

STATES OF JERSEY



STANDING ORDERS: MINIMUM LODGING PERIODS – REVISION

Lodged au Greffe on 23rd December 2010
by Senator P.F. Routier

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

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

- (a) to agree that the current 2 week minimum lodging period for the following categories of propositions should be increased to a minimum lodging period of 4 weeks –
 - (i) a proposition for the appointment of any person to any tribunal or to any public body or office;
 - (ii) a draft legislative Act or draft standing orders;
 - (iii) any proposition lodged by a member of the States in his or her own right and to which a 6 week lodging period does not already apply;
- (b) to request the Privileges and Procedures Committee to bring forward for approval the necessary amendments to Standing Orders to give effect to the proposal.

SENATOR P. F. ROUTIER

REPORT

This proposition is brought forward because I have received a number of comments from members regarding the need to manage our States Assembly debating workload in a more orderly manner.

Members will be aware that the current 2 week minimum lodging period before a debate takes place gives very little time for other members to prepare for the debate and even lodge amendments and then for the remaining members to consider the consequences of the main proposition and any amendments.

Members will also be aware that there are times when Ministers are due to provide comments on propositions and that those comments are received just before a debate and sometimes on the day of a debate. This does not give sufficient time for all members to carefully consider the comments prior to any debate. I am aware that when a proposition is lodged and a proposer asks for a 2 week debate date that there can be great difficulty for Ministers and Departments to research and formulate an appropriate comment and for it to be considered on the Council of Ministers agenda, which is held on the Thursday before a States sitting. Sometimes when a draft comment is discussed at the Council of Ministers, further work is required before the final comment is ready to be lodged. This can result in comments only being available just before a debate.

Members will be aware that Standing Order 26(7) states *“The States may reduce a minimum lodging period if they are of the opinion that the proposition relates to a matter of urgency and importance that it would be prejudicial to Jersey to delay its debate”*. It is of course important to retain that standing order.

I believe it is also important to retain the 2 week lodging period for matters covered under Standing Order 26(3)(b) dismissal of a Minister, (c) votes of no confidence, (d) censure and (e) suspension. These matters should all be dealt with as a priority.

I suggest to members that this proposition if adopted will give all members an opportunity to review and consider all the amendments and comments in a timely manner.

Financial and Manpower implications

There are no direct financial and manpower implications however a longer lodging period will enable Departments to plan their workloads in a more effective way and could avoid the need for officers to work over the weekend before a States sitting week.