



Email to All Oireacthas Members:
27th October 2015

Re: School Transport

A Chara,

I seek your support on behalf of small to medium, mostly family owned, bus and coach operations across Ireland in their dealings with the State Company, Bus Éireann.

These small to medium, mostly family owned enterprises are subjected to and forced into a most unfair, non-transparent and one sided contract arrangement by this State Company if they wish to remain in business.

Each year Bus Éireann places the School Transport contracts of small to medium, mostly family owned businesses, out to tender, please note, **none of the Bus Éireann contracts are put out to Tender**. Bus Éireann has created and presides over a reign of terror for the last 10 to 15 years through their position of power and their own "brand" of competition designed to only drive down the price of the segment they have chosen, the private operator piece, to now below economical and dangerously low prices where the lives of children are at risk.

I copy here extracts from narratives received 28th October 2015 from two small to medium operators and these show the level of stress and anxiety being experienced.

Letter 1.

"Thanks John, we got your email this morning and it's nice to see somebody is behind us in connection with the tendering of contracts. It is and has been so stressful for mam and I, we don't know whether were coming or going, were still on temporary contract we were told at the end of August we would have a temporary contract till midterm break it's looking like Christmas now, it's so unfair and so stressful it has affected us very badly. Financially I have dropped €100 a day, I had to go on interest only with my mortgage because I don't have permanent contract".

Letter 2.

I have been contracted by Bus Eireann since 1983 providing transport to a special needs school in.<address with FOTO>. Last year my run came up for tender and I lost it because of price, as I was totally dependent on this work for my income I had to try and get it back. Through the help of my lawyer and advice from yourself, Bus Eireann rang me two days before school opened and asked if I was still interested and how much I would do it for. They told me the operator that they had got was coming in at €80 a day less than me so I would have to drop my price, I did that by €30 and got the contract for five years. This year five other operators in this school

Continued overleaf

Embassy Office Park, Kill, Co Kildare
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came up for tender and four of them lost their runs. these special needs runs should not be put up for tender like other primary and post-primary runs, they are completely different in so far as these special children need to know the driver and build a trust with them. Any change in this causes upset for these children, their parents and the school. There is extra work involved in these runs which is not stated in the tender and it was on this point that I fought my case last year.

If the price keeps dropping on this work operators will have to drop standards and cut corners to keep going this will end up where we have a bad service for our most important people (our children). This work is not the same as making a road or transporting freight and in my opinion should not be down to price but given on experience and quality of service.

FOTO has called for the appointment of an oversight/appeals body to this tendering system; FOTO will insist on its nominee to this body. It should not be acceptable that the tendering process as exists at present is wholly controlled by a contractor also tendering for contracts within this school transport scheme. It should not be acceptable that this tendering process is overseen by persons known personally and accessible to individual applicants. It is not acceptable where it seems that legitimate representation by small to medium, mostly family owned, business enterprises are penalised through this process of tendering by this State Company.

These small to medium, mostly family owned businesses require urgently the protection of this appeals and oversight body. They require the anonymous protection of their interests that the FOTO representation can provide for them on this oversight/appeals body. We respectfully seek your support and promotion for the formation and appointment of this oversight and appeals body.

Yours Sincerely



John Dunne
Director
Federation of Transport Operators (FOTO)

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