

STATES OF JERSEY



COMPOSITION AND ELECTION OF THE STATES: REVISED STRUCTURE (P.72/2009) – SECOND AMENDMENT

Lodged au Greffe on 28th July 2009
by the Connétable of St. Clement

STATES GREFFE

COMPOSITION AND ELECTION OF THE STATES: REVISED STRUCTURE
(P.72/2009) – SECOND AMENDMENT

1 PAGE 2 –

In paragraph (a), for sub-paragraphs (i) and (ii), substitute the words “49 Members to be known as Deputies, elected by reference to the Parishes, some of which will be divided into districts” and make a consequential amendment in paragraph (d)(i) of the proposition by deleting the words “6 large”.

2 PAGE 2 –

After paragraph (a) insert a new paragraph (b) as follows –

“(b) no Parish shall elect fewer than two Deputies;”.

and renumber the remaining paragraphs accordingly.

CONNÉTABLE OF ST. CLEMENT

REPORT

The amendment of the Deputy of St. Martin does 2 things. It removes the right of Connétables to sit in the States by virtue of their office, which is right. It also removes the relationship between the States and the Parishes, which is wrong.

My amendment resolves that issue.

It is vital that the relationship between the Parishes and the States remains intact, because Parishes are the very basis of our cultural, social and political life and without the link it will surely wither and die.

I accept the view of the Review Panel on the Machinery of Government in Jersey that the roles of the Connétable as a States Member and as Father of the Parish are not mutually exclusive, and there are many in this Island who would wish to serve in the position if they did not also have to sit in the States. There are others who seek election as Connétable solely because they wish to be in the States.

The Review Panel said, and the Deputy of St. Martin agrees, “that those Connétables who have the time and inclination could stand for election to the States, there being no conflict in the dual role. They would then be truly elected by their parishioners to represent them in the States.”

Although this is what the Deputy of St. Martin claims he wants, his amendment ensures it cannot happen as it removes Parish elections. This amendment restores that position.

The second amendment may not suit those who favour mathematical exactitude, but ensures that each Parish maintains at least the same number of directly elected States members as at present.

Under the “large districts” proposal, the link with the Parishes would be lost, and it is feasible that the smaller Parishes could effectively be disenfranchised. For example, St. Mary could support overwhelmingly one candidate who might not appeal to the voters of Trinity, St. John, St. Ouen and St. Lawrence. Equally, the voters of St. Clement could over-ride the wishes of those from Grouville, and St. Peter would clearly be the political second fiddle to St. Brelade, as would St. Martin to St. Saviour.

The political powerbase would be dramatically shifted to the more populous Parishes at the expense of those with fewer voters. Some might see that as right and proper, but if one of the objectives is to improve voter turnout, I fear we could see exactly the opposite, as more of the electorate see their votes counting for nothing.

The change to paragraph (d)(i) of the proposition is a consequential amendment.

There are no additional financial or manpower implications for the States arising from this amendment.

Re-issue Note

This projet is re-issued because the proposer was incorrectly named as Senator L. Norman instead of the Connétable of St. Clement.