

STATES OF JERSEY



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE STATES: REVIEW

Lodged au Greffe on 28th April 2009
by the Deputy of St. John

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

to request the Privileges and Procedures Committee to review the Code of Conduct for Elected Members of the States and the sanctions available for breaches of the Code and put forward measures to ensure that States Members maintain acceptable standards of behaviour when undertaking their public duties.

DEPUTY OF ST. JOHN

REPORT

In recent months we have seen several members detained or arrested for various offences, yet in some cases the member has pleaded guilty to an offence, yet within our current Code of Conduct there is nothing to prevent these members who have pleaded guilty from putting questions to the Law Officers or bringing changes to the Law under which he or she has been charged prior to the case being heard by the Courts.

This cannot be right, a member of the public cannot ask H.M. Attorney General or H.M. Solicitor General questions on issues to do with charges/offences to which they have pleaded guilty, nor should a States Member be permitted to do so.

Further to this, the members should have respect for each other within the Chamber, no matter what views each may hold; likewise we are seeing members using the Internet more and more as a way of expressing their views of elected and non-elected members, and this can be hurtful, not only to the person on the receiving end, but also to their family.

If this is adopted by the members, I would hope that a robust Code of Conduct will be brought back to the Assembly by the Privileges and Procedures Committee with sanctions fit for purpose including, if necessary, suspension of a member for considerably longer than at present, also a monetary penalty of removal of wages over the suspension period: that might change members' ideas about their actions.

Financial and manpower implications

There are no significant financial or manpower implications arising from this proposition other than the time that will be needed to draft the amendments to Standing Orders in relation to the Code.