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*Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, Inc.*  
*National Board*  
*Established 1894*

*Office of the National President*  
*Marilyn Madigan*

March 12, 2024

Dear Sisters,

On March 1, we along with six other Irish American Organizations collaborated on the Irish Unity Summit held at the Cooper Union in New York City. What a historic event for Irish America. The LAOH was well represented with members from Delaware, District of Columbia, Connecticut, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Virginia. Special thank you to all those who attended.

I was honored to speak at the Irish Unity Summit. Here is the speech: I am privileged and honored to address you today as the National President of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians. The Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians is the largest Irish Women's organization in the United States. For the past one hundred and thirty years, we have been committed to Ireland and Irish causes. In the Preamble of our Constitution, we state that one of our purposes is to aid and advance by all legitimate means, the aspirations and endeavors of the Irish people to achieve complete and absolute Independence. Today's event is a historic day in the history of Irish America as we gather at this Irish Unity Summit. We will hear about how we can be a part of the journey to a New and United Ireland. There have been conversations about Irish Unity all over the island of Ireland. Now it is our time to be a part of that conversation. Last year, the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians marked the twenty fifth Anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement with the publication *Trasna na nTonnta Across the Waves Women's Reflection on the Good Friday Agreement*. This publication highlighted Women Advocates on both sides of the Atlantic who helped make the Good Friday Agreement possible through their commitment to peace and justice. Today's event will bring many of these women together again to be advocates for Irish Unity.

The leadership of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians have spoken up over the last century for this important goal of a United Ireland. Our early leaders spoke before a Congressional Committee on the Irish question before they even had the right to vote. Today our members continue to speak up. I would like to quote our early leaders and as the current President echo their words. Past President Ellen Ryan Jolly “We are here in liberty’s name. We are here to ask the Congress of the United States to pass a Resolution whose purpose is to permit Ireland, the oldest of the nations, to light the torch of Irish National Independence.” today’s Irish Unity.

The Good Friday Agreement over a hundred years after Jolly spoke before the Congressional Committee provides for what she stated “The resolutions before you provide that self-determination shall be given to the people of Ireland; that they shall finally and for all time decide for themselves the system of government under which they shall live.’ The widespread conviction in America is that the doctrine of self-determination shall be applied to the Irish question. Now the question of Irish Unity. Adelia Christy stated “We ask Mr. Chairman, only for a free Ireland. We ask that in conjunction with all the other small nations, Ireland may be allowed to work out her own development, to look after her own interests and to be governed and directed by a Government of her own people.” That is what we are asking for today that the people on the island of Ireland determines the future of a New and United Ireland.

We will take away from this Irish Unity Summit many ideas of how we as individuals and members of our organizations can take the next steps to make Irish Unity a reality if that is the wishes of the people of Ireland both North and South.

In conclusion again I echo the words of our early leaders “the dreams of the Hibernians of early days may be realized. They dreamed and hoped for an independent Ireland. We shall never hope for less. By Unity, Friendship and Christian Charity we may win that which to the faint hearted may seem impossible, the privilege of celebrating and very soon a St. Patrick’s Day upon the holy soil of an independent and United Ireland.”

While in New York for the Summit, Dolores Desch, Sandi Swift and I also had the opportunity to meet with Gerry Carlile and Niall Murphy. We were privileged to receive the publication Ireland 2030. This is a very exciting and historic time for a New and United Ireland. Please visit [www.irelandsfuture.com](http://www.irelandsfuture.com) and become part of this important journey.