

# STATES OF JERSEY



## STANDING ORDERS: ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS (P.132/2011) – COMMENTS

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Presented to the States on 9th September 2011  
by the Council of Ministers

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STATES GREFFE

## COMMENTS

The Council of Ministers believes that there is merit in looking at the purpose and protocol of States' questions as one of the mechanisms to be used to hold the Executive to account. However, it believes that any review should encompass the questions as well as the answers, to ensure that public accountability of States Members, whether in the Executive or not, is fully demonstrated. The Council of Ministers, without detracting from the democratic right to ask Ministers about their policies and actions, questions the value of repeated enquiries on the same subject matter.

Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier bases his amendment on the New Zealand Standing Order, which interestingly has a similar section on the content of questions (371) which is almost word-for-word the same as the conditions posed on the content of answers. Interestingly, it has an additional requirement –

“(3) A question for a written answer must not repeat the substance of a question already lodged in the same calendar year.”.

The Council of Ministers therefore opposes the proposals from Deputy Southern on the basis that Ministers are not convinced that the perceived benefits suggested by the Deputy outweigh the potential impact such proposals may have on the way the States conducts its business. The proposals could well lead to numerous points of order being raised to establish whether or not a question has been answered satisfactorily.