

# **STATES OF JERSEY**



## **COMPOSITION AND ELECTION OF THE STATES ASSEMBLY: PROPOSED REFORM (P.145/2006): AMENDMENTS (P.145/2006 AMD.)– COMMENTS**

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**Presented to the States on 30th April 2007  
by the Privileges and Procedures Committee**

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**STATES GREFFE**

## COMMENTS

Deputy Southern's amendments to the proposition of Senator Shenton contain 2 separate proposals. There is firstly a proposal to hold a general election for all members in the spring of 2008 instead of the autumn and secondly an amendment to remove the right of the Connétables to sit in the States by virtue of their office and add 8 new Deputies seats instead.

The Privileges and Procedures Committee has no comments on the second part of the amendments as a decision on these is a purely political judgment for each member. These comments therefore relate to amendment (1) only.

PPC supports a move to spring/early summer elections and this view is already set out in the report accompanying its own amendments to P.145/2006. It has been recognised for some considerable time that the late autumn is not an ideal time for elections, with dark evenings and, on occasions, cold and/or wet weather. PPC agrees that it would assist candidates, and hopefully improve turnout, if elections could be held when the evenings were lighter and the weather usually much better.

Despite its general support for a move to spring elections PPC cannot support the amendment of Deputy Southern which proposes that this change should be introduced from next year. Although it might just be possible to have the necessary legislation drafted, approved and in force in time for June 2008 there are a number of consequential changes to the States annual financial cycle that are needed before any move to spring elections can be introduced. It is not at all clear how the Annual Business Plan process could be handled in 2008 if elections were held in June as the preparation and lodging of the Plan currently takes place during the time when the elections would be held. In addition, if the amendment was adopted, it would mean that the term of office of a considerable number of members would need to be curtailed and this could easily lead to legal challenges which would have the potential to derail the entire reform process, meaning that the 2008 elections would simply take place according to the present procedures.

PPC believes that if members support a move to spring/early summer elections they should reject Deputy Southern's amendment and support instead one of the amendments that would allow the change to take place from 2012. In this way the necessary changes to the States annual financial cycle can be planned and introduced in an orderly way over the next 5 years. In addition, if members support the amendments which set out orderly transitional arrangements to avoid curtailing the existing terms of office of members, unnecessary legal challenges can be avoided.