

June 2014

Coalition of Irish Immigration Centers Newsletter

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Welcome to the June 2014 edition of the CIIC Newsletter!

This month marks many changes for me, as I will be finishing up with the Coalition this week, making this my last newsletter as National Coordinator. While my time with the CIIC has been short, it has been very sweet. I have worked with some incredible people who are passionate about the CIIC, amongst those include the CIIC Board and Subcommittee members. I have had opportunities to witness the CIIC strengthen in remarkable ways and in a variety of capacities particularly after our meeting in San Francisco last January where we strategized and set goals for the CIIC. Tools have been developed and implemented to share best practices, which have not only continued to enhance the work of front line services, but have also built a sense of community between our nationally diverse Member Centers.

I am happy to announce that Aileen Leonard Dibra will be returning as the National Coordinator after a short time away from the position. Aileen is glad to be returning to the CIIC and will be continuing the positive work of the Coalition and its partners. For all future communication to the CIIC, please contact Aileen at the details listed below:

t: 914.837.2007

e: aileen.dibra@ciic-usa.org

I would like to thank all of you for supporting me in this role and for making my time as National Coordinator one that was very special and dear to my heart, especially after having arrived to the US after living in Ireland for many years. I wish you all much success in the future and look forward to seeing what the CIIC will accomplish next.

All the best,
Sara McDermott



What's Happening at Irish Senior Connect

*by Susan Doody ISC
Program Coordinator*

**Irish Senior Connect
855.249.5146**

Irish Senior Connect continues to link Irish seniors throughout Greater Boston and beyond to a supportive caring group of senior volunteers who provide empathy and support and who offer referral to local senior resources.

The weekly ISC well-being check-in call service provides reassurance and a sense of security to seniors, especially for those who may be homebound or isolated.

Over 300 calls from seniors have been received by ISC listening line volunteers, and a total of 1370 calls have been made to seniors through the program's weekly well-being check-in call service.

On Saturday, June 7th, ISC volunteers and the ISC Coordinator staffed a table at the Annual Irish Festival at the Irish Cultural Centre in Canton, Ma. ISC program information and brochures were handed out throughout the day to seniors and their families who visited the festival.

July 15th will be the launch date for ISC Chicago, to be hosted by Chicago Irish Immigrant Support at the Irish Heritage Center. The ISC Coordinator will join volunteers, CIIS staff and dignitaries from the Irish community to celebrate the activation of the calling line and check-in services. The replication of the program in Chicago will increase the ISC coverage area and service hours and will establish the program as a senior resource providing services at a national level.

Irish Senior Connect continues to receive strong response in the Irish community throughout Greater Boston and beyond. The program, funded by the DFA Ireland and the AIF is in it's third year providing listening line, resource information and referral, and well-being check-in call services for seniors.

Give us a like! We're on [Facebook](#)

For more information about the program, contact ISC Program Coordinator, Susan Doody, at susan.doody@ciic-usa.org

Irish Senior Connect is generously funded by The American Ireland Fund and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Emigrant Support Program.

News from the Emerald Isle Immigration Center

New York

June 18th & 19th - Staff and Board members of the center hosted Irish Abroad Unit Director Ciaran Madden at their offices in Woodside, Queens on Wednesday, June 18th and in the Woodlawn section of the Bronx on Thursday, June 19th, 2014. The staff made a small presentation to Ciaran on the occasion of his first visit. There was some very positive feedback and discussion focusing on the many programs and services the center is providing to the needy in the community.



Pictured: EIIIC Staff with Ciaran Madden of the Irish Abroad Unit and Fiona McCabe of the Irish Consulate in NY

June 17th - Executive Director, Siobhan Dennehy (EIIIC) was honored at Old St. Patrick's Basilica at the Taste of Guatemala event on Tuesday, June 17, 2014. Proceeds from the event go toward the support of the Mission in San Luca.



Pictured: Siobhan Dennehy with representatives from the Mission San Lucas Toliman in Guatemala

June 16, 2014 -The Emerald Isle Immigration Center (EIIIC) Executive Committee, board and staff mourn the death of their longtime board member and dear friend John "Jack " Ahern. Jack was an exceptional Irish American and supported the community and the EIIIC at every opportunity.

John "Jack" Thomas Ahern died in his home in Old Westbury on June 17, 2014, surrounded by his family. Jack was born in Brooklyn to Jack and Margaret (Henry) Ahern on November 3, 1953. He graduated from Nazareth High School and attended Brooklyn College. In 1983 Jack married his wife Susan, and was the proud father of Corey, Taryn, and Michael.

In 1974, Jack began his service in the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 30 as an apprentice and rose through the ranks of the mechanical and engineering workers' union. He was elected Business Manager and Financial Secretary of IUOE Local 30 in 1999 and remained in those positions until his death. He was a labor leader for over 35 years and represented over 4,600 members in both the private and public sector. Jack's dedication to the labor movement ran deep and he was honored to advocate for the rights of working people everywhere.

Jack also served as Chairman of the Trustees to the International Union of Operating Engineers and Trustee of the IUOE Northeastern Conference. In addition, Jack served as Vice-Chairperson of the NYC Municipal Labor Committee, Executive Board member of the NY Building Congress, and a member of the Board of Trustees for Molloy College.

Jack was very active in the Irish-American community and was exceptionally proud of his heritage. He traced his roots to County Cork and County Longford, and was a proud third generation member of the County Cork Association. Jack was honored to serve as the 253rd Grand Marshal of the NYC St. Patrick's Day Parade earlier this year. He was also the Grand Marshal of the Rockaway St. Patrick's Day Parade in 2000 and 2013. Jack will be remembered as a loving family man, a strong labor leader, and a proud Irish-American.



Pictured: Jack Ahern

Cantor's Defeat Raises More Questions Than Answers About Immigration's Future

*by Breandan G. Magee
CIIC Vice President &*

Executive Director of Chicago Irish Immigrant Support

They say a week is a long time in politics and ne'er truer words have been spoken when eyeing up the political state of play this week with the fall of House Majority Whip Eric Cantor (R-VA). The darling of the Tea Party and pain in President Obama's side was unceremoniously ousted in a Republican primary in the 7th Congressional District of Virginia by an even more conservative and lesser known economics professor.

The political repercussions and the shockwaves that the defeat sent through the Republican establishment were palpable. The Tea Party claimed victory and establishment figure Congressman Peter King (R-NY), a long time friend to the Irish, took to the air waves to bash Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) and his firebrand Tea Party movement as frauds. Civil war within the rank and file of the Republican Party is in full swing it would seem, while immigration reform advocates look on and ponder what it means for legislation this year.

Before this week's shocking primary, the powers that be in the Republican Party were, it seems, crafting a plan to get some form of immigration reform legislation through the House in June or July. President Obama had told his Department of Homeland Security chief to hold off on new guidelines that would have effectively reduced deportations in the hope that this would give some breathing space to Republicans seeking a deal. Now this is all up in the air. Why, you ask? Well, it just so happens that immigration was a hot button topic in the recent primary loss for Eric Cantor.

The party leader supported it, in theory, until his opponent lambasted him for being soft on 'amnesty', so he did the unforgivable in politics and flip flopped on the issue. Now the real reasons for Cantor's loss go much deeper than his stance on immigration but Republicans and pundits alike are sounding the death knell for reform hopes, in the short term at least. While hubris may have played a role in Cantor's meteoric fall from power I do not believe that we ought to throw the baby out with the bath water and forget about immigration reform altogether.

If we look at another tightly contested Republican primary, namely Senator Lyndsey Graham's of South Carolina we see that his support for immigration reform got him reelected comfortably. Graham in fact was one of the Gang of Eight architects of the Senate immigration bill that passed last year. Now is the time for immigration reform advocates to flex their muscles and build on the massive base of support that they have corralled over the years, including Bibles, Badges and Business (Faith communities, law enforcement and chambers of commerce). The window of time is short for sure but as we saw in just a few days, a week is a long time in politics.

The Irish, including myself, will be in Washington D.C. next week to educate legislators and ask them to pass immigration reform this year. Another recent victim of the polls Labour Leader, Tánaiste and Minister of Foreign Affairs Eammon Gilmore T.D. will be there too, using his last month in office to push immigration reform on the Hill. He and Eric Cantor will be stark reminders to all of our elected officials that the people's business matters and to get the job done while they can.

Fr. Michael Leonard's Decade of Ministry to CIIS

Chicago Irish Immigrant Support

Fr. Mike has steadfastly served the Irish community of Chicago for over 10 years since joining CIIS as Chaplain in 2003, under the auspices of the Irish Bishop's Conference. It is with great sadness that we see his tenure as chaplain to CIIS come to an end on July 1st. We have all laughed at his jokes and been touched by his words of wisdom. He has helped countless lost souls and comforted those in need, not to mention his tireless advocacy for the undocumented in his quest for immigration reform.

New Website for the Undocumented and their Friends/Families

A new website is up and running that aims to provide up to date information on the undocumented in the USA. Siobhan Lyons, Executive Director of the Irish Immigration Center, Philadelphia talks about the undocumented Irish in her community and commends the Coalition of Irish Immigration Centers for their enormous support.

Please visit www.undocumentedirish.com for more information.

Chicago Irish Immigrant Supports Immigration Attorney Gives Her Take

by Raia Stoicheva

Chicago Irish Immigrant Support

June marks the one year anniversary of the Senate passage of S. 744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, aka the Senate's comprehensive immigration reform (CIR) bill. The House of Representatives has still not acted on this or any other CIR bill constructively. However, the conversation has remained alive, even if lacking in clarity. Even without Congressional action, there have been indications in recent weeks that President Obama may consider administrative reforms to help stem deportations, as well as keep workers in the country. For that reason it is important to begin getting ready for any legislative or administrative measures that may impact on legalization.

If you are currently undocumented, there several steps you can take to get ready for any future legalization efforts and/or to be ready to apply for

immigration benefits for which you may become eligible in the meantime.

- Obtain your **identity documents**, such as original birth certificate, passport, consular identification, or any other identity document issued by your country of origin.
- Obtain the **original versions** of all other official documents that might be necessary, such as your children's birth certificates and/or adoption records, any divorce certificates, criminal records, etc.
- If you have any **arrest or conviction history**, you will need to **obtain certified dispositions** about each instance from the police department or court involved. If you have ever been arrested, including by immigration authorities, you may want to have your **fingerprints taken** so that you can review your record and identify any potential stumbling blocks to your legalization and how you may be able to avoid them. If you have had interaction with immigration authorities, you should **obtain a copy of your file** from your attorney or file a Freedom of Information Act request with the appropriate agency. You should seek legal advice if you have had any interactions with law enforcement (including immigration).
- File and pay **taxes** for all years you are required to do so, and make sure they **accurately reflect** your income and dependents. Even if your income falls below the filing threshold for a given year, it may make sense for you to file anyway. Otherwise, keep documentation about

your lack of income for those years.

- Begin collecting documents of **your physical presence** in the U.S. These include leases/ mortgages, bank records, medical records, pay stubs or direct deposit slips, school records, etc. You will likely have to show your presence in the country prior to a date set out in the legislation (for S. 744 that date is December 31, 2011), on the day of the filing of your application for legalization, and from the day the application is filed until it is approved.
- In the event of a CIR bill, the application costs associated will likely be significant. S.744 requires not only payment of the actual filing fee, but of a fine, and any assessed federal taxes that you have not paid in the past. For that reason, it is important to **plan your finances** accordingly.
- The debate around CIR often moves in confusing spurts. It is important to **stay informed** about CIR through several different and reputable news sources. In addition, you can and should contact your local community based organization. You can call us on 773-282-8445.
- In the meantime, **seek legal advice from an attorney or an organization recognized by the Board of Immigration Appeals**. People who are not attorneys or BIA accredited representatives are not entitled to give legal advice. If you have doubts about a person's credentials, you can check whether an attorney is not authorized to practice on the Attorney Registration and

Disciplinary Commission (ARDC) website and you can find a roster of BIA recognized organizations and accredited individuals on the website of the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR).

As always, if you have any immigration related questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at 773-282-8445 or via email at rstoicheva@ci-is.org.

Upcoming Events

Upcoming Events in Seattle's Irish Community

Seattle, WA

July 27th - Seattle's Irish Community Picnic is at Lake Sammamish State Park on Sunday, July 27, from noon-dusk. Free admission and all are welcome to join in the fun and games.

August 15th - The annual Irish Headstone Ceremony in Sunnyside Cemetery in Coupeville on Whidbey Island is on Friday, August 15 at 5:30 pm. The headstone inscription is in the Irish language written in old Gaelic script and memorializes a Tipperary woman buried on Whidbey Island in 1861. See attached shot of part of the headstone or watch last year's ceremony on [YouTube](#).

ABOUT THE COALITION OF IRISH IMMIGRATION CENTERS

The Coalition of Irish Immigration Centers (CIIC) is a national umbrella group for all of the Irish Immigration Centers in the US. The CIIC was established in 1996 to promote the welfare of Irish immigrants in the US at a national level. The CIIC is funded by a grant from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Emigrant Support Program and by generous support from the American Ireland fund for its Irish Senior Connect Program.

The mission of the CIIC is to represent immigrant organizations throughout the United States who are committed to providing services to Irish immigrants. The Coalition provides support and assistance to the various centers in their work through advocacy, education and the exchange of information. CIIC member organizations are located in California, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Philadelphia, Washington and Wisconsin.

To learn more about CIIC visit, www.ciic-usa.org