

SENATORS AND DEPUTIES: TERMS OF OFFICE

**Lodged au Greffe on 7th December 1999
by Deputy A. Breckon of St. Saviour**



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PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion -

- (1) to agree that -
 - (a) the term of office of Senators should be reduced from six years to four years and the term of office of Deputies increased from three years to four years;
 - (b) the ordinary elections for Senators and for Deputies should be held on the same day;
 - (c) the States Assembly would not meet, except in exceptional circumstances, between the first nomination meeting for candidates at an ordinary election and the day after the poll of electors,and to charge the Legislation Committee to present to the States for approval the necessary legislation;
- (2) to charge the Legislation Committee to review the term of office and the timing of elections for the office of Connétable and to report back to the States with recommendations.

DEPUTY A. BRECKON OF ST. SAVIOUR

Report

The House Committee have been looking at reviewing the timing of public elections as well as the length of office of States Members - to date there has been much discussion but no firm recommendations. In the interim I believe good government is suffering, and the people are not best served by a short (three-year) cycle, which at times must appear to the general public as having no chain attached by which to propel it and also two flat tyres, as matters grind to a halt by delay, indecision and deferment.

With respect to others who may be reviewing such matters - I believe it is in the public interest to have these matters fully aired now, and I wish to put down a "marker" so that, if all else fails, these important issues can be debated in the States without other diversions and put in place, if agreed, for the elections of 2002.

For information the existing STATES OF JERSEY LAW 1966 states that -

"ARTICLE 5.

TERMS OF OFFICE.

(1) Senators shall be elected for a term of six years and, in every third year, six Senators shall retire on their places being filled by an ordinary election.

(2) Deputies shall be elected for a term of three years and shall retire on their places being filled by an ordinary election."

I would seek to amend this so that elections are held every four years for ALL Senators and Deputies, and furthermore -

"ARTICLE 12.

ELECTIONS.

(1) An ordinary election for Senators shall be held in the third week of the month of October in every third year and an ordinary election for Deputies shall be held in the last week of the month of November in every third year."

I would seek to amend this so that there is a general election on a given day every four years. I believe it would be relatively simple to distribute two (or three) ballot papers - one for Senator and one for Deputy, and it would also concentrate the minds of candidates.

Also there has been some discussion on the merits (or otherwise) of the States sitting while an election campaign is in progress. On one side those who are not States Members believe that valuable publicity can be gained, and those who are States Members believe that it is, or could be, a diversion away from the electoral process. In the interests of fair play and common sense it would seem logical to suspend States meetings between the first nomination meeting and election day.