**Freedom For All Ireland – Dolores Desch**

The 2019-2020 Christmas Appeal checks will be distributed this month. President Keane and I will be participating along with the AOH, in a Zoom event on Saturday September 19 at 2:30 pm EST with the Christmas Appeal recipients to hear from them on their recent projects. The Zoom meeting will be available on the AOH Facebook Page. This year’s recipients include Relatives for Justice, Holy Cross Trust (Ardoyne), St. Patrick's Center (Downpatrick), Cairde (Strabane), Belfast National Graves, Down Patriot Graves, EALU (East Tyrone), New Lodge Commemoration Committee, Conway Mill Trust, Tyrone AOH, Bridges Beyond Boxing (Belfast), Green Cross, Omagh Basketball, Omagh Choir, Duchas-Oiriall (South Armagh), Ballymurphy Families Committee, Bloody Sunday Trust (Museum of Free Derry), Tyrone National Graves, The Witness Project - Sean Murray, The Pat Finucane Center. I am accepting donations for the 2020-2021 Christmas Appeal. Please send your FFAI donations to me at: 20 Arlene Ave. Albany, NY 12203. Please include the check payable to: LAOH, Inc**.**, the full name of your State, County, Division making the donation and a contact name with email address. Also, you may designate the donation to any of the groups listed above. Please do not send donations directly to the AOH.

The issues faced by those living in the North of Ireland are evolving faster than we can imagine. Brexit is the main issue of the week as the British Government is pushing legislation which will greatly benefit their new post-Brexit economy yet have a devastating impact on the island of Ireland. Although admitting to violating international law and reneging on the Withdrawal agreement they are pursuing this effort. The Withdrawal agreement which came int effect in January, stipulated that the UK would adhere to some EU rules (food safety, regulations) after Brexit happens, preventing a hard border between the Republic of Ireland and the north of Ireland. This latest bill would be in opposition to that Withdrawal agreement by allowing UK ministers to not apply the EU rules if no trade deal is made with the EU. With the EU regulations not being enforced, the threat of a hard border to protect the interests of the EU is now back in the forefront. Members of the US Congress have publicly opposed this new plan and have said that they will oppose any trade deal with the UK unless they adhere to the Withdrawal agreement.

Our FFAI Committee met in September and discussed how we can improve and increase participation in the FFAI program. We agreed that knowledge and communication is key, and we encourage all of you to ensure that your division, county and state have an FFAI appointee. This appointee can work to provide the membership at each meeting with the knowledge of the issues and progress being made in helping those in the north of Ireland gain the justice, peace, equality and independence they are looking to achieve. I am working with our National Webmaster – Beth Zuczek on updating the FFAI Page <https://ladiesaoh.com/freedom-for-all-ireland/> with updated Christmas Appeal information as well as FFAI news. I will be scheduling the Quarterly meeting with all FFAI State Chairs and any other interested members very soon to hear from all of you and share information. Please send me your email address if you have not already and want to be included in that Zoom meeting. As always, if you have any questions or would like more information please contact me at laohnationalffai@gmail.com. Thank you for all of your support for Freedom For All Ireland. Please like and follow us on Facebook. Go raibh maith agat.