

# **STATES OF JERSEY**

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## **SENATORIAL ELECTIONS 2005: REDUCED TERM OF OFFICE**

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**Lodged au Greffe on 1st February 2005  
by the Deputy of St. Martin**

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**STATES GREFFE**

## **PROPOSITION**

**THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –**

- (a) to agree that the term of office of the Senators elected in the senatorial elections to be held in October 2005 should be reduced from 6 years to 3 years;
- (b) to charge the Privileges and Procedures Committee to bring forward for approval the necessary legislation to give effect to the proposal.

DEPUTY OF ST. MARTIN

## **REPORT**

Although the States decided not to approve any of the various options put forward during last year's debate on constitutional reform, I think it is generally accepted that the States are committed to reform, albeit that there has been little consensus as to what shape or form the reform should take.

Whilst there was little consensus as to whether the membership should be reduced and whether there should be one form of States Member, it was generally accepted that the term of office should be of the same length and there should be one general election.

One of the main reasons why members did not approve any of the proposed changes was because it was felt that the Ministerial system should be given an opportunity to see whether it needed the present membership of 53 members or whether it could work with fewer members as per the Clothier recommendation. Therefore it could be assumed that by the autumn of 2008 States Members should be in a position to decide whether a reduction is required.

In the autumn of 2008 the term of office of the 6 Senators elected in October 2002 and the 29 Deputies elected in November 2005 will end. Unless steps are taken this year to reduce the term of office of those Senators elected in October this year, should it be decided during the next 3 years to reduce the membership of the States or for Members to have the same term of office, the States will again be placed in an invidious position of taking steps to remove those Members elected for a 6-year term of office this October.

To enable one general election, and for all States Members' terms of office to be of the same length, it seems obvious that there must be a starting point whereby no-one will be disadvantaged or feel that they have been denied the opportunity to serve the term of office for which they were elected. As such, it would make sense that the term of office of the Senators elected in October should end at the same time as that of the 35 members mentioned above.

It will be argued that a 3-year term for Senators will no longer make the position attractive to candidates. However, insofar as the States' decision to retain both the Connétables and Senators can be understood, it appears that there is strong support for a group of politicians who have an Island-wide mandate and there are a number of candidates who prefer a wider mandate. As such, the issue of a 3 or 6-year term is not crucial.

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