

STATES OF JERSEY



CHIEF MINISTER POLL

**Lodged au Greffe on 17th April 2025
by Deputy K.L. Moore of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter
Earliest date for debate: 13th May 2025**

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

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

- (a) to agree, in principle, that the Chief Minister should be elected through an Island-wide vote of registered voters;
- (b) that, prior to a general election, all prospective candidates intending to stand for the role of Chief Minister must declare their intention when they submit their nomination form as a Senatorial candidate in the general election;
- (c) that a poll of candidates shall be conducted in parallel with a general election to establish which the electorate prefers in the role of Chief Minister;
- (d) that the results of the poll of candidates for Chief Minister shall be binding, and that the successful candidate will become Chief Minister designate upon their taking the oath of office as a States Member following the general election; and
- (e) to request the Privileges and Procedures Committee to bring forward for approval the necessary legislative amendments to give effect to the above proposals for implementation before 28th February 2026.

DEPUTY K.L. MOORE OF ST. MARY, ST. OUEN AND ST. PETER

REPORT

This proposition seeks to deliver a Chief Minister who is directly elected by the people of Jersey. This change should boost public engagement in the elections and offer the electorate a greater level of transparency regarding the future leadership of the Island by conducting a simple poll on the day of the general election. The poll will mean that contenders for the position of Chief Minister will have to state their intention prior to the election and run an Island wide campaign.

Over the past 30 years voter turnout (of those registered to vote) has averaged 44%. The island ranks bottom of OECD countries for [Civic Engagement](#). At the 2018 general election voter turnout was 43.4% and in 2022 this had dropped slightly to 41.7%.

Giving the public the power to choose the future leadership and therefore the vision and direction of the Island should enhance voter interest and turnout, as the result will be binding on the new Assembly.

A key finding of the Democratic Accountability and Governance Sub-Committee in their [2022 report](#) was that -

Accountability of the role of Chief Minister within the public arena is lacking as voters do not have a say on who should be elected to the role. Voters should be provided with the opportunity to indicate their preferred candidate for Chief minister during the voting process.

It is anticipated that in the case of a political party, the party will put their leader forward in this poll to truly test their popularity across the Island. If they hold a sufficient level of popularity, they should also see their leader supported in this poll.

Candidates who do not belong to a party, but feel they have the ability and the experience to be the next Chief Minister would also be able to add their name to the poll.

A poll for Chief Minister will pose a specific question to the electorate. It will ask them to consider who they think has the qualities and vision that they would like to see lead the island. It is, of course, possible that an individual with no political experience might be elected and, if this were the case, it is anticipated that the electorate would have made the decision based on the clear leadership qualities of the candidate who would be supported by the professional civil service in the transition.

After many years of interviewing a wide range of people from all walks of life, I have absolute confidence in the ability of the voting public to exercise the discernment required to engage in this poll.

Deputy Russell Labey brought a similar proposition ([P.78/2017](#)) to the Assembly in 2017, albeit the Deputy's proposition was slightly different in that the poll would have been held after the general election, requiring the public to turn out to vote again. The comments of the PPC (Privileges and Procedures Committee) of the day suggested that such a public vote would be *"hybrid between a parliamentary and a presidential system. This would be unusual and unprecedented."* The Island does not have a Presidential system, but an island wide debate would be a welcome addition to the electoral process. It will enable the public to understand the political vision of the future

leader of the island and to have their say in the direction that is taken for the next political cycle.

If the Assembly adopts this proposition, PPC may have to consider an additional ruling as to the allowed expenses for such a campaign. Given the very distinct nature of the poll and the limited number of candidates anticipated, it should be relatively simple for the media to cover the campaign in a balanced fashion within their legal requirements and should not cause a great deal of additional expense.

In the unlikely scenario where a candidate wins the poll for Chief Minister but fails to be elected, a process must be established to enable the candidate who came second in the poll to be elected.

In the event that a Member brought a motion of no confidence in the Chief Minister, the Assembly would be required to ask the Greffe to run a further public poll to elect a new Chief Minister

The Privileges and Procedures Committee will have sufficient time to consider any consequential changes that would be necessary for standing orders or election law.

Financial and staffing implications

It is considered that all actions can be completed within existing budgets and accordingly, no additional resources would be required in the event that this proposition is adopted.

Children's Rights Impact Assessment

A Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) has been prepared in relation to this proposition and is available to read on the States Assembly website.