

## Email Template to Politicians on HEA Bill 2022

First, copy and paste your TDs from your constituency, then copy and paste the Senators who are applicable, and finally, copy and paste, and edit accordingly, the template in your email client.

Senators do not have area-based constituencies, but we made a note of the areas where they have been politically active. For example, if you are a student, or from Wexford, you might consider writing to Senator Malcolm Byrne as he was a former USI Vice-President and was a former Wexford TD.

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### TDs

Kathleen Funchion	Carlow-Kilkenny	kathleen.funchion@oireachtas.ie
John McGuinness	Carlow-Kilkenny	john.mcguinness@oireachtas.ie
Malcolm Noonan	Carlow-Kilkenny	malcolm.noonan@oireachtas.ie
Jennifer Murnane O'Connor	Carlow-Kilkenny	jennifer.murnaneoconnor@oireachtas.ie
John Paul Phelan	Carlow-Kilkenny	johnpaul.phelan@oireachtas.ie
Matt Carthy	Cavan-Monaghan	matt.carthy@oireachtas.ie
Heather Humphreys	Cavan-Monaghan	heather.humphreys@oireachtas.ie
Brendan Smith	Cavan-Monaghan	brendan.smith@oireachtas.ie
Niamh Smyth	Cavan-Monaghan	niamh.smyth@oireachtas.ie
Pauline Tully	Cavan-Monaghan	pauline.tully@oireachtas.ie
Joe Carey	Clare	joe.carey@oireachtas.ie
Cathal Crowe	Clare	cathal.crowe@oireachtas.ie
Michael McNamara	Clare	michael.mcnamara@oireachtas.ie
Violet-Anne Wynne	Clare	violet-anne.wynne@oireachtas.ie
Pat Buckley	Cork East	pat.buckley@oireachtas.ie
James O'Connor	Cork East	james.oconnor@oireachtas.ie
Sean Sherlock	Cork East	sean.sherlock@oireachtas.ie
David Stanton	Cork East	david.stanton@oireachtas.ie
Mick Barry	Cork North-Central	mick.barry@oireachtas.ie

Colm Burke	Cork North-Central	colm.burke@oireachtas.ie
Pádraig O'Sullivan	Cork North-Central	padraig.osullivan@oireachtas.ie
Michael Creed	Cork North-West	michael.creed@oireachtas.ie
Aindrias Moynihan	Cork North-West	aindrias.moynihan@oireachtas.ie
Michael Moynihan	Cork North-West	michael.moynihan@oireachtas.ie
Simon Coveney	Cork South-Central	simon.coveney@oireachtas.ie
Micheál Martin	Cork South-Central	micheal.martin@oireachtas.ie
Michael McGrath	Cork South-Central	michael.mcgrath@oireachtas.ie
Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire	Cork South-Central	donnchadh.olaoghaire@oireachtas.ie
Holly Cairns	Cork South-West	holly.cairns@oireachtas.ie
Michael Collins	Cork South-West	michael.collins@oireachtas.ie
Christopher O'Sullivan	Cork South-West	christopher.osullivan@oireachtas.ie
Pearse Doherty	Donegal	pearse.doherty@oireachtas.ie
Pádraig Mac Lochlainn	Donegal	padraig.maclochlainn@oireachtas.ie
Charlie McConalogue	Donegal	charlie.mcconalogue@oireachtas.ie
Joe McHugh	Donegal	joe.mchugh@oireachtas.ie
Thomas Pringle	Donegal	thomas.pringle@oireachtas.ie
Richard Bruton	Dublin Bay North	richard.bruton@oireachtas.ie
Seán Haughey	Dublin Bay North	sean.haughey@oireachtas.ie
Denise Mitchell	Dublin Bay North	denise.mitchell@oireachtas.ie
Aodhán Ó Ríordáin	Dublin Bay North	Aodhan.ORiordain@oireachtas.ie
Cian O'Callaghan	Dublin Bay North	cian.ocallaghan@oireachtas.ie
Chris Andrews	Dublin Bay South	chris.andrews@oireachtas.ie
Ivana Bacik	Dublin Bay South	ivana.bacik@oireachtas.ie
Jim O'Callaghan	Dublin Bay South	jim.ocallaghan@oireachtas.ie

Eamon Ryan	Dublin Bay South	eamon.ryan@oireachtas.ie
Paschal Donohoe	Dublin Central	paschal.donohoe@oireachtas.ie
Gary Gannon	Dublin Central	gary.gannon@oireachtas.ie
Neasa Hourigan	Dublin Central	neasa.hourigan@oireachtas.ie
Mary Lou McDonald	Dublin Central	marylou.mcdonald@oireachtas.ie
Alan Farrell	Dublin Fingal	alan.farrell@oireachtas.ie
Darragh O'Brien	Dublin Fingal	darragh.obrien@oireachtas.ie
Joe O'Brien	Dublin Fingal	joe.obrien@oireachtas.ie
Louise O'Reilly	Dublin Fingal	louise.oreilly@oireachtas.ie
Duncan Smith	Dublin Fingal	duncan.smith@oireachtas.ie
Emer Higgins	Dublin Mid-West	emer.higgins@oireachtas.ie
Gino Kenny	Dublin Mid-West	gino.kenny@oireachtas.ie
Eoin Ó Broin	Dublin Mid-West	eoin.obroin@oireachtas.ie
Mark Ward	Dublin Mid-West	mark.ward@oireachtas.ie
Dessie Ellis	Dublin North-West	dessie.ellis@oireachtas.ie
Paul McAuliffe	Dublin North-West	paul.mcauliffe@oireachtas.ie
Róisín Shortall	Dublin North-West	roisin.shortall@oireachtas.ie
Josepha Madigan	Dublin Rathdown	josepha.madigan@oireachtas.ie
Catherine Martin	Dublin Rathdown	catherine.martin@oireachtas.ie
Neale Richmond	Dublin Rathdown	neale.richmond@oireachtas.ie
Joan Collins	Dublin South-Central	joan.collins@oireachtas.ie
Patrick Costello	Dublin South-Central	patrick.costello@oireachtas.ie
Aengus Ó Snodaigh	Dublin South-Central	aengus.osnodaigh@oireachtas.ie
Brid Smith	Dublin South-Central	brid.smith@oireachtas.ie
Colm Brophy	Dublin South-West	colm.brophy@oireachtas.ie
Seán Crowe	Dublin South-West	sean.crowe@oireachtas.ie
Francis Noel Duffy	Dublin South-West	francisnoel.duffy@oireachtas.ie

John Lahart	Dublin South-West	john.lahart@oireachtas.ie
Paul Murphy	Dublin South-West	paul.murphy@oireachtas.ie
Jack Chambers	Dublin West	jack.chambers@oireachtas.ie
Paul Donnelly	Dublin West	paul.donnelly@oireachtas.ie
Roderic O'Gorman	Dublin West	roderic.ogorman@oireachtas.ie
Leo Varadkar	Dublin West	leo.varadkar@oireachtas.ie
Richard Boyd Barrett	Dún Laoghaire	richard.boydbarrett@oireachtas.ie
Cormac Devlin	Dún Laoghaire	cormac.devlin@oireachtas.ie
Jennifer Carroll MacNeill	Dún Laoghaire	jennifer.carrollmacneill@oireachtas.ie
Ossian Smyth	Dún Laoghaire	ossian.smyth@oireachtas.ie
Seán Canney	Galway East	sean.canney@oireachtas.ie
Ciarán Cannon	Galway East	ciaran.cannon@oireachtas.ie
Anne Rabbitte	Galway East	anne.rabbitte@oireachtas.ie
Catherine Connolly	Galway West	catherine.connolly@oireachtas.ie
Mairéad Farrell	Galway West	mairead.farrell@oireachtas.ie
Noel Grealish	Galway West	noel.grealish@oireachtas.ie
Hildegarde Naughton	Galway West	hildegarde.naughton@oireachtas.ie
Éamon Ó Cuív	Galway West	eamon.ocuiv@oireachtas.ie
Pa Daly	Kerry	pa.daly@oireachtas.ie
Norma Foley	Kerry	norma.foley@oireachtas.ie
Brendan Griffin	Kerry	brendan.griffin@oireachtas.ie
Danny Healy-Rae	Kerry	danny.healy-rae@oireachtas.ie
Michael Healy-Rae	Kerry	michael.healy-rae@oireachtas.ie
Réada Cronin	Kildare North	reada.cronin@oireachtas.ie
Bernard Durkan	Kildare North	bernard.durkan@oireachtas.ie
James Lawless	Kildare North	james.lawless@oireachtas.ie

Catherine Murphy	Kildare North	catherine.murphy@oireachtas.ie
Cathal Berry	Kildare South	cathal.berry@oireachtas.ie
Martin Heydon	Kildare South	martin.heydon@oireachtas.ie
Seán Ó Fearghail	Kildare South	sean.ofearghail@oireachtas.ie
Patricia Ryan	Kildare South	patricia.ryan@oireachtas.ie
Charles Flanagan	Laois	charles.flanagan@oireachtas.ie
Sean Fleming	Laois	sean.fleming@oireachtas.ie
Brian Stanley	Laois	brian.stanley@oireachtas.ie
Brian Leddin	Limerick City	brian.leddin@oireachtas.ie
Willie O'Dea	Limerick City	willie.odea@oireachtas.ie
Kieran O'Donnell	Limerick City	kieran.odonnell@oireachtas.ie
Maurice Quinlivan	Limerick City	maurice.quinlivan@oireachtas.ie
Niall Collins	Limerick County	niall.collins@oireachtas.ie
Richard O'Donoghue	Limerick County	richard.odonoghue@oireachtas.ie
Patrick O'Donovan	Limerick County	patrick.odonovan@oireachtas.ie
Peter Burke	Longford-Westmeath	peter.burke@oireachtas.ie
Sorca Clarke	Longford-Westmeath	sorca.clarke@oireachtas.ie
Joe Flaherty	Longford-Westmeath	joe.flaherty@oireachtas.ie
Robert Troy	Longford-Westmeath	robert.troy@oireachtas.ie
Peter Fitzpatrick	Louth	peterm.fitzpatrick@oireachtas.ie
Imelda Munster	Louth	imelda.munster@oireachtas.ie
Ged Nash	Louth	Gerald.Nash@oireachtas.ie
Ruairí Ó Murchú	Louth	ruairi.omurchu@oireachtas.ie
Fergus O'Dowd	Louth	fergus.odowd@oireachtas.ie
Dara Calleary	Mayo	dara.calleary@oireachtas.ie
Rose Conway-Walsh	Mayo	rose.conwaywalsh@oireachtas.ie
Alan Dillon	Mayo	alan.dillon@oireachtas.ie

Michael Ring	Mayo	michael.ring@oireachtas.ie
Thomas Byrne	Meath East	thomas.byrne@oireachtas.ie
Helen McEntee	Meath East	helen.mcentee@oireachtas.ie
Darren O'Rourke	Meath East	darren.orourke@oireachtas.ie
Damien English	Meath West	damien.english@oireachtas.ie
Johnny Guirke	Meath West	johnny.guirke@oireachtas.ie
Peadar Tóibín	Meath West	peadar.toibin@oireachtas.ie
Barry Cowen	Offaly	barry.cowen@oireachtas.ie
Carol Nolan	Offaly	carol.nolan@oireachtas.ie
Michael Fitzmaurice	Roscommon-Galway	michael.fitzmaurice@oireachtas.ie
Claire Kerrane	Roscommon-Galway	claire.kerrane@oireachtas.ie
Denis Naughten	Roscommon-Galway	denis.naughten@oireachtas.ie
Frankie Feighan	Sligo-Leitrim	frank.feighan@oireachtas.ie
Marian Harkin	Sligo-Leitrim	marian.harkin@oireachtas.ie
Martin Kenny	Sligo-Leitrim	martin.kenny@oireachtas.ie
Marc MacSharry	Sligo-Leitrim	marc.macsharry@oireachtas.ie
Martin Browne	Tipperary	martin.browne@oireachtas.ie
Jackie Cahill	Tipperary	jackie.cahill@oireachtas.ie
Alan Kelly	Tipperary	alan.kelly@oireachtas.ie
Michael Lowry	Tipperary	michael.lowry@oireachtas.ie
Mattie McGrath	Tipperary	mattie.mcgrath@oireachtas.ie
Mary Butler	Waterford	mary.butler@oireachtas.ie
David Cullinane	Waterford	david.cullinane@oireachtas.ie
Marc Ó Cathasaigh	Waterford	marc.ocathasaigh@oireachtas.ie
Matt Shanahan	Waterford	matt.shanahan@oireachtas.ie
James Browne	Wexford	james.browne@oireachtas.ie
Brendan Howlin	Wexford	brendan.howlin@oireachtas.ie

Paul Kehoe	Wexford	paul.kehoe@oireachtas.ie
Verona Murphy	Wexford	verona.murphy@oireachtas.ie
Johnny Mythen	Wexford	johnny.mythen@oireachtas.ie
John Brady	Wicklow	John.brady@oireachtas.ie
Stephen Donnelly	Wicklow	stephen.donnelly@oireachtas.ie
Thomas Gould	Wicklow	thomas.gould@oireachtas.ie
Simon Harris	Wicklow	simon.harris@oireachtas.ie
Steven Matthews	Wicklow	steven.matthews@oireachtas.ie
Jennifer Whitmore	Wicklow	jennifer.whitmore@oireachtas.ie

### **Senators**

Garret Ahearn	Former Tipperary Councillor	garret.ahearn@oireachtas.ie
Catherine Ardagh	Formerly ran for Dublin South-Central TD	catherine.ardagh@oireachtas.ie
Frances Black	From Dublin	frances.black@oireachtas.ie
Niall Blaney	Former TD for Donegal North-East	niall.blaney@oireachtas.ie
Victor Boyhan	Former member of Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown County Council	victor.boyhan@oireachtas.ie
Lynn Boylan	Former MEP for Dublin	lynn.boylan@oireachtas.ie
Paddy Burke	Former member of Mayo County Council	paddy.burke@oireachtas.ie
Jerry Buttimer	Former TD for Cork South-Central	jerry.buttimer@oireachtas.ie
Malcolm Byrne	Former member of Wexford County Council, former TD for Wexford, former USI Vice-President	malcolm.byrne@oireachtas.ie
Maria Byrne	Former member of member of Limerick City and County Council	maria.byrne@oireachtas.ie
Micheál Carrigy	Formerly ran for Longford–Westmeath TD	micheal.carrigy@oireachtas.ie
Pat Casey	Former chairman of Wicklow County Council	pat.casey@oireachtas.ie
Shane Cassells	Former Wicklow TD	shane.cassells@oireachtas.ie
Lisa Chambers	Former Mayo TD	lisa.chambers@oireachtas.ie

Lorraine Clifford-Lee	Formerly ran for Dublin Fingal TD	lorraine.cliffordlee@oireachtas.ie
Tom Clonan	Trinity Senator	tom.clonan@oireachtas.ie
Martin Conway	Former member of Clare County Council	martin.conway@oireachtas.ie
Gerard P. Craughwell	Went to Limerick for College	gerard.craughwell@oireachtas.ie
Ollie Crowe	Formerly ran for Galway West TD	ollie.crowe@oireachtas.ie
John Cummins	Formerly ran for Waterford TD	john.cummins@oireachtas.ie
Emer Currie	Former member of Fingal County Council	emer.currie@oireachtas.ie
Mark Daly	From Kerry	mark.daly@oireachtas.ie
Paul Daly	Former member of Westmeath County Council	paul.daly@oireachtas.ie
Aidan Davitt	Former member of Westmeath County Council	aidan.davitt@oireachtas.ie
Regina Doherty	Former Meath East TD	regina.doherty@oireachtas.ie
Aisling Dolan	Formerly ran for Roscommon–Galway TD, Former member of Galway County Council	aisling.dolan@oireachtas.ie
Niall Ó Donnghaile	Belfast	niall.odonnghaile@oireachtas.ie
Timmy Dooley	Former Clare TD	timmy.dooley@oireachtas.ie
Mary Fitzpatrick	Former member of Dublin City Council	mary.fitzpatrick@oireachtas.ie
Eileen Flynn	Dublin	eileen.flynn@oireachtas.ie
Robbie Gallagher	Former member of Monaghan County Council	robbie.gallagher@oireachtas.ie
Róisín Garvey	Formerly ran for Clare TD	roisin.garvey@oireachtas.ie
Paul Gavan	From Limerick	paul.gavan@oireachtas.ie
Pippa Hackett	Formerly ran for Laois–Offaly TD	Pippa.Hackett@oireachtas.ie
Alice Mary Higgins	NUI Senator	alicemary.higgins@oireachtas.ie
Annie Hoey	Former USI President, formerly ran for Meath East TD and was formerly member of Meath County Council	annie.hoey@oireachtas.ie
Gerry Horkan	Former member of Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown County	gerry.horkan@oireachtas.ie



	Council	
Mary Seary Kearney	Former member of South Dublin County Council	mary.seerykearney@oireachtas.ie
Sharon Keogan	Former member of Meath County Council	sharon.keogan@oireachtas.ie
Seán Kyne	Former Galway West TD	sean.kyne@oireachtas.ie
Tim Lombard	Former Cork County Council member	tim.lombard@oireachtas.ie
Vincent P. Martin	Former member of Kildare County Council	vincentp.martin@oireachtas.ie
Michael McDowell	NUI Senator	michael.mcdowell@oireachtas.ie
John McGahon	Formerly ran for Louth TD	john.mcgahon@oireachtas.ie
Erin McGreehan	Former member of Louth County Council	erin.mcgreehan@oireachtas.ie
Rebecca Moynihan	Formerly ran for Dublin South-Central TD	rebecca.moynihan@oireachtas.ie
Rónán Mullen	NUI Senator	ronan.mullen@oireachtas.ie
Eugene Murphy	Former Roscommon-Galway TD	eugene.murphy@oireachtas.ie
David Norris	Trinity Senator	david.norris@oireachtas.ie
Denis O'Donovan	Former Cork South-West TD	denis.odonovan@oireachtas.ie
Fiona O'Loughlin	Former Kildare South TD	fiona.oloughlin@oireachtas.ie
Joe O'Reilly	Former Cavan–Monaghan TD	joe.oreilly@oireachtas.ie
Pauline O'Reilly	Formerly ran for Galway West TD	pauline.oreilly@oireachtas.ie
Ned O'Sullivan	Former member of Kerry County Council	ned.osullivan@oireachtas.ie
Lynn Ruane	Trinity Senator	lynn.ruane@oireachtas.ie
Marie Sherlock	Former member of Dublin City Council	marie.sherlock@oireachtas.ie
Mark Wall	Formerly ran for Kildare South TD	mark.wall@oireachtas.ie
Barry Ward	Formerly ran for Dún Laoghaire TD	barry.ward@oireachtas.ie
Fintan Warfield	Sinn Féin Seanad Spokesperson on Youth affairs, LGBT rights and the Arts.	fintan.warfield@oireachtas.ie
Diarmuid Wilson	Former member of Cavan County Council	diarmuid.wilson@oireachtas.ie

## Template

Dear [TD]/[SENATOR],

I am writing to bring to your attention as a [student/staff/parent/etc.] in the higher-level institution [name] my grave concerns surrounding Minister Harris' new plan for the future of academia.

I believe the plan of the government for third-level education is abysmal. Firstly, there is no commitment to reducing the student fees. Secondly, the funding is less than half of what our universities need. Thirdly, the plan comes with strings attached through the HEA Bill 2022, which is essentially a government takeover to control academia.

Not only does the plan not include a reduction in the student fees, the state is taking over academia. In the 144-page bill, the "Minister" is mentioned 373 times. He holds sway over universities' equality policy. The same cabinet that is gifting away the National Maternity Hospital to the church will now hold this power. He and the Board that he appoints and the CEO of the HEA approves the budget and development framework of universities, unilaterally sets policies, guidelines and codes, and can impose serious penalties, for which no independent appeals board exists. The same neoliberal government that has decimated funding for our universities will now be able to control its finances. He will handpick people on governing bodies of universities. The same academic voices who are now dissenting will be finally muzzled, as a bigger share of state-appointed, external members and university leaders with corporate leanings on governing bodies take power. There will be a subsequent shrinking of internal members, trade union and student representatives, [without even a guarantee of representation for academic and professional staff](#).

Students4Change and the Graduate Students' Union of Trinity lodged an FOI request to Minister Harris' Office as they felt that there was not appropriate stakeholder consultation across their College, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The bill has numerous detractors. The [23 documents we received](#) include UCC and Maynooth calling the bill a "command and control" over universities, the IUA saying that aspects of the bill do not "accord with natural justice and will prove unworkable", and universities raising concerns that state control will lead to reduced EU funding.

As raised by University College Cork, the HEA Bill 2022 under EU rules might reduce the overall capacity of the state to borrow, resulting in a weaker financial position for universities, if Eurostat assesses the proposed restrictions amounts to government control. This risk has been recognized by the Department of Further Education itself, as revealed by another [FOI](#).

The way our institutions are run is a crisis that the government themselves have created, and are now stepping in as saviours to fix it, with the promise of guarding taxpayer money. They will not. They will further push their disastrous economic policy of corporatization, with the ideology of the private sector.

Students and staff on the ground will be the most affected. The government promised no student loan system, but they cannot be trusted. They are playing the long game. Now that they will control academia, their policies cannot be stopped. We will be pushed to precarity.

In line with government policy, there is not a single mention of mental health funding within the plan. Who controls the money will control the policy. Small courses will be cut. Programmes will be merged. Academics will lose their jobs. The bill lays out a dark future for academia in Ireland, akin to the situation in the U.K.

I would, therefore, like to ask you to **oppose this bill**, support the **amendments by Students4Change and the Graduate Students' Union** [here](#), and to **demand to save the future of higher education in Ireland**. Please see a **detailed briefing on the issue** [here](#). Senators across the board are united in opposing this bill, and there is also a lot of opposition to this bill coming from across the sector, but we need to put this into the national discourse. I implore you to spread awareness of this issue wherever you can, because it is nothing more than a government takeover of academia, a centralising of power in the hands of the HEA nationally, and a centralising of power in the hands of bureaucracy within universities as governing bodies will be shrunk and trade union, staff and student input into our institutions reduced.

In addition to the briefing document, please find more resources below.

[49-page detailed research paper on the HEA Bill 2022 by two Trinity students](#)  
[Why should you care about the HEA Bill 2022?](#)  
[DFHERIS Officials Admit HEA Bill 2022 Has No Guarantees for Trade Union, Academic Staff and Democratic Student Representation. FOI Reveals](#)  
[Universities Act 1997 vs HEA Bill 2022 Governing Body Composition](#)  
[Powers of the Minister HEA Bill 2022](#)  
[Powers of the Minister HEA Bill 2022 \(diagram\)](#)  
[Myth vs Truth - HEA Bill 2022 \(debunking misconceptions\)](#)  
[Students' Union Autonomy and the HEA Bill 2022](#)  
[Explanatory video - why is the HEA Bill 2022 problematic?](#)  
[Shorter 6-point briefing document re. HEA Bill 2022](#)  
[HEA Act 1971 vs HEA Bill 2022 HEA Board composition](#)  
[Recent open letter of S4C, GSU, TCDSU, NCADSU and NUIGSU](#)  
[Stop HEA Bill 2022 Campaign Page](#)

I would like to ask you to support the abolition of student fees, adequate funding for higher-education and protection of democracy and our universities' autonomy. We need to stand up and make our voices heard and warn people of the impending catastrophe that will affect third-level education in Ireland for decades to come should this bill pass.

Thank you for your time and awaiting your response,

[Signature]