

STATES OF JERSEY

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DRAFT AMENDMENT (No. 27) TO THE STANDING ORDERS OF THE STATES OF JERSEY (P.171/2004): AMENDMENT (P.171/2004 AMD.) – COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 19th October 2004
by the Privileges and Procedures Committee**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENT

If adopted this amendment would move the deadline for oral questions *from* noon on the Friday preceding a States meeting *to* noon on the preceding Thursday.

The Privileges and Procedures Committee shares Senator's Routier's view that it is undesirable to require public servants to work at weekends to prepare answers but it would remind members that Presidents are required to give a 'concise' answer to oral questions and so the amount of preparation for responding to questions should therefore be limited. Preparing for supplementary questions is likely to require additional information from departments, but this can be communicated to Presidents prior to a States sitting by e-mail. Although Senator Routier's amendment would assist Presidents and their senior officers, it would mean that questions would not be possible on any particularly topical issue that arose between the Thursday and Friday. When proposing the trial on oral questions in May the Privileges and Procedures Committee pointed out that one advantage of the new system was that more topical questions would be possible.

On balance the Privileges and Procedures Committee does not support this amendment as it considers that the assistance it would give to Presidents is outweighed by the disadvantage of reducing the topicality of questions.