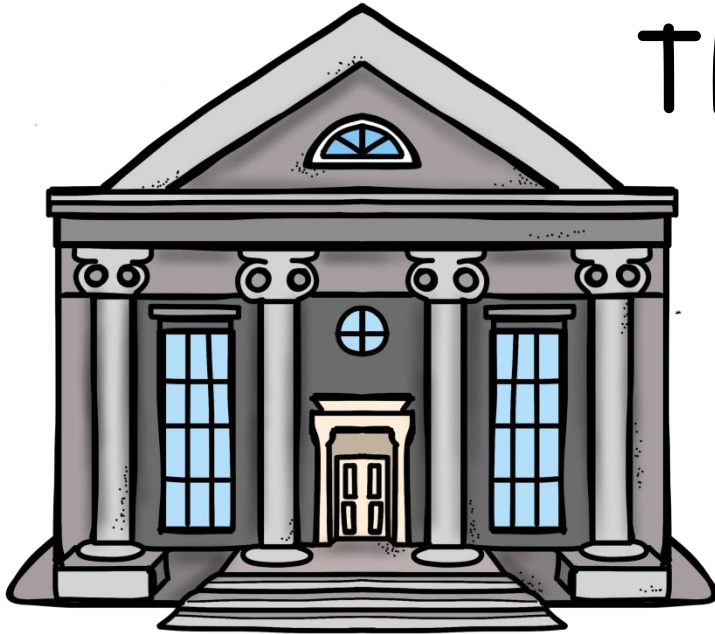


Blasphemy Referendum 2018

The Irish government
is to hold a
referendum on
October 26th 2018 to
remove the
reference to
blasphemy from the
Irish Constitution.

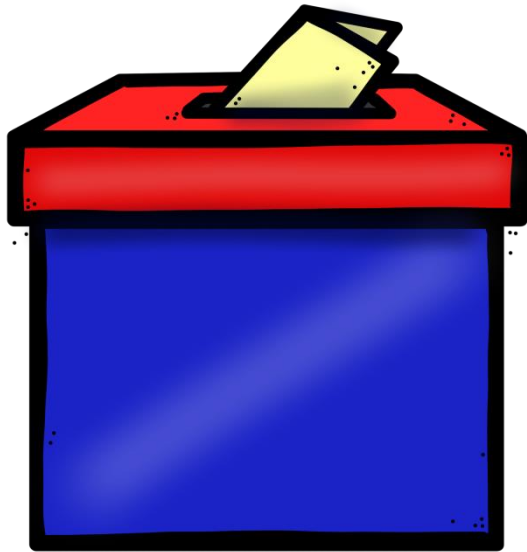


Government



The system of
rule in a
country or
state.

Referendum



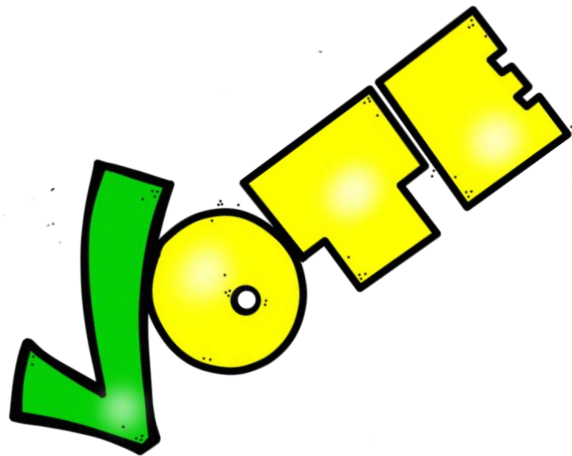
A vote of the citizens in a country, necessary to change something in the Constitution.

Constitution

A system of principles according to which a state/nation is ruled. These are usually written in a document called the Constitution.



Constitution



The Constitution
can only be
altered by
citizens in a
Referendum.

Blasphemy

To publish or say something which is abusive or insulting about any religion or something held sacred by a group of followers of that religion.

Blasphemy in the Irish Constitution

The Irish Constitution says that citizens have the right to freely express their opinions. However, there are some restrictions to this right.

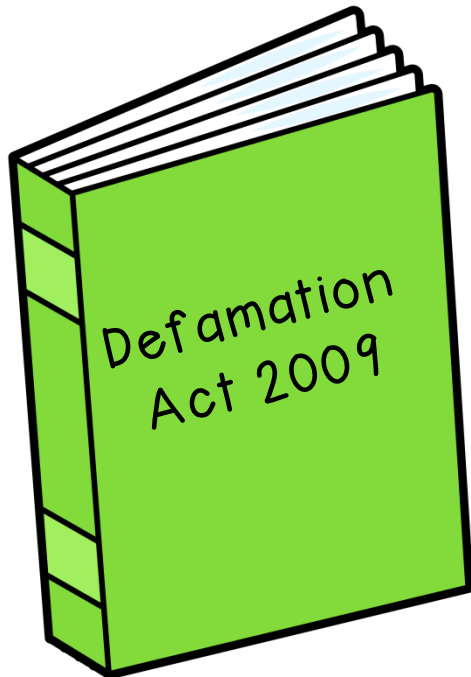


Blasphemy in the Irish Constitution

The Irish Constitution says that the “publication or utterance” of something blasphemous must be a criminal offence.



Legal Position of Blasphemy



The Irish Constitution does not define “blasphemy” but the legal definition of blasphemy is contained in the Defamation Act 2009.

Defamation Act 2009

This act says that a person publishes or utters something blasphemous if they:

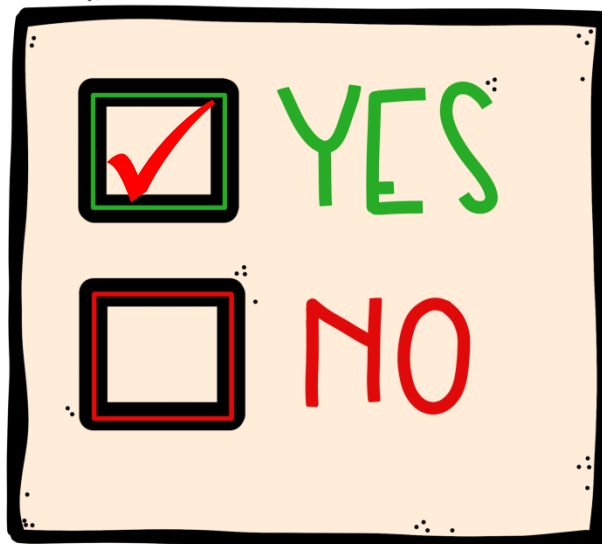
- * publish or say something that is grossly abusive or insulting in relation to matters held sacred by any religion, thereby causing outrage to followers of that religion
- * intend to cause that outrage

Punishment for Blasphemy

At present, Blasphemy is a criminal offence. There is no prison sentence for this offence, but a person convicted of the offence may be fined up to €25,000.



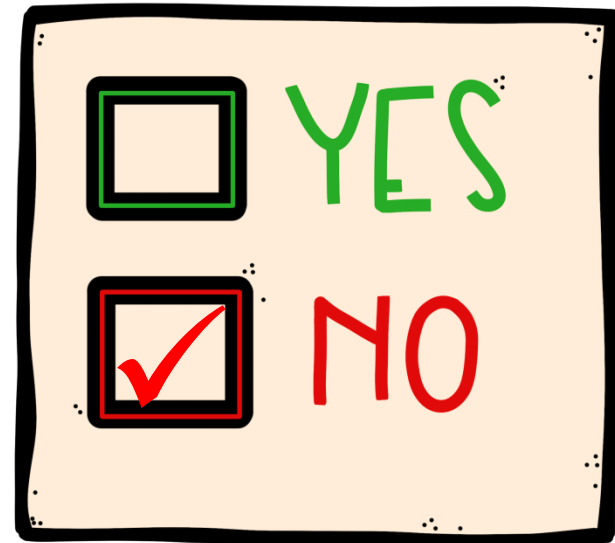
If the Public Vote Yes



If a majority of citizens vote "Yes" in this referendum, then blasphemy will be removed from the Constitution and it will no longer be a criminal offence.

If the Public Vote No

If a majority of citizens vote "No" in this referendum, then the Constitution will remain unchanged and blasphemy will remain a criminal offence.



Some Facts on Blasphemy

- No-one has ever been prosecuted for blasphemy in Ireland
- Spain and Switzerland currently also allow for fines for the offence of blasphemy
- Some countries impose a prison sentence for the offence of blasphemy
- A few countries even have lashings or the death penalty for the offence of blasphemy

What Do You Think?

- Should blasphemy be a criminal offence?
- Should the punishment for blasphemy be more strict?
- Should citizens be allowed to say what they want about any religion?
- Is blasphemy an old-fashioned concept that needs to be removed from the Constitution?

What Do You Think?

- Do citizens need to vote in a referendum on blasphemy? Should the government not just make the laws?
- Why do we need a law that no-one has even been prosecuted for?
- Should all mention of religion be removed from the Constitution?
- How would you vote in this referendum?

Resources used in this file from:



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