

STATES OF JERSEY



PUBLIC HOLIDAYS AND BANK HOLIDAYS: DESIGNATION OF 19TH OCTOBER 2011 (P.33/2011) – COMMENTS

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

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Council is opposed to this proposition for the following reasons –

- (i) Public holidays should only be sanctioned in exceptional circumstances. The Election Day as such has no special characteristics, but clearly the Council is supportive of encouraging voter participation.
- (ii) There is no evidence that the creation of a public holiday would make any positive difference to voter participation; it could indeed have the contrary effect. Furthermore, Members will be aware that, not only are the polls open for the extended period of 12 hours, but the States has also now approved the wider availability of pre-poll voting. There is, therefore, ample opportunity for any elector who really wishes to vote.
- (iii) Whilst the additional cost over and above existing budgets is less, the true cost of a public holiday to the States of Jersey is circa £1.5 million.
- (iv) From the point of view of the Island economy, a public holiday on a day which is not a holiday elsewhere is likely to be economically damaging, particularly for the international finance industry, which is already facing stiff competition. Whilst an exception can justifiably be made for Liberation Day, it is difficult to think of any other occasion where Jersey should have a public holiday where the United Kingdom does not.