

19 October 2007

Kennedy: New passport legislation will bring greater sense of security

NEW PASSPORT legislation currently before the Houses of the Oireachtas will not only bring tighter controls on the issuance of passports but also increase public confidence in Ireland's passport security, Deputy Michael Kennedy stated yesterday (October 18, 2007) in the Dail chamber.

Deputy Kennedy said: "The Passports Bill aims to bring all existing laws relating to passports under the umbrella of one piece of legislation. The Bill sets out all of the offences relating to passports and includes the provision of bio-metric passports which were introduced for the first time in October 2006."

"Unfortunately, the events of the last decade have forced the Government and the citizens of this state to concentrate their concerns on the effectiveness of existing passport legislation and equally, on the effectiveness of our passports."

"As such, the Government is now aiming to tighten control of passports, and the new bill lists the various offences relating to passports, including the use of someone else's passport to obtain alcohol or enter a licensed premises."

"It's my view that a passport is one of the most important possessions that an Irish person can own. Not only does it define our identity, it gives us a power beyond what we could ever imagine having 20 or 30 years ago. In this enlarged Europe, to be a holder of an Irish passport holds enormous value, and as such I warmly welcome any proposals to strengthen passport security," Deputy Kennedy concluded.