

STATES OF JERSEY



AMENDMENT OF THE STANDING ORDERS OF THE STATES OF JERSEY TO PROVIDE FOR POLITICAL PARTIES

Lodged au Greffe on 11th December 2020
by Senator S.Y. Mézec

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

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

that the Standing Orders of the States of Jersey should be amended to take into account that members of the States Assembly may choose to organise themselves within political parties, and to request the Privileges and Procedures Committee to investigate and bring forward the necessary amendments that are appropriate to facilitate this by the end of 2021.

SENATOR S.Y. MÉZEC

REPORT

“Criteria for the formation of parliamentary party groups, and their rights and responsibilities in the Legislature, shall be clearly stated in the Rules” – Section 4.2.1 of the **Commonwealth Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures**¹

Whether Jersey further develops into a party political system is ultimately a matter for the electorate. But at the last two general elections, enough members of the public decided that they wished to be represented by States Members who are affiliated to a party, to end up with some being elected. Yet those members elected have not had it recognised in any form by the procedures of the Assembly that they are affiliated to a party and conduct their work on behalf of their constituents on that basis.

This proposition asks that the Privileges and Procedures Committee (PPC) be tasked with investigating the appropriateness of bringing forward any amendments to Standing Orders to enable the recognition that some elected members will be affiliated with a party, and outline their rights and responsibilities, as per the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association’s (CPA) recommended benchmarks.

P.161/2020, lodged by Deputy Wickenden, is an inappropriate way forward, as it is based on misinformation (as the comments from PPC make clear²) and seeks to address one issue in isolation and without reference to best practice. Approaching this subject in a holistic way will be a much more sensible way forward.

Across the Commonwealth there are many jurisdictions with smaller populations than Jersey’s which operate either full party systems, or hybrid systems alongside independent representation. There will be a wealth of knowledge and experiences to draw upon to find appropriate ways forward for the States Assembly.

An important starting point would be for a system to recognise parliamentary groupings in the Assembly and a formal way for those being registered. From there, further measures may be considered appropriate, such as governance on how those members draw a demarcation between their work in parliament and their work in the non-parliamentary administration of their parties.

Financial and manpower implications

PPC is already undertaking work to respond to the recommendations of the CPA Election Observer Mission. This proposal can be dealt with alongside that work, with any resources required being met from within the current budget.

¹http://www.cpahq.org/cpahq/Main/CPA_Benchmarks/Main/Programmes/Benchmarks_for_democratic_Legislatures.aspx

²<https://statesassembly.gov.je/assemblypropositions/2020/p.143-2020com.pdf>