

STATES OF JERSEY



DRAFT TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY (AMENDMENT NO.2) LAW 202- (P.8/2021): COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 16th March 2021
by the Minister for Health and Social Services**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

As Minister for Health and Social Services I have no objection to the proposed amendment to the Termination of Pregnancy (Jersey) Law 1997, removing the seven-day mandatory waiting period between a woman's first and second consultation. I have sought advice from HCS's Associate Medical Director, who is also lead Consultant for Obstetrics & Gynaecology, and who similarly has no objection to the amendment.

The current seven-day waiting period appears out of step with other jurisdictions and could delay access to abortion services, which may bring attendant risk to a woman's wellbeing.

The removal of the mandatory waiting period does not prevent any woman from taking the time she needs to consider how best to proceed for herself and her family, providing that any termination is carried out on accordance with the law. In contrast to the position when the legislation was introduced, there are now many sources of advice and information available to women who might be considering terminating a pregnancy.

The report to Deputy Doublet's proposition cites the World Health Organisation's position that mandatory waiting periods can both delay access to care and '*demean women as competent-decision makers*'. I would not want to retain legislation that imposes controls on a person's ability to make their own decisions unless there are clear and compelling grounds for doing so, which does not appear to be the case in these circumstances.

Deputy Richard Renouf
Minister for Health and Social Services