



UCD Constitutional Studies Group
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A Guide to the referendum on the 35th Amendment to the Constitution

What is the referendum about?

On 22 May 2015, voters will be asked to approve or reject the Thirty-fifth Amendment of the Constitution (Age of Eligibility for Election to the Office of President) Bill 2015, which proposes to lower the age at which a citizen may seek election to the office of President of Ireland.

What is the current constitutional position?

At present a citizen must be aged 35 or older to seek election to the presidency (Article 12.4.1°).

What will change if the referendum is passed?

If the amendment is passed, the Constitution would provide that citizens aged 21 years or older may seek election to the office of President.

If voters accept the proposed amendment by voting yes, the following sentence will be inserted in the Constitution: "Every citizen who has reached the age of twenty-one years is eligible for election to the office of President."

What will not change if the referendum is passed?

The constitutional position, powers or functions of the presidency would not be changed if the amendment is accepted by the People.

The amendment, if made, will not change the requirement that to be a candidate for election as President a person (other than an outgoing or former President) must have been nominated by at least twenty members of the Houses of the Oireachtas or by the councils of at least four counties or county boroughs.

The proposal relates solely to the minimum age at which a person may be President.

The voting age of 18 years is also unaffected by this proposal.