

STATES OF JERSEY



ASSISTANT MINISTERS: APPOINTMENT BY THE STATES (P.6/2011) – COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 28th March 2011
by the Council of Ministers**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Council of Ministers opposes the Proposition of the Deputy of St. John, which requests the Privileges and Procedures Committee to bring forward amendments to legislation in order to provide that Assistant Ministers are appointed by the States.

Ministers first of all believe that the Deputy's proposal is too narrow in its remit and should only be considered within the context of a wider review of how ministerial government is working. The Council believes that the time is right to consider if changes need to be made to the way ministerial government operates and intends to propose that there should be a review of the system.

The Council believes it is important to make sure that an effective and robust system of government exists to meet the future needs of the Island and the challenges it faces. The appointment process for Assistant Ministers is just one area that needs to be reviewed, and the Council hopes that any proposals to change the current ministerial system could be brought to the States Assembly as a comprehensive package rather than in a piecemeal fashion.

The Council is also concerned that if this Proposition is adopted it would needlessly prevent Ministers from appointing Assistant Ministers who they believe are most able to support their work and that of a department. Ministers are accountable to the States for the discharge of their duties, which makes it important that Ministers are able to appoint Assistant Ministers with whom they are able to develop a strong working relationship.

If there is no guarantee that a Minister's favoured appointee is chosen as Assistant Minister, it could weaken this working relationship and unduly impact on the work of a department. Having been appointed by the States, Ministers should instead be able to determine the make-up of their ministerial team and decide who they think has the experience, strengths and skills needed to serve as an Assistant Minister.

The Council is therefore firmly of the view that this Proposition should be rejected until such time that a wide-ranging review of ministerial government is presented to the States.