

STATES OF JERSEY



CHIEF MINISTER: TERM LIMIT

Lodged au Greffe on 6th April 2017
by Senator S.C. Ferguson

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

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

- (a) no person shall be elected to the office of Chief Minister more than twice;
- (b) no person who has been elected to the office of Chief Minister, or acted as Chief Minister, during an electoral term to which some other person was originally elected Chief Minister, shall be elected to the office of the Chief Minister on more than one subsequent occasion; and
- (c) to request the Privileges and Procedures Committee to bring forward amendments to the States of Jersey Law 2005, as well as any necessary Standing Orders changes, to give effect to this proposition before the end of 2017.

SENATOR S.C. FERGUSON

REPORT

It should be noted that this is not a personal attack on anyone, least of all the current politicians. It is, however, a topic which should be discussed now rather than in the frenzied heat of the election period.

Many countries now place limits on the length of time individuals are permitted to hold the highest offices. This is a policy which appears to have been formalised by the Founding Fathers of the United States of America. George Washington set the precedent and it was followed by Adams, Jefferson and their successors.

Management Consultants have discussed at length the ideal duration of a tour of duty as Chairman. If someone is a good leader then there is a tendency to encourage them to stay on but it is not often that there is an actual assessment of the performance of the Chairman in most companies. Can the election by the Public and by the States be considered to represent a genuine review of performance of a Chief Minister? In business there is a tendency to get a little stale during the second period of a contract and to lapse into burnout in a third period, a fact which does support the concept of a limited term.

For example, the Comptroller and Auditor General is in post for 7 years only, and it is proposed that a limit of 9 years is placed on the Chairman of the Appointments Commission. Commissioners to the Jersey Financial Services Commission normally serve 2 terms only. The post of Lieutenant Governor is held for a period of 5 years only and it is an unwritten rule that there should be no second term.

The American showman P.T. Barnum allegedly said: “Always leave them wanting more” – which must apply to high profile positions in politics as well as business and theatre. On this basis, and for the reasons given, it is advisable to limit the length of term of the Chief Minister to 2 terms only.

Financial and manpower implications

There are no financial or manpower implications for the States arising from this proposition.