

# **STATES OF JERSEY**

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## **COMPOSITION OF THE STATES: REFERENDUM (P.86/2007) – COMMENTS**

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**Presented to the States on 3rd July 2007  
by the Privileges and Procedures Committee**

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**STATES GREFFE**

## COMMENTS

The Privileges and Procedures Committee does not support this proposition. Although PPC has always made it clear that it believes that the views of the public on the issue of the composition of the States should be sought through a referendum the Committee does not believe that Senator Perchard's proposition is the appropriate way to achieve this objective.

If this proposition is adopted the public would be able to choose between the 4 options set out with the 'status quo' being effectively a fifth option. If a referendum with so many options is put forward it is almost inevitable that the electorate will be disillusioned that yet further options have not been offered, for example on matter such as a more significant reduction in membership. The Committee itself faced substantial criticism of this type when it circulated its consultation leaflet to all households with only 5 options. In addition PPC believes that an uncertain outcome could result from the referendum as it is quite possible that votes would be spread almost evenly over the various options. The third option, namely an Assembly of 12 Senators and 36 Deputies all elected on one single day and for a common 4 year period, is one that PPC does not even believe is a realistic option for worthwhile reform.

PPC has worked on the issue of composition of the States for many months and has undertaken 2 opinion surveys and a range of other research and consultation. If this proposition is adopted the States will, effectively, be going right back to square one. PPC believes that the time has come for the States to show leadership and take a decision on a preferred way forward by adopting P.75/2007 (Composition of the States: revised structure and referendum) with or without the amendment of Deputy Baudains. The Committee is convinced that these 2 options are the only workable and worthwhile options that are likely to be acceptable to the present States Assembly. Once a preferred way forward has been agreed in principle by members PPC believes that a referendum on that single proposal should be held. This would enable the electorate to express its view on the way forward that has already been agreed by the States.

PPC might have felt able to support a proposal for a referendum on the 2 options set out in PPC's proposition P.75/2007 and the amendment of Deputy Baudains but believes that nothing would be achieved by Senator Perchard's proposal. It is unlikely to give any clear steer on the way forward, will delay the possibility of introducing transitional arrangements for 2008 and, in practice, might even preclude any reform for the foreseeable future if there is no clear outcome.