



# NEWSLETTER INDEPENDENT



## SENATOR GERARD CRAUGHWELL

### In Retrospect 2024



Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann/Organisation of National Ex-Service Personnel (ONE) Senator Craughwell leads ONE delegation visits to UK,

July 24th, 25th, 26th, 2024

John Scivier MSc CMgr FCMI FloL MCGI, Chair of Veterans Outreach Support (VOS), has the honour, alongside President, Sir Jeremy de Halpert, and CEO, Ian Millen, to host Irish Senator Gerard Craughwell, and the CEO and Clinical director of the Irish Organisation of National Ex-Service Personnel (<https://one-veterans.org>) and Dr Graham Cable EdD, the Chair of the South East Veterans Advisory Committee. The briefing session was on their work at VOS and the Veterans Places, Pathways and People project of which they are the SE region portfolio lead. The visit and briefing demonstrated that veteran support is not just a UK effort but that cross border(s) sharing of information and collaboration can only strengthen the ways in which we can provide support. Thanks as always to Dan Brooks, David Knight SJS MIH and the Royal Maritime Hotel for the support and facilities.



**Memorial Of Private Billy Kedian - Moneymore, Ballyhaunis, Mayo, July 20, 2024**

On Behalf of the Billy Kedian Memorial Committee, Senator Gerard P. Craughwell extended an invitation on behalf of the Billy Kedian committee to the 25th Anniversary of the passing of Pte Billy Kedian. Billy died tragically while on service with C Coy 85 Infantry Battalion, UNIFIL, in South Lebanon in 1999. Thanks to Cllr. Seamus Weir (Cathaoirleach Cheantar Bardasach Bhéal an Áth) and his colleagues in Mayo County Council for passing the motion in 2023 to allocate the funds for the erection of a commemorative plaque in Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo to honour Billy's service in the Defence Forces. On the day it was unveiled, Cllr Gallagher described Pte Kedian as 'true gentleman' and 'a man of very words at times, yet with razor-sharp sense of humour who would light up any room.



**Taipei, Taiwan, July 14-18, 2024**

Senator Craughwell had a visit with Hsiao Bi-Khim Vice President of Taiwan. What a wonderful person! She advocates strongly for soft diplomacy and open dialogue without preconditions. Clearly, Taiwan is only interested in peaceful coexistence! Ireland does not have diplomatic relations with Taiwan but has economic and cultural links. The purpose of the trip was to enhance understanding of Taiwan's democratic development and cross-strait relations, as well as working towards strengthening the bilateral relations that already exist between Taiwan and Ireland. Fianna Fáil Senators Gerry Horkan and Diarmuid Wilson, Fine Gael Senator Garret Ahearn, and Independent Senators Sharon Keogan and Gerard Craughwell were on the visit which began on Sunday and concludes on Friday.



**On July 8th, 2024, State loses High Court Action to block Senator's case over 'secret RAF air policing deal'.**

Senator Gerard Craughwell's challenge highlights concerns about transparency and constitutional processes in international agreements. The alleged secret deal between Ireland and the UK, allowing British RAF fighters to intercept aircraft in Irish airspace, raises questions about sovereignty and the need for public approval through a referendum.

The reference to the *Crotty v An Taoiseach* ruling is crucial here. This landmark case established that certain international agreements require the approval of the Irish people via a referendum to be lawful and constitutional.

**SUMMER EDITION 2024**



Senator Craughwell leads a delegation towards **Digital Leadership and E-Government Services, Tallin, Estonia June 17-19, 2024,**

Estonia's digital transformation is indeed impressive! Their e-government services and the widespread use of electronic IDs (eIDs) have set a global benchmark. The fact that more people voted electronically rather than using traditional paper ballots in recent elections is a testament to the trust and efficiency of their system.

**To Be the World's Best We Must Collaborate**

It is always great to hear about Senator Craughwell's collaboration with Ambassador Kairi Künka. Estonia's reputation in digital public services and cybersecurity is well-deserved, and it's inspiring to see such international cooperation. The variety of delegations from Ireland, including notable figures from various institutions, will surely gain valuable insights from Estonia's digital advancements. The academia programme participants are Eoin Byrne CyberIreland, George O'Mahony MTU, Hazel Murray Cyber Skills, Ronan Coleman Cyber Innovate, Mark Lane TUD, Lubna Luxmi Dhirani UL, John Sheppard SETU, Veronica Rogers ATU. Senator Craughwell's warning highlights a crucial issue. Ireland Must Act Now to Fortify Cybersecurity! With the increasing sophistication of cyber threats, it's essential for all sectors to stay ahead.



Writing is an act of discovering what you think and what you believe. For the month of May, Independent Senator Gerard P. Craughwell has written a number of challenging publications that can be easily accessed throughout his social media platforms. On *May*

*6th*, he publishes ironically **#PaddyNeutrality will save us – sure everyone loves Ireland!** "Many of our friends in Europe are warning that an attack on EU soil is no longer a possibility but more likely a probability. Ireland has not taken defence seriously for decades and the latest efforts fall far short of what is required for a #neutral country to command the respect of its friends let alone its enemies. I hear some politicians and many members of the public express concerns about Ireland joining #NATO. Let's get real here membership of NATO requires a country to spend at least 2% of GDP on defence some countries are spending far more. Ireland spends a paltry 0.2% we have one ship patrolling our vast Atlantic EZ and our Air Corps is struggling due to the lack of maintenance crews." **It'll take a seismic kinetic event for Ireland to take national security/defence seriously**, published on *May 23, 2024*, and **Irish Politicians, Diplomats and Media Impede an Informed Debate on Security and Defence**, where **It All begins with a Falsehood, The Irish are Far from Well-Travelled on International Affairs!!** published on *May 29, 2024*.



**Teachers Union ANNUAL CONGRESS 2024**  
Tuesday, 2nd – Thursday, 4th, April 2024

The Annual Congress 2024 took place in the INEC, Killarney, Co. Kerry. As former President of the TUI, Senator Gerard P. Craughwell, to this day, still represents with great distinction the interests of its members with educators from second level, further education and third level. He is championing equity and inclusion to all citizens, irrespective of age, gender, race, religion, or background. During his time as President, he won the respect of those with whom he dealt, regardless of their brief. He is possessed of a broad and generous national vision. The teacher recruitment and retention crisis; rise in bureaucratic workload; chronic underfunding of education – how it impacts on student experience; AI – maximising opportunities and limiting risks; ensuring no regional variations across Technological University sector; unacceptable delay in providing Adult Education Tutors with appropriate terms of employment; were only a small sample of key issues debated and addressed in keynote speeches for Minister Norma Foley TD, who had had a good reception and Minister of State Niall Collins TD where his comments were warmly welcomed by all.

On *April 14th, 2024*, Senator Craughwell gets published by *The America Times* with **Ireland is Dangerously Negligent on National Security and in Safeguarding its Sovereignty?** followed respectively by **Ireland's Foreign Policy Incomplete Until It Embraces Credible Defence Policy** on *April 21st, 2024*.



Senator Craughwell's **farewell to Ralf Lissek** into the **German – Irish Chamber of Industry & Commerce, April 18, 2024**

On the evening of April 18 at Leinster House, the German Irish Chamber had the privilege of holding a celebratory dinner to honour the former CEO, **Ralf Lissek**, as he concluded his remarkable 25-year tenure. This special event was graced by distinguished guests and tributes that highlighted Ralf's energy, enthusiasm, and dedication to the Chamber. Contributions were made by Senator **Gerard Craughwell**, **Manfred Todtenhausen MdB**, member of the German Bundestag and **Ian O'Hara** from **IDA Ireland** along with the President of the Chamber, **Simon Dauber**, and **His Excellency German Ambassador Cord Meier-Klodt**.



**The future of the European Union, Inter-parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) Belgium, Bruges, March 3rd -5th, 2024** with the head of the Irish delegation Chair of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, TD Cathal BERRY, TD Charles FLANAGAN and Senators Diarmuid WILSON and Gerard CRAUGHWELL.

EU finds itself at a crossroads and must implement a certain number of reforms, independently of its enlargement process. The Union's policies must be fit for the future and financed sustainably, in line with its fundamental values, and the EU institutions must function effectively. Because without in-depth reform, the Union risks being faced with the dilution of its project and erosion from within. To avoid blockages, the EU must rethink its decision-making process and improve its ability to speak with one voice.

With the approval by the European Council of the Strategic Compass adopted in March 2022, the Union has an action plan for a stronger security and defence policy between now and 2030 with concrete actions in four areas: act, secure, invest and work with partners. The Strategic Compass also emphasises the importance of coordinated defence planning among EU member states. Resilience refers, above all, to the EU's ability to withstand and recover from various threats, such as cyber-attacks and disinformation campaigns. It includes the efficient use of EU military and civilian assets in addressing security challenges. Cooperation with other international organisations and countries also helps strengthen the EU's security and defence capabilities. Technology plays a crucial role in this. The EU invests in the development of advanced cyber security capabilities and promotes cooperation among member states in this field. The Union is also working to combat disinformation and strengthen media literacy to reduce the impact of false information on its citizens.



On 8th March 2024 **#Referendum** We did it our way! Senator Gerard Craughwell is celebrating a significant victory. The people are sovereign and not to be messed with. We **#VoteNoNo** are thankful to my friend and colleague Senator Michael McDowell for his leadership, which was instrumental for this outcome.

28th March 2024 Senator Craughwell and Cathal Berry TD had a meaningful visit with the current **Defence Forces Officer Cadet Class at Leinster House.**

It's great to see such support and encouragement for the cadets, especially with the next competitions on the horizon! The cadet program is indeed known for being one of Ireland's toughest and most prestigious diplomas. **Best of luck to all the applicants! #Ireland toughest diploma!**



On February 1st, 2024, @ the Order of Business, "I am wearing my pin today for **Lá Fhéile Bhríde**. It is fitting that today, one of the strongest women in Irish representation, Antoinette Cunningham of the Association of Garda Sergeants, and Inspectors, is retiring. Antoinette leaves behind some fantastic achievements, including access to the Workplace Relations Commission and the Labour Court for members of An Garda Síochána."

**Lá Fhéile Bhríde** celebrates Ireland's only female patron saint, and we now have a bank holiday to celebrate her life and legacy.

February 14th, 2024, Senator Craughwell writes about the **Clarity needed on choice of Referendum date**



On the date, in the Irish Times, an article (Appendix 1) reveals that the Supreme Court was scheduled to hear a case on 11th April in which the mother of a child with Down Syndrome,

epilepsy and borderline autism seeks to overturn a High Court decision rejecting her claim to a full carer's allowance without means test by reason of her partner and the father of the child having weekly earnings which deny her a full non-contributory carers allowance.

She relies on Article 41(2) of the Constitution and on the words proposed to be deleted by the 40th Amendment Bill to claim that the Minister for Social Protection must make regulations under Section 186 of the Social Welfare (Consolidation) Act 2005 to grant her a full Carer's Allowance.

She applied to have her appeal case dealt with directly by the Supreme Court rather than having to have the appeal dealt with by the Court of Appeal.

On 31st October 2023, the Supreme Court gave her exceptional leave to appeal to it directly (a "leapfrog appeal", see Appendix 2). The date of hearing of the appeal was fixed for 11th April 2024.

This hearing date was fixed before Housing Minister Darragh O'Brien fixed the referendum date for the 8th of March. The leapfrog appeal application was opposed by the Minister and the Attorney General. Follow for more on LinkedIn <https://shorturl.at/mPuTF>

**February 21st, 2024. 106 Anniversary of the Republic of Estonia**

On this day Senator Craughwell honours 106 Anniversary of the Republic of Estonia where he has had the pleasure of working with Estonian Ambassador Kairi Künka since her arrival in Ireland.

Estonia has made indeed remarkable strides in digital public services and cybersecurity, earning a global reputation for its innovative approaches. Senator Craughwell's collaboration with Ambassador Kairi Künka and his efforts to bring delegations to Estonia highlight the strong ties and mutual respect between Ireland and Estonia. Celebrating the 106th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia is a significant milestone, reflecting on the country's journey and achievements since its independence.



**February 29th, 2024. Senator Craughwell in support for Referendum opposing the 39th and 40th Amendments of the Irish Constitution.**

There are so many wrong things with these amendments. Please read on what the lawyers have to say #VoteNoNo **Lawyers For No document - Family and Care Referendum - Michael McDowell.**



**January 8th – 12th, 2024 Senator Gerard P. Craughwell led a delegation of Irish education executives and experts to visit CCDCOE.**

The primary discussion topic was centred around how the CCDCOE can best support #Ireland in cybersecurity skill development. Everybody agreed that while skill frameworks and standards are also important, active leadership in cybersecurity should be the first priority. With Ireland's participation in CCDCOE's #LockedShields exercise, a lot of visibility and attention on cyber issues can be generated.



**REIM Training Solutions** Directors **Eimear Murphy and Sandra Richardson** were privileged to be part of an Irish delegation invited by Senator Gerard Craughwell who travelled to Estonia to explore their digital ecosystem, and cyber security centres of excellence.

They had a busy few days which included visits to: **e-Estonia, CybExer Technologies, CR14, Riigi Infosüsteemi Amet // Estonian Information System Authority (NCSC-EE), NATO Force Integration Unit Estonia, NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE) Tallinn University** and the Irish Embassy in Estonia. REIM Training Solutions offer a wide variety of training programmes to both the education and business sectors. They currently run a catalogue of courses for the Cavan and Monaghan education and Training Board in the technical category; Information Technology Skills, Engineering skills; Core ICT skills, Electrical Engineering Skills, Mechanical Engineering Skills, and Manufacturing Skills.

In **January 12th, 2024** Senator Gerard Craughwell saw the celebration of **60 years of the BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition**, the longest standing display of secondary school students' abilities in the area of science and technology.

The first ever Young Scientist Exhibition was held in the Mansion House in 1965: 230 students participated and 5,000 people attended. Since 1965, over three quarters of a million people have visited the Young Scientist Exhibition.



**SENATOR GERARD P. CRAUGHWELL**

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