

# STATES OF JERSEY



## ELECTED MEMBERS' ACCESS TO INFORMATION: MEDIA RELEASES

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Lodged au Greffe on 14th February 2011  
by Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of St. Helier

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STATES GREFFE

## **PROPOSITION**

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

to request the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers to ensure that all information to be sent to the media is first sent to elected members at least one hour prior to the media release being made, wherever it is possible to do so.

DEPUTY P.V.F. LE CLAIRE OF ST. HELIER

## **REPORT**

The purpose of this proposition is to ensure that as far as possible, all of the information that is sent to the media electronically is also sent to all States Members, with a protocol of States members being sent these press releases at least one hour in advance of the media receiving them, whenever that is possible to do so, in order that members can be as informed as possible. There may be times when small organisations or sub-groups such as schools, etc. don't manage to include everyone, but that is better than at present, where much of what we see and hear first is via the media. It is acceptable for there to be exceptions and in any event much of what is sent by small groups need not necessarily be of interest to all members. Major policy changes and announcements however should always be sent to members first, wherever that is feasible. Media press releases often include background to the press releases which should also be included. I do not believe it is necessary for us all to receive everything all of the time and not always one hour before the media. I do believe however that an understanding should exist within the States that elected representatives should be treated with some courtesy and consideration in this regard. It is often backbenchers that are contacted for their views by the media to give a balance to the reporting. This can be extremely difficult, especially when the reporter first has to explain what has already been decided or what has already happened.

I believe with the States Communications Department running now for several years, with its role expanding to include briefing departments on how, when and where to send media communications, it is only a matter of process and protocol that States members have sight of what the Executive is doing from them first, without having to rely upon the local media itself for that information, which may be edited or released at a later date than desired and in some instances perhaps not picked up at all.

### **Financial and manpower implications**

There are none. The States Communications Department is funded to do this and any work that they do or advise others on. Should it turn out that it is too difficult to achieve or problematic to co-ordinate, that in itself will be a failing of the Communications Department in my view. I believe they are professional enough to adapt and enact this if members support this proposal.