



Civil Registration Bill 2019 passed by Both Houses of the Oireachtas

**Allows both members of female same-sex relationship to register as parents
and allows for other necessary changes to Civil Registration**

**Also makes it no longer necessary for a woman to contact with an estranged
husband when establishing paternity of child with new partner**

Wednesday 15 May 2019

The Civil Registration Bill 2019 has today (Wednesday, 15th May) passed its final stages through the Dáil and Seanad and will be presented to the President for signing. The Bill, when enacted, will facilitate commencement of existing legislation that provides for registration of children of donor-assisted births.

This new law will make possible the registration, as parents, of both partners in a female same-sex relationship. Currently only the particulars of the mother could be recorded in the birth register.

Inclusion of both partners as parents on birth certificates will assist in affirming their parental rights in practical day-to-day matters. These new arrangements will support easier access to services such as passports for their children, school enrolment, interaction with medical practitioners, and other situations where the demonstration of parental relationship may be required.

Marking the passage of the Bill, Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Regina Doherty, T.D. said:

“I am pleased that we have taken a very significant step forward in recognising the diverse range of family formation that we have in Ireland today. I want to see our civil registration legislative framework keep pace with the evolving family composition in our society, and with how this diversity is supported by our laws.

“We need to work now to have this legislation, and all of the other relevant legislation, commenced as quickly as possible to enable registrations and re-registrations of births. I look forward to the day, soon, when same-sex female couples are able to register the birth of their children, in a way that reflects the formation of their families as lived in their daily lives.”

Another key provision in the Bill is to bring civil registration legislation in line with current legislation governing the presumption of paternity. This will make it less onerous on a woman to rebut automatic presumption of paternity of her estranged husband in the birth registration process. It will now be possible for a woman to present her own evidence of separation in order to rebut automatic presumption that her estranged husband is the father of a child she may subsequently give birth to with a new partner.

Minister Doherty added:

“I am pleased that we now have consistent laws in relation to presumption of paternity. In particular, I am glad that there will no longer be a need for contact with a woman’s husband where the separation may have been acrimonious, or may even have involved incidence of domestic violence”

The Bill also includes other amendments to civil registration that include provisions:

- to allow a role for family members in registering a death in cases involving a coroner;
- to allow the Civil Registration Service to share historical records with a body under the aegis of the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht;
- to enable the Central Statistics Office comply with EU Regulations concerning data collected as part of the death registration process; and
- other technical amendments concerning civil registrations.

ENDS