

# STATES OF JERSEY



## **STATES MEMBERS' REMUNERATION: ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW BODY (P.26/2003) – COMMENTS**

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**Presented to the States on 15th April 2003  
by the Privileges and Procedures Committee**

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**STATES GREFFE**



## COMMENTS

The Committee, in accordance with its terms of reference, as agreed by the States in adopting P.23/2002 on 26th March 2002, and following an extended period of consultation intends to bring forward revised proposals for on the remuneration and expenses provision for elected members of the States.

The Committee has taken account of the views strongly expressed by many members that it was inappropriate at the present time to seek a substantial increase in States members' remuneration but remains firmly of the opinion that a review should be undertaken of the current arrangements, prior to the introduction of the ministerial system of government, with a view to bringing forward proposals for an appropriate scheme to be introduced when the new system of government is established.

The Committee is minded to support the appointment of an independent Review Board which would give added legitimacy in the eyes of the public to any future proposals. It agrees that there should be an open debate with full public consultation on this important matter. This view is reflected in paragraph 1.5 of the report accompanying its revised proposition. The Committee suggests that an independent panel to consider annual increases in the future should be considered as part of the further work proposed in paragraph (c) of its revised proposition.

The Committee, however, cannot support the proposal that this independent body should be empowered to make binding decisions on elected members' remuneration and expenses. The Committee feels that, as a political issue, elected members' remuneration and expenses must remain in the political domain of the Chamber.

The Committee is mindful of the practice in the United Kingdom House of Commons where the Senior Salaries Review Board (SSRB) exists to make recommendations on members' pay. The final decision has always rested with members themselves. In recent years there have been a number of occasions when the recommendations of the SSRB have been rejected by the Government or amended by MPs. For example in 1983 the SSRB recommended an increase of some 31 per cent, the Government proposed an increase of only four per cent and, after a lengthy debate, the House accepted a compromise of 5.5 per cent immediately with subsequent annual increases over a five year period. In 1996 the SSRB recommended an increase of 26 per cent. The Government proposed an increase of only three per cent but, after debate, MPs agreed to accept the SSRB's recommendation.

The Committee also recalls the last occasion, in May 1996, in which the States agreed to the appointment of an independent review body under the chairmanship of the former Senator John Averty. The recommendations of the Review Board were put to the States by the House Committee in R.C.42/1997 and P.207/1998. They were subject to considerable amendment before being approved by the States in July 1998. The scheme that emerged is still in place at present although the actual amounts have been increased annually.

The Committee believes that any recommendations following the proposed review of elected members' remuneration and expenses must take account of the States budgetary process and therefore be subject to approval following proper debate in the Chamber.