

STATES OF JERSEY



STANDING ORDERS: ADDITIONAL SIGNATORIES ON PROPOSITIONS (P.174/2010) – THIRD AMENDMENT

**Lodged au Greffe on 7th January 2011
by Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier**

STATES GREFFE

STANDING ORDERS: ADDITIONAL SIGNATORIES ON PROPOSITIONS
(P.174/2010) – THIRD AMENDMENT

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Number the existing proposition as paragraph (a).

Insert new paragraph (b) –

“(b) to request the Privileges and Procedures Committee to bring forward an amendment to Standing Orders to require a proposition for debate lodged by a Minister to be endorsed and countersigned by 7 Ministers or Assistant Ministers.”.

DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER

REPORT

Firstly I must point out that this proposition is intended to help all Ministers to achieve a successful outcome to any proposition that they wish to bring forward. There will obviously be a useful oversight from colleagues that would help the Minister to make clear his purpose and to gain some support prior to any debate. It is not intended to form an obstacle to the bringing of propositions, but to encourage full discussion and agreement among members of the executive to produce a greater sense of collective responsibility.

During my time in the States, I have witnessed a number of propositions which have been lodged for debate by Ministers, only to be withdrawn subsequently for various reasons. When this occurs, there is a real sense of frustration amongst conscientious backbenchers regarding the waste of members' time in preparation for the debate. Unlike Ministers, backbenchers do not have a small army of officers to do the required research or to write the speech which can add value to the debate or to make a critical amendment to policy. Furthermore, there is an increasing trend for Ministers to bring propositions with reduced notice. There is a growing feeling that Ministers' policies, especially where they are cross-disciplinary, lack co-ordination and coherence, leading to a lack of direction. The need for signatures would go some way to correcting this.

Most notable of many of such histories is the North of Town Masterplan (referred to fondly by the Connétable of St. Helier as "not the Masterplan"), which has had so many "final" versions that I have lost count. More recently, we have had the announcement of a new policy on subsidy for the fee-paying sector from the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture. This occupied considerable amounts of members' time and attention, only to be withdrawn following objections from 3 or 4 Ministers. In the Budget debate, members were also presented with the prospect of a Minister for Treasury and Resources bringing forward a proposal that he did not personally support.

I hope members will accept this proposition in the way it is intended, so that we can use our time effectively for the benefit of the people we are elected to serve.

Financial and manpower implications

There are no financial or manpower implications for the States arising from this amendment.