

# STATES OF JERSEY



## RE-INSTATEMENT OF SENATORS (P.108/2022): COMMENTS

---

Presented to the States on 13th January 2023  
by the Privileges and Procedures Committee

---

STATES GREFFE

## COMMENTS

On 27th June 2022, Deputy Ian Gorst lodged 'Re-instatement of Senators' (P.79/2022) which asked the States Assembly to agree that the office of Senator be re-instated in time for the General Election in 2026. If adopted, the proposition requested PPC to engage with States Members, the public and other individuals as necessary to develop proposals in time for debate by July 2023 with consequential amending legislation being lodged no later than December 2023.

The proposition was originally due to be debated on 13th September, but Deputy Gorst kindly agreed to defer the debate to allow PPC more time to consider its response, once the CPA Election Observers Mission (EOM) and Jersey Electoral Authority Reports and the outcome of the Jersey Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (JOLS) were available and their contents could be absorbed. The proposition was subsequently relogged as P.108/2022, along with two amendments. These comments relate to both the main proposition and these amendments.

The Committee believes that it would be beneficial to let the new system 'bed-in' following the significant changes that were made to the electoral system during the last term. The changes followed the 2018 EOM to Jersey which [found](#) that the electoral system was overly complicated and cumbersome. Following significant work undertaken by a PPC Sub-Committee, PPC proposed moving to two categories of Member in order to simplify the system for the electorate. This was accepted by the Assembly and the changes were implemented in time for the 2022 election.

The 2022 EOM recognised the enormous changes which have been made following on from the recommendations made in 2018 and the Committee believes that making any further changes now could be confusing to voters. Currently, there is no concrete evidence to suggest that the loss of the Senators impacted negatively on election turnout. Indeed, the results of the JOLS indicates that just 3 percent of those surveyed considered it to have influenced their intention to vote.

In the six months since the elections there has been no discernible impact on the work of the Assembly from the 'loss' of the Senators. One consequence of the revised system is that the public have a wider choice of constituency representation than previously existed, as it was rare for Senators to engage with Parochial issues.

That is not to say the Committee will not consider this matter in the future. As part of its ongoing work, the Committee intends to focus public outreach initiatives on the States Assembly throughout the term and not just in the run up to elections. The core aim of this is to drive up public participation and engagement with the work of the Assembly which in turn will hopefully increase voter turnout.

To conclude, the Committee is neutral in its stance on this proposition, but the timeframe is a concern. Some members of the Committee would rather the changes were left to 'bed in' a little longer before any further changes are introduced. This would also enable time for a period of reflection and evaluation of the new system so that, should any changes be considered in the future, they can be based on tangible evidence and an informed viewpoint.