

STATES OF JERSEY



DEPUTIES: EXTENSION OF TERM OF OFFICE TO 4 YEARS (P.98/2007) – COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 7th September 2007
by the Privileges and Procedures Committee**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Privileges and Procedures Committee opposes this proposition and urges all members to reject it.

Deputy Troy has proposed reform to the term of office of Deputies in isolation and states clearly in his report that he has “purposefully left the term of Senator unchanged at 6 years.” He goes on to suggest that PPC may wish to review the term of office of Senators this autumn.

In the absence of reform to the position of Senator the proposition of Deputy Troy would, quite literally, lead to electoral chaos. Elections would be held as follows in the coming 12 years –

Connétables elections (and Deputies if Deputy Troy proposition adopted)	Senatorial elections
2008	2008
	2011
2012	2014
2016	2017
2020	2020

In addition to the confusion that would arise with elections at such random intervals it would be difficult to manage the appointment of Ministers, Chairmen of Committee/Panels and other office holders in a sensible way. If these appointments were made after each senatorial elections (as many members of the public might expect) this would only coincide with the Deputies elections every 12 years. In the intervening period membership of the Assembly would change in the course of the 3 year period and planning an efficient and effective programme of government action would be virtually impossible.

Deputy Troy may consider that extending the term of office of Deputies will somehow ‘force’ reform of the position of Senator but recent States debates have shown that a majority of members are simply not willing to do that at the present time. PPC would remind members that propositions and amendments rejected in recent months relating to Senators included proposals to –

- reduce the number of Senators to 8;
- reduce the term of office of Senators to 4 years;
- elect all Senators on one day;
- abolish the position completely.

The only reform option for Senators that would appear to work alongside Deputy Troy’s proposal and that has not yet been considered would be an extension of the term of office to 8 years, with 6 Senators elected every 4 year. A term of office of this length seems extremely undesirable and PPC cannot imagine that it would be acceptable to members or to the public.

In summary PPC sees no immediate prospect of successful reform to the position of Senator at the present time and to adopt Deputy Troy’s proposition in isolation in the ‘hope’ of achieving other reform would be nothing short of irresponsible.

Privileges and Procedures Committee has notified the Comité des Connétables that, if Deputy Troy’s proposition is rejected, the Committee will bring forward legislation on the single election day for Connétables which retains

the current 3 year term for Connétables and therefore invites members to reverse their July decision to extend this to 4 years. In this way Connétables would fall into the 3 year electoral cycle and be able to participate fully in the appointments process immediately after their election.

Re-issue Note

This comment has been re-issued to correct the last sentence of the paragraph beginning “The only reform option for Senators” that was incorrect in the original version.