

STATES OF JERSEY

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DRAFT AMENDMENT (No. 27) TO THE STANDING ORDERS OF THE STATES OF JERSEY (P.171/2004): THIRD AMENDMENTS

Lodged au Greffe on 12th October 2004
by Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier

STATES GREFFE

DRAFT AMENDMENT (No. 27) OF THE STANDING ORDERS OF THE STATES OF JERSEY (P.171/2004):
THIRD AMENDMENTS

(a) PAGE 12 – INSERTED STANDING ORDER 12A

Delete paragraph (3) and renumber accordingly.

(b) PAGE 13 – INSERTED STANDING ORDER 14(B)(1)

For the words “one hour” substitute the words “90 minutes”.

DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER

REPORT

I believe that the result of the trial question time over the past 6 months has led to a reduction in the ability of members to hold Presidents to account. Both the quality and quantity of questions has been markedly reduced in this period.

For evidence, I only have to refer to what happened during questing time on 12th October. For once, the Bailiff was allowing full rein to supplementaries, placing President after President under considerable pressure; but that was the first half. That was followed by an extreme version of what has become normal practice for question time. Questioner after questioner was cut short as the Bailiff attempted to make up time to get under the 60 minute curfew. In attempting to achieve efficiency, I believe that the Privileges and Procedures Committee have gone too far. The fact is that 60 minutes is insufficient time to allow for full and proper exploration of vital and contemporary issues that fall within the remit of Presidents and their Committees. I propose therefore, in (b), we extend the time allowed for oral questions, whilst maintaining the cut-off limit.

In (a), again on the principle of “full and proper exploration” of issues, the restriction on the number of questions permitted by a member, I believe reduces the effectiveness of the process. I, for example, have on 2 occasions been compelled to put questions over my allotted 2 through other members. A question requiring several elements cannot always be put easily as a series of supplementaries. Nor does it get good quality responses if aspects are introduced with no notice.

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