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

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

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**October 4th:** Voters go to the polls.