

24 June 2024

Denis Naughten TD

Chair of the Oireachtas Committee on Social Protection, Community and Rural Development and the Islands

By email only

Re: Pre-Legislative Scrutiny of the Bereaved Partner's Contributory Pension Bill 2024.

Dear Deputy Naughten,

I am writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the Oireachtas Committee on Social Protection, Community and Rural Development and the Islands. I wish to express FLAC's desire to engage with the Pre-Legislative Scrutiny of the Bereaved Partner's Contributory Pension Bill 2024.

The purpose of the 2024 Bill is to give effect to the decision of the Supreme Court in *O'Meara v Minister for Social Protection* [2024] IESC 1. FLAC acted for the O'Meara family in those proceedings and we have a particular expertise in the areas of social welfare and family law. FLAC's Independent Law Centre undertakes public interest cases and casework arising from our dedicated legal services such as the Roma Legal Clinic. Social welfare is an area where we frequently provide representation.

FLAC's Telephone Information & Referral Line and Legal Advice Clinics provide thousands of people with family law information and advice each year. Since January this year, FLAC has been contacted by a significant number of families seeking information and advice on their welfare rights in light of the *O'Meara* decision.

We understand that a General Scheme of the 2024 Bill will be provided to the Committee and that it is hoped to complete pre-legislative scrutiny before the summer Dáil recess. We are eager to be part of the Pre-Legislative Scrutiny process. In particular, we would ask for sight of the General Scheme to allow us to analyse it and, if necessary, make a submission to the Committee in relation to its contents.

We trust this is in order and we look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Eilis Barry
FLAC Chief Executive

CC (by email only): Caoimhe O'Rourke, Clerk to the Committee.