

Bill No 3**Explanatory Memorandum**

The Severance Fund was established under Statute Chapter XVI of 2003, to enable financial settlements to be made to clergy agreeing to withdraw permanently from stipendiary ministry following a process of mediation through the Provincial Mediation Panels established under Statute Chapter VI of 2001. Funding was by means of a diocesan levy.

The Fund was not accessed for the first several years of its existence and consequently, from 2008 to the present, no levy has been collected, with a balance in excess of €500,000 currently remaining in the Fund.

In light of the lack of use of the Fund through the Provincial Mediation Panels system, the Representative Body in 2008 amended the Fund Regulations to introduce an alternative route whereby the Fund could be accessed in response to an individual recommendation from an archbishop or bishop relating to permanent cessation from the stipendiary ministry. In 2012 the Statute Chapter VI of 2001 was substantially repealed and the Provincial Mediation Panels disbanded. Consequently at present the only route to accessing the Fund is by a recommendation from an archbishop or bishop under the provisions of the Fund Regulations as amended.

The Bill seeks to broaden the scope of circumstances in which the Severance Fund may be accessed, to include provision for cases of permanent incapacity on medical grounds by amending the Statute Chapter XVI of 2003 to rename the Fund the 'Clergy and Ministry Protection Fund'. The provisions of this Bill may be considered as complementary to the provisions of Bill No 2 and to the policy and procedure being developed in the area of long-term clergy illness under the provisions of Bill No 1.

THE BISHOP OF DERRY AND RAPHOE
MR KEVIN BOWERS

(At the Request of the Standing Committee and the Representative Church Body)

BILL

To amend Chapter XVI of 2003

WHEREAS in Chapter XVI of 2003, the General Synod made provision for the establishment of a Severance Fund for clergy;

AND WHEREAS it is desirable to extend the circumstances in which the said Fund can be accessed to include provision for clergy forced from ministry by illness;

AND WHEREAS for these purposes it is desirable to rename the said Fund “The Clergy and Ministry Protection Fund”;

AND WHEREAS for these purposes it is necessary to amend Chapter XVI of 2003.

BE IT ENACTED by the Archbishops and Bishops and Clergy and Laity of the Church of Ireland, in General Synod assembled in Armagh in the year 2015, and by the authority of the same as follows:

1. In this Statute, ‘Chapter XVI’ means the Statute of the General Synod, Chapter XVI of 2003 as amended.
2. In Chapter XVI, the term “The Clergy and Ministry Protection Fund” shall be substituted for “The Severance Fund” wherever it occurs.
3. In Chapter XVI after section 5, the following sections shall be inserted:

5A Regulations may be made by the Representative Church Body concerning the use of the Clergy and Ministry Protection Fund.

5B Any regulations made by the Representative Church Body under section 5A of this statute, and any amendments thereto, shall be laid on the table of the General Synod on the first day of its session next after the making of such regulations or amendments.

4. Nothing in this Statute shall invalidate or affect any action taken or thing heretofore done or any right or liability heretofore acquired or incurred under Chapter XVI prior to this amendment.