

STATES OF JERSEY



STATES OF JERSEY ELECTIONS: PRE-ELECTION PROCEDURES FOR STATES MEETINGS AND THE LODGING OF PROPOSITIONS

Lodged au Greffe on 22nd May 2018
by Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

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

- (a) that the Privileges and Procedures Committee and the Comité des Connétables should ensure that the Assembly does not ordinarily meet in the week before the week in which election candidates are nominated;
- (b) that the lodging of propositions (other than amendments) should be prohibited during the period from 2 months before the date on which election candidates are first nominated until the date of the election;
- (c) that a procedure should be devised for enabling a proposition to be lodged and debated in an emergency during the period when lodging is ordinarily prohibited;
- (d) to request the Privileges and Procedures Committee to bring forward amendments to Standing Orders to give effect to these changes;
- (e) to request the Privileges and Procedures Committee to undertake a more general review of the purdah rules applying to the Assembly, scrutiny panels and committees and Ministers, and to present a report, with recommendations, to the Assembly on purdah.

DEPUTY J.M. MAÇON OF ST. SAVIOUR

REPORT

It may feel counter-intuitive at the beginning of a term to be discussing the end of it. However, following the final days of the last States Assembly, I felt it most unsatisfactory that Members were sitting right up to the wire. This led to rushed decisions, which is not good governance. It was also unfair on those election candidates who had to rush off from the States Sitting to the Town Hall to be nominated for Senator. It seems to me therefore logical to request that the Privileges and Procedures Committee and the Comité des Connétables should work together to ensure that there is a week between the last scheduled States Sitting of the term and the nomination meetings – this is part (a) of my proposition.

Part (b) seeks to deal with the mountain of propositions that get lodged just before the end of a political term as Ministers and Members seek to finish projects before breaking for elections. My plan is to bring the deadline forward, allowing for the usual build-up of work, and then the Assembly can space out the work over a 2 month period, making it more manageable for Members and allowing for more considered approaches, rather than rushed decisions, just before an election. Clearly, this restriction on when things are lodged should not be applied to amendments. Additionally, a procedure is necessary to deal with matters which have to be dealt with in an emergency, although this should be restricted to matters which genuinely cannot wait. This is dealt with in part (c) of my proposition.

Finally, these specific changes are part of a wider picture of political activity during the purdah period. Rules relating to the activities of scrutiny panels and committees also need to be looked at, and ministerial guidance, such as on the signing of Ministerial Decisions during the election period, also should be reviewed. Part (e) of my proposition would require PPC to undertake a broad review of purdah rules and come back to the Assembly with recommendations.

Financial and manpower implications

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