# Stormont Executive faces backlash over legislative failures



The Stormont Executive faces an intense backlash for its glaring inadequacies in fulfilling legislative commitments, with opposition leaders unearthing significant delays in the introduction of promised bills. Following a progress report released in May 2024, accountability is in high demand as it had set a deadline for all bills by the end of that year. Yet, according to Matthew O’Toole, the opposition leader, a worrying trend has emerged: only slightly more than half of the pledged legislation has made its way to the Assembly.

O’Toole did not mince his words, criticising the Executive for indulging in “sham fights and empty motions” instead of prioritising substantial legislative work. He lamented how the Assembly’s discussions have been hijacked by meaningless proceedings from the ruling parties, a distraction from their evident failure to deliver on legislative promises. The current quarrels, particularly the farcical conflict between Sinn Féin and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) regarding Irish language signage at Grand Central Station, only serve to divert attention from the dire need for legislative action.

In a statement steeped in concern, O’Toole pronounced, "Mere hours on from the final Assembly sitting before the Easter recess, the Executive has slipped out a statement admitting that they have again failed to deliver on a legislative programme originally promised for 2024 – and it was light then." He stressed that stalled legislation undermines the potential for real improvements in the lives of Northern Ireland’s citizens, pointing out, "what this actually means is that they have failed to introduce measures to uplift our communities on the timeline they themselves set."

Alliance MLA Paula Bradshaw, who chairs the Stormont Executive Committee scrutinising the Executive Office’s performance, echoed O’Toole's urgent calls for accountability. "We can see clearly now that more than a year on from restoration, and with promises made of an ‘ambitious’ legislative programme to be brought forward, still more than half of the Bills proposed have not been introduced well into 2025," she stated, pinpointing the bureaucratic sluggishness and inefficiencies plaguing the Executive. Critically, she asserted that the responsibility falls squarely on the shoulders of the First Minister and deputy First Minister. Once again, she spotlighted the pressing need for reform, stating, "It is yet another area where the case for reform of the institutions is clear."

As the political landscape shifts markedly, the escalating criticisms directed at the Stormont Executive illuminate serious questions about its competence and ability to act on behalf of the people of Northern Ireland. This grim scenario highlights the urgent need for a transformation in governance and legislative efficiency, further fuelling the demand for a genuinely reformist approach in Northern Irish politics.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://factcheckni.org/articles/stormont-has-half-the-legislation-planned-for-northern-ireland-this-year-failed-to-appear/> - This article provides evidence that only a fraction of the promised legislation has reached the Northern Ireland Assembly in 2024, as outlined by the First Minister and deputy First Minister. It highlights that nearly two-thirds of the planned bills did not progress as expected.
* <https://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/official-reports/written-ministerial-statements/2022---2027/the-executive-legislation-programme-2024.pdf> - This document details the Executive's legislation program for 2024, outlining the bills intended for introduction during that year. It reflects the challenges faced in fulfilling the legislative agenda.
* <https://www.niassembly.gov.uk/> - The Northern Ireland Assembly's official website provides resources and information on its proceedings, including legislative progress and debates related to the Stormont Executive's performance.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/northern-ireland> - BBC News coverage of Northern Ireland offers analysis and updates on political developments, including the performance of the Stormont Executive and reactions to legislative delays.
* <https://www.thespectator.co.uk/> - The Spectator provides political commentary and analysis that can include perspectives on the governance issues and reforms within Northern Ireland, offering insights into the context of the Stormont Executive's challenges.