

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in relation to the bill, which has been tabled regarding the employment of ex- prisoners as Special Advisers.

Barring ex-prisoners from employment as a Special Adviser would be discriminatory and would run contrary to the Good Friday Agreement and the St Andrews Agreement.

GFA.

In the **GFA** the British and Irish governments pledged to:

“continue to recognise the importance of measures to facilitate the reintegration of prisoners into the community by providing support both prior to and after release, including assistance directed towards availing of employment opportunities, retaining and / or re-skilling, and further education” **(Annex B, point 5 10 April 1998)**

St Andrew’s Agreement.

The St Andrew’s Agreement (2006 Annex B) pledged that:

“government will work with business, trade unions and ex-prisoners groups to produce guidance for employers which will reduce barriers to employment and enhance re – integration of former prisoners”

Legislating to bar ex-prisoners from employment as a Special Advisors would again institutionalise discrimination. Many elected representatives throughout Ireland are ex-prisoners, including Ministers, MP’s MLA’s Councillors, TD’s and MEP.

Many Ex-prisoners are involved in community development roles and projects within their own community. These individuals strive day and daily to develop facilities and programmes that will enhance their community to the betterment all. The fact that ex-prisoners are in these positions demonstrates clearly that a significant section of society trust and relay on ex-prisoners as their representatives and community leaders.

We would ask that this bill is not passed as it will have a discriminatory effect upon the whole Ex-prisoners community.

Is Mise
John Mc Crory
Chairperson
Cairde
Strabane Republican Ex-prisoners Group.