Dáil: National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Bill 2012: Second Stage (Resumed) (Continued) (Wednesday 19 September 2012): Deputy Jerry Buttimer: This is an historic day in our Republic. For the first time, a Government has published a Bill to go before the people in a referendum on enshrining in the Constitution the protection and rights of children.
<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091900015?opendocument>

Seanad: Order of Business (Continued) 19/09/2012: [Senator Rónán Mullen:] A good step has been taken today with this proposed referendum wording. I expect to see consistency from the Government in the commitment to protecting children's welfare at all stages.
<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/seanad2012091900006?opendocument>

Seanad: Order of Business (Continued) 19/09/2012:[Senator Paschal Mooney:] In fact, four significant Bills were introduced which have gone an extraordinarily long way to protect children's rights. What is at issue in this particular referendum, which we will have an opportunity to debate, is specifically the question of adoption as well as the right of hearing in court. There is already a significant body of legislation in this regard.
<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/seanad2012091900014?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann: Order of Business (Continued) 19/09/2012: Deputy Micheál Martin: I welcome the decision to hold a referendum to insert in the Constitution an amendment on the rights of children. Much work has been undertaken on this issue over a number of years by all political parties in the House. I refer in particular to an all-party committee chaired by former Deputy Mary O'Rourke, which created significant momentum on the issue . . .
<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091900006?opendocument>

Dáil: National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Bill 2012: Second Stage (Resumed) (Continued) (Wednesday 19 September 2012): Deputy Mary Mitchell O'Connor: Step by step and piece by piece, the Government is addressing gaping holes in the protection of children and vulnerable adults. Yesterday the Taoiseach announced a referendum to protect children. Thankfully, 20 years after the retired former justice Catherine McGuinness advised this reform, the Government is now giving the people a choice to give children a voice in our Constitution . . .

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091900012?opendocument>

Seanad Éireann Order of Business (Continued) 19/09/2012: Senator Fidelma Healy Eames: I welcome all of my colleagues back to the House and also welcome the beginning of a session during which we can make a major difference to many people's lives in this country. I am referring to the forthcoming referendum on children's rights. Right now there are 1,500 children who have been in care for more than five years. Children of married parents who are in care for various reasons, including neglect or abuse, cannot be adopted in this country.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/seanad2012091900009?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Bill 2012: Second Stage (Continued) 18/09/2012: Deputy Finian McGrath: . . . I also welcome the broader debate that is taking place on the protection of children. There has been a lot of talk about protecting the rights of children but we need to make this a reality by ending the suffering and nightmares for the children who are being damaged as I speak tonight. I hope the upcoming referendum will also deal with these issues. I welcome that the referendum will be held on a Saturday. From what I am hearing, there is considerable potential to safeguard the rights of children and I hope I will be able strongly to support the campaign.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091800039?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Bill 2012: Second Stage (Resumed) (Continued) 20/09/2012: Deputy Dominic Hannigan: I propose to share time with my colleague, Deputy Robert Dowds. I welcome the opportunity to speak on the Bill. The Bill will work alongside legislation such as the Children First Bill and the Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information) Bill. The Bill will be complimented by a new provision in the Constitution if the people decide to pass the children's rights referendum. We published the wording of the referendum yesterday and it was good to see it broadly welcomed by all sectors. It is a positive start to see such support and hopefully it will translate into a "Yes" vote on Saturday, 10 November.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012092000025?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann Topical Issue Matters 19/09/2012: Minister for Social Protection (Deputy Joan Burton): I hope this week will be remembered as a week in which the Government put the needs and safety of children at the heart of Government policy. I am conscious that at 11.30 a.m. my colleague, the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, will publish the wording of the children's

referendum, which will be held on 10 November, and the accompanying draft legislation on adoption. This Bill, the referendum and the adoption legislation represent good work on behalf of the children of this country, particularly those who may be vulnerable or at risk.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091900008?opendocument>

Education: including special needs, ECCE and childminding, minorities, disadvantage, literacy and numeracy, school staffing, school buildings, school patronage, curriculum

Dáil Éireann School Transport (Continued) 19/09/2012:

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091900032?opendocument>

Budget 2013: Discussion with Minister for Education and Skills (Continued) 19/09/2012:

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/committeetakes/EDJ2012091900003?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann Written Answers Special Educational Needs 18/09/2012: Deputy Mattie McGrath asked the Minister for Education and Skills Ruairí Quinn if schools are obliged to implement an individual education plan for children with special needs who are progressing through the mainstream system; the avenue available to a parent who is not satisfied that their special needs child is receiving the proper facilities to allow them to progress through the mainstream school system; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091800075?opendocument>

Asylum/Immigration

Dáil Éireann. Direct provision/Child Protection: Deputy Derek Nolan: I wish to raise the matter of the report produced this week by the Irish Refugee Council, entitled State Sanctioned Child Poverty and Exclusion, which deals with children of asylum seekers in direct provision centres.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091900031?opendocument>

Seanad. Refugee Accommodation (Continued) Senator Jillian van Turnhout: As someone who stands over the report of the Irish Refugee Council, I find the statement issued by the Minister objectionable. I invite him to accompany Members on a visit to some of the direct provision centres to see the appalling treatment in them.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/seanad2012092000030?opendocument>

Child Services/ Children in Care: including foster care and social work services, HSE staffing, youth services

Dáil Éireann Written Answers Children in Care 18/09/2012: Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Frances Fitzgerald if she will list the residential child care centres in Dublin North East; the number of young persons in each of these centres; the budget allocation for each; and the proportion for staff salaries.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091800135?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann Written Answers Child Care Services 18/09/2012: Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Frances Fitzgerald the reasons the Health Service Executive made the decision to close a children's residential unit in Dublin Central (details supplied); if her attention has been drawn to of the valuable service this unit has provided for children and families in the area; . . .

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091800135?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann Written Answers Family Support Services 18/09/2012

Deputy Tom Fleming asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Frances Fitzgerald if she will provide representation to the family resource centres on the family services committee currently being developed in acknowledgement of the vital and outstanding work that they are carrying out.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091800133?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann Written Answers Child Care Services 18/09/2012

Deputy Billy Kelleher asked the Minister for Health Information on Dr. James Reilly if the reports of parents in North Dublin, that public health nurses dealing with children between six months and 24 months have informed them that there is currently no public hearing testing service available for these children true; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091800157?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann Written Answers Departmental Staff Numbers 18/09/2012: Deputy Robert Troy asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Frances Fitzgerald the number of WTE social workers in February 2011; the number now; the number expected to be provided by the end of the year; the proportion for each; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091800133?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann Written Answers Children Services Committees 19/09/2012: Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Frances Fitzgerald if the Health Service Executive children and adolescent mental health service is represented on the children services committees at a local authority level or on the national children's strategy implementation group at a national level; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091900080?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann Written Answers Family Support Services 19/09/2012: Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Frances Fitzgerald her plans to proceed with the recommendation of the task force on the Child and Family Support Agency to include children and adolescent mental health service within the new agency; the way this will deliver better inter-agency co-operation between HSE, CAMHS and the child welfare and protection services; the way this might be addressed in the Child and Family Support Agency Bill; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091900080?opendocument>

Child Abuse/Child Protection: including vetting, child abduction

Dáil Éireann National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Bill 2012: Second Stage (Resumed) (Continued) 19/09/2012:

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091900008?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann Written Answers Child Protection 18/09/2012: Deputy Michael Healy-Rae asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Frances Fitzgerald her plans to introduce vetting in respect of persons taking charge of foster children; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091800134?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann Written Answers United Nations Conventions 19/09/2012: Deputy Anne Ferris asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Frances Fitzgerald when she expects the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography to be ratified; and if she will make a statement on the matter.<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091900080?opendocument>

Family: including adoption

Dáil Éireann: Order of Business (Continued) Foreign Adoptions 19/09/2012: Deputy Patrick O'Donovan asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Frances Fitzgerald if she will provide an update on progress made between Ireland and Russia on the issue of inter-country adoptions; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012092000057?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann: Order of Business (Continued) Foreign Adoptions 19/09/2012: Deputy Paschal Donohoe asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Frances Fitzgerald if she will provide an update on the current situation regarding the inter country adoptions arrangements between Ireland and India; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012092000057?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann Written Answers - Foreign Adoptions 18/09/2012: Deputy Jack Wall asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Information on Frances Fitzgerald Zoom on Frances Fitzgerald when the Adoption Authority of Ireland will start processing adoptions from India; when will an agent be appointed; and if she will make a statement on the matter . . .

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091800135?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann: Order of Business (Continued) Adoption Services 19/09/2012: Deputy Anne Ferris asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Frances Fitzgerald her views on establishing a statutory inquiry on adoptions from Ireland to the U.S.A. in the 1950's and 1960's; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Health and Wellbeing: including disability, mental health, substance misuse, primary care, health services, hospital services, obesity, sports facilities

Dáil Éireann Written Answers National Children's Hospital 18/09/2012 Deputy Terence Flanagan asked the Minister for Health Dr. James Reilly when he expects to make a decision regarding the National Children's Hospital; if the Mater site is still the favoured site; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091800157?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann Written Answers Written Answers Mental: Health Services Deputy Bernard J. Durkan asked the Minister for Health Dr. James Reilly if any weaknesses in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services have been identified over recent years; the extent to which new demands are not being met on time; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091800136?opendocument>

Child Benefit/Social Welfare/Poverty/Housing

Dáil Éireann Written Answers Domiciliary Care Allowance: Deputy Mattie McGrath asked the Minister for Social Protection Joan Burton the percentage of applications for the domiciliary care allowance that were refused each year for the past five years; the number of refusals that were over turned following appeal; the main reason for refusal; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091800096?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann Written Answers Domiciliary Care Allowance: Deputy Simon Harris asked the Minister for Social Protection Information on Joan Burton if she will provide details of her policy review of the domiciliary care allowance scheme; the membership of this review group; the terms of reference of

the review; the number of times the review group has met; when the review group is next scheduled to meet; the way interested parties can make submissions to the review group; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091800098?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann Family Income Supplement 19/09/2012:

Deputy Tom Fleming asked the Minister for Social Protection Joan Burton if she will review the family income supplement for working one parent families adversely affected by her budget cuts; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091900073?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann. Family Income Supplement 19/09/2012: Deputy Denis Naughten asked the Minister for Social Protection the number of new applications made for family income supplement in the past available 12 month period; the corresponding figure for renewal decisions; the number of renewal applications refused, granted with reduced rate, granted with existing rate, granted with increased rate; the plans if any to allow persons to remain on their existing rate until a determination is made on their renewal application; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091800100?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann. Family Income Supplement 19/09/2012: Deputy Terence Flanagan asked the Minister for Social Protection Information on Joan Burton Zoom on Joan Burton if consideration will be given to the costs of private child care when means testing children's benefit on income; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091800099?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann. Family Income Supplement 19/09/2012: Deputy Willie O'Dea asked several questions on the Family Income Supplement.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091900070?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann Written Answers: Homelessness Strategy 18/09/2012: Deputy Mary Lou McDonald asked the Minister for the Environment; Community and Local Government Phil Hogan his views on the findings of the recent census that 230,000 units lie empty here while up to 5,000 are homeless; his plans to proceed with a housing first initiative to combat this; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091800053?opendocument>

Justice Issues/ Human Rights/Equality

Dáil Éireann Other Questions Traveller Community 19/09/2012: Deputy Gerry Adams asked the Minister for Justice and Equality Alan Shatter his plans to introduce legislation to recognise Traveller ethnicity; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091900025?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann Written Answers Juvenile Offenders 19/09/2012: Deputy Mick Wallace asked the Minister for Justice and Equality Alan Shatter his views on the protection regime in St. Patrick's Institution, Dublin, which can see children locked up for up to 23 hours a day with little access to

education, physical activity and association; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091900062?opendocument>

Dáil Éireann Written Answers Human Trafficking 19/09/2012 Deputy Bernard J. Durkan asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the extent to which trafficking in women, children and juveniles has been identified throughout the country over the past five years on an annual basis, affecting both the national and non-national population; if any particular statistics have arisen which might require specific attention; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

<http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail2012091900077?opendocument>