



Dear Committee Members

The growing relationship between Ireland and the 50 States of the United States is very welcome and important. The links between our two Republics are strong and enduring. The United States was there for Ireland over one hundred years ago in our struggle for Independence. The only country mentioned by name, other than Ireland, in the 1916 Proclamation, Ireland's equivalent of the American Declaration of Independence, is your country where it says, 'supported by her exiled children in America'.

The United States was also there for Ireland just over 25 years ago for the Good Friday Peace Agreement. We know there are people alive in Ireland today because of the continuous bipartisan support of State Legislators, successive United States Presidents, the United States Senate, United States House of Representatives, and various elected officials who worked with the Government of Ireland to ensure the success of the Good Friday Agreement, after 30 years of violence. For the ongoing support of the United States for our Peace Process, we in Ireland are eternally grateful.

We want to continue to promote ongoing trade, peace, education, political and people to people links. Ireland has direct access to the EU market of 450 million people and 950 US companies, already based in Ireland, using it as a gateway to this EU Market. Ireland is also the 9th largest investor in the United States.

Assemblywoman Carol Murphy who is the Democratic Whip in the New Jersey Assembly following a visit by a delegation from the New Jersey Legislature to Ireland authored the New Jersey Ireland Trade Commission Legislation, this legislation was then picked up by Republican Speaker of the West Virginia House of Delegates, both Bill have been passed into law and signed by Governors in their respective States. There is now more than a dozen States actively pursuing this legislation with many hoping to pass it through their Legislature by St Patricks Day.

I hope Rhode Island can join these States in ensuring these Commission will be able to build on the great links between the States and Ireland.

Is mise le meas,

Senator Mark Daly,
An Seanadóir Marcus O Dalaigh
Leas Cathaoirleach of Seanad Eireann
24th Chair of the Senate of Ireland