

October 5, 2013

Colin Gleeson's "How The Referendum Campaigns Unfolded: A brief history of the Seanad abolition and Court of Appeal referendums," quoting Tillman

Seth Barrett Tillman

Colin Gleeson, *How The Referendum Campaigns Unfolded: A brief history of the Seanad abolition and Court of Appeal referendums*, THE IRISH TIMES (Oct. 5, 2013), available at <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/how-the-referendum-campaigns-unfolded-1.1551693>, also available at http://works.bepress.com/seth_barrett_tillman/484/ (quoting Tillman).

2011: Fine Gael election manifesto promises to call a referendum to abolish the Seanad.

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April 30th: The Government approves plans for a referendum to allow the setting up of a Court of Appeal via an amendment to Article 34 of the Constitution. Minister for Justice Alan Shatter said the need for this arose mainly from a “significant” backlog of cases at the Supreme Court.

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September 11th: Alan Shatter says he is “profoundly concerned” at the lack of coverage RTÉ has given the upcoming referendum on the establishment of a court of appeal.

September 16th: The Government’s arguments for creating a Court of Appeal are “somewhere between incoherent and incomprehensible”, constitutional lawyer Seth Barrett Tillman says.

September 17th: Former Supreme Court judge Catherine McGuinness says a new court of appeal is “very important” for a fast and fully considered determination of important legal cases and to help weed out more trivial cases.

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September 20th: Retired registrar to the Court of Criminal Appeal Bernard Neary says it is wrong to make taxpayers pay for a new court during an economic crisis without first attempting to ease delays with existing resources.

September 26th: The Law Society writes to all 9,000 solicitors in the State urging them to vote Yes in the Court of Appeal referendum.

September 27th: Chief Justice Susan Denham says the four-year backlog at the Supreme Court is an “unsustainable situation” with untold costs for society and the economy – but stops short of advocating any particular vote in the referendum.

September 28th: The Bar Council calls for a Yes vote in the Court of Appeal referendum, describing the proposal as “an essential step” to address serious delays in the Supreme Court.

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September 30th: The Master of the High Court Edmund Honohan says the proposed Court of Appeal is unnecessary, describing it as a “crude device” that will lead to a rise in appeals.

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October 2nd: The four main parties jointly call for a Yes vote in the referendum on a Court of Appeal.

In an unusual move, senior figures from Fine Gael, Labour, Fianna Fáil and Sinn Féin issued a statement urging voters to approve the proposal to create a court between the High and Supreme courts.

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October 4th: Voters go to the polls.