

STATES OF JERSEY



REFORM OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE STATES ASSEMBLY

Lodged au Greffe on 26th September 2023
by Deputy M.R. Scott of St. Brelade
Earliest date for debate: 17th October 2023

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

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

- (a) to agree that the number of Deputies in the States Assembly should be reduced, and that the office of Senator, elected on an Island-wide basis, should be re-instated in time for the General Election in 2026;
- (b) to request the Privileges and Procedures Committee to develop proposals that will determine the number of Deputies to form part of the re-constituted States Assembly in 2026 in accordance with the following principles –
 - (i) there should be no increase in the total number of States Members from the current 49;
 - (ii) the twelve Connétables should remain as voting Members in the Assembly; and
 - (iii) there should be at least one Deputy for each existing constituency; and
- (c) that all of the consequential amending legislation should be brought for debate by the Assembly before July 2025 to ensure implementation for the 2026 elections.

DEPUTY M.R. SCOTT OF ST. BRELADE

REPORT

[P.108/2022](#), lodged by Deputy Gorst, was only defeated by only one vote, with two Members absent on the day it was debated.

During the debate of proposition.108/2022, it was suggested there were problems with a lack of clarity in both the main Proposition and the proposed Amendments, and a timeline that was too challenging for the Privileges and Procedures Committee (“PPC”) to achieve.

My Proposition has therefore sought to;

- (i) address the comments made during the debate; and
- (ii) in proposing a reduction of the number of Deputies and the reinstatement of the officer of Senator in the States Assembly:
 - a. improve specialised representation of Islandwide interests that are the subjects of Ministerial and Scrutiny Portfolios;
 - b. enable States Members to focus on local community/constituency representation or other common-interest representation (as the case may be); and
 - c. better enable States Members to adopt a particular work focus without experiencing concerns that they are not paying sufficient attention to other areas of work performed by States Members,

without (in the case of Deputies) limiting their ability to take up any position of interest to them within the States Assembly.

Conversely, the structure of the States Assembly needs to avoid:

- (i) overloading States Members with an excessive number of roles at the expense of their well-being;
- (ii) overweighting constituency or Parish representation, which could be perceived to have compromised the quality of representation in important Islandwide matters (the overweighting of constituency representation is a risk highlighted on page 17 of the [2012 Report for the States of Jersey Electoral Commission](#) with respect to constituencies with more than one representative in small jurisdictions); and
- (iii) requiring excessive resourcing within the States Greffe to support duplication of roles.

During the debate of P.108/2022, I suggested that, if the States Assembly decided to not support the Proposition, I would bring a proposition calling for a referendum to obtain a clearer understanding of the views of the electorate on the matter of Senatorial reinstatement. There have been practical and technical issues that have prevented me from pursuing this course of action to date, indicating that this process would be cumbersome and costly.

If Members support this Proposition, considering their election manifestos and the views of their constituents, there needs to be sufficient time for PPC to implement the necessary changes before the next General Election. This is why it is so important to support this Proposition now.

Financial and staffing implications

There are limited financial and staffing implications from this proposition as it is anticipated that the majority of costs could be accommodated within existing PPC resources. The broad time frame allows the project to be progressed at a reasonable pace.

It is also important to note that the drafting already exists for inclusion of the Senatorial role within the required documents – and that this would therefore significantly reduce the administrative time needed.