

# STATES OF JERSEY



## MINISTERIAL OFFICES: REDUCTION

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Lodged au Greffe on 12th November 2010  
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 –**

- (a) to request the Chief Minister to bring forward for approval by the States the necessary Regulations under Article 29 of the States of Jersey Law 2005 to reduce the number of ministerial offices by –
  - (i) abolishing the ministerial office of Social Security within a period of no more than 5 years and transferring the functions of that office to the Minister for Health and Social Services, the Minister for Treasury and Resources and any other Minister or Ministers as deemed appropriate;
  - (ii) abolishing the ministerial office of Housing within a period of no more than 3 years and transferring the functions of that office to the Chief Minister, the Minister for Health and Social Services and any other Minister or Ministers as deemed appropriate;
- (b) to request the Privileges and Procedures Committee, in consultation with the Chairmen's Committee, to bring forward for approval the necessary amendments to Standing Orders to establish a revised structure of scrutiny panels to reflect the revised ministerial structure.

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

## REPORT

I would like to see a smaller system of Government which is more accountable to the public of Jersey. In these difficult times of global recession and curtailing of public services, it is now that we should be reducing our machinery of Government and its structures to better reflect what we do. It is also a good opportunity to create more synergy between services and the public by reducing the number of departments. I believe there are a number of areas which we have recently seen brought to our attention where Ministers share out their budgets into other Ministers' portfolios so that similar aims and objectives can be achieved. No more so than in Social Security, where we are constantly seeing the merge of duties and responsibilities of that department integrating with the needs at Health and Social Services. The crossover with the duties of fund management in pension issues would also be in my mind better placed within those of the Treasury as indicated by Deputy Gorst in the States himself, most recently.

I appreciate that the Minister for Housing has a plan to move forward with an association, this will need careful scrutiny, but I also believe, with the Population Office, for example, situated within the Chief Minister's Department, there is an opportunity to merge some functions. Transferring the property portfolio into an association, with perhaps critical elements of social housing being managed by Health and Social Services, will see a better and more sustainable use and provision in that important area, in my opinion.

If you speak to the Ministers, many of them will tell you that we are moving towards this objective, with some believing we can reduce Ministerial Government down to 7 departments. It is, of course, a matter for the Ministers to do whatever they wish, whenever they want, and we can only be politely invited as States members to be a party to many of their decisions. It is therefore going to be a matter for the Council of Ministers. Their comments no doubt will be critical. I expect them to be. They don't like being told what to do or when to do it. It's human nature after all. I don't suppose there will necessarily be that much appetite from other Ministers to take on the work or for their departments to do more either. 3.30 on a Friday afternoon is still 3.30 on a Friday afternoon after all!

It is, however, our opportunity as States members, during the debate on this proposition, to set them a target of smaller Government and less bureaucracy. There will be less BlackBerries and less bureaucracy. There will also be a clear demonstration to the public that we are prepared to reduce the size of the States as so many have promised to do and so many more have asked us to. I have repeated this proposal verbally in many debates, throughout the last 3 years of the States, and I know some members will be keen to join me in demonstrating to the public we are willing to travel the same path as we are asking the public as individuals, private sector as businesses and NGOs to go on. A path that is clearly difficult, with some pain attached, but for the long-term benefit of us all.

I will not labour over this report as States Members understand what it is I am asking them to agree to. The difficult job I am asking them to set upon the Council of Ministers, and the demonstration to the electorate that we are listening, will be a matter for each of them to decide on the day. There are now going to be 8 Senators and there is every reason why there should also be 8 Ministerial departments.

### **Financial and manpower implications**

There are no financial or manpower implications for the States arising from this Proposition. In fact there will be considerable savings in achieving better synergy and smaller Government. If I had advocated a larger structure that began new functions that would have implications that would cost more.

## Article 29 of the States of Jersey Law 2005

**29 Powers to move Ministers and to change Ministerial offices**

- (1) The Chief Minister may, subject to the approval of the States, move a Minister from one Ministerial office to another.
- (2) The States may by Regulations –
  - (a) establish and abolish Ministers;
  - (b) determine the name by which any Minister shall be described;
  - (c) confer functions upon a Minister;
  - (d) transfer all or any of the functions exercisable by one Minister to another Minister; and
  - (e) direct that the functions exercisable by any Minister shall be or shall cease to be exercisable concurrently with another Minister.
- (3) Regulations made under paragraph (2) may contain such incidental, consequential, supplemental and transitional provisions as may be necessary or expedient for the purpose of giving full effect to the Regulations, including provisions –
  - (a) for the transfer of any movable property held, any rights enjoyed and any liabilities (whether civil or criminal) incurred by the Minister in connection with any function transferred, including any such rights and liabilities in respect of which, at the time of transfer, no claim has been made or no proceedings have been commenced;
  - (b) for the carrying on and completion by or under the authority of the Minister to whom functions are transferred of anything commenced, before the Regulations have effect, by or under authority of the Minister from whom the functions are transferred;
  - (c) for the amendment of enactments relating to any functions transferred or to any Minister who is established, abolished or renamed;
  - (d) for the construction of enactments of the United Kingdom having effect in Jersey relating to any functions transferred or to any Minister who is established, abolished or renamed;
  - (e) for the construction and adaptation of any instrument, contract or legal proceedings made or commenced before the Regulations have effect;
  - (f) where such Regulations establish or abolish Ministers, for the amendment of Article 18(1) so as to increase or decrease the number of Ministers there mentioned; and
  - (g) where such Regulations establish or abolish Ministers or determine the name by which any Minister shall be described, for the consequential amendment of standing orders.
- (4) Only the Chief Minister may lodge draft Regulations to be made under paragraph (2).
- (5) In this Article, “Minister” includes the Chief Minister.