

STATES OF JERSEY

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DRAFT AMENDMENT (NO. 4) OF THE STANDING ORDERS OF THE STATES OF JERSEY

**Lodged au Greffe on 14th March 2006
by the Privileges and Procedures Committee**

STATES GREFFE



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REPORT

When new Standing Order 44 was approved on 5th October 2005 the States agreed by a narrow majority (18-16) to amend the normal adjournment between the morning and afternoon sessions of a meeting from 12.45 p.m.– 2.30 p.m. to 1 p.m.– 2.15 p.m. The intention of the Privileges and Procedures Committee, in proposing this change, was to make better use of each States' day and compensate for the addition of 30 minutes of questions without notice without any impact on the time available for other business.

On 17th January 2006 Senator M.E. Vibert proposed, under Standing Order 45, that the adjournment should be from 12.45 p.m. to 2.30 p.m. and not the shorter time set out as the default provision in Standing Order 44. The States supported this proposal by 29 votes to 20. Although this decision was only taken in respect of the one meeting it was made clear by Senator Vibert that the decision should be viewed as an indication of the way in which the new States wished this issue to be dealt with on a permanent basis.

Following this decision of the States PPC has considered this issue again. The Committee is, in general, reticent to propose amendments to the new Standing Orders so soon after their coming into force but accepts that it would be unsatisfactory for uncertainty to remain about the normal times of the midday adjournment on an on-going basis.

In reviewing the matter PPC was conscious that the decision to reduce the length of the adjournment was taken by a very narrow majority by the old States at a time when only 34 members were present. In addition the decision was taken during a period when States members had been faced with an almost record number of additional meeting days because of the volume of business to be debated before the elections and the prospect of lengthening sitting hours at the expense of members' work outside the Chamber was an attractive option. The Committee considers that the more structured approach to planning States' business that has been introduced as part of the new system of government will hopefully overcome the concerns about the need for unscheduled additional meetings that perhaps influenced the decision to make this change in October 2005.

Having reviewed the matter PPC accepts that present Standing Order 44 on the length of the midday adjournment strikes the wrong balance between the need for debating time in the Chamber and the many other activities that members can be involved in on a States' day. Although there may be a perception that the adjournment is simply for members to eat lunch experience shows that this is not the case. The adjournment is almost invariably used for meetings and, even with the abolition of the Committee system, there are a number of Committees, Panels and other bodies that meet during the adjournment. In addition there are frequently presentations for all members during this period and the mere fact of having all members together in one place at one time means that many informal meetings between members can take place. The Committee is also conscious that Ministers and members with other positions of responsibility need to have adequate time during a States' day to deal with urgent matters that may arise.

The Committee's conclusion is that the States midday adjournment should be amended to 12.45 p.m. to 2.15 p.m. In this way there will be a 30 minute period for members to actually eat lunch and a full one hour period to hold meetings or presentations and attend to the many other matters that members have to deal with on a States' day.

As can be seen the Committee is not proposing that the end of adjournment reverts to 2.30 p.m. The Committee believes that 1½ hours is an appropriate length but the wording in this projet deliberately sets out the whole of Standing Order 44 so that any member who feels strongly that 2.30 p.m. is a more appropriate time to reconvene can lodge an amendment to that effect. In order to ensure that the States take a final decision in this matter the Committee would therefore urge any member who considers that the States should not reconvene until 2.30 p.m.

to lodge such an amendment so that this issue can be debated and resolved once and for all. The Committee considers that it will be important, once a decision has been taken, for the adjournment to take place within the agreed times.

These are obviously no financial or manpower implications arising from this amendment to Standing Orders.

Explanatory Note

This Amendment substitutes standing order 44, which is concerned with the adjournment of the States between the morning and afternoon sessions of a meeting. It provides for the presiding officer to invite the States to adjourn at 12.45 p.m. instead of at 1 p.m.



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Made

[date to be inserted]

Coming into force

[date to be inserted]

THE STATES, in pursuance of Article 47 of the States of Jersey Law 2005^[1], have made the following amendment to Standing Orders –

1 Standing order 44 substituted

For standing order 44 of the Standing Orders of the States of Jersey^[2] there shall be substituted the following standing order –

“44 Midday adjournment

If the business of the States is not concluded by 12.45 p.m. the presiding officer shall at that time invite the members of the States to decide whether to adjourn immediately and continue at 2.15 p.m.”.

2 Citation and commencement

This Amendment may be cited as Amendment (No. 4) of the Standing Orders of the States of Jersey and shall come into force on the day that it is made.

[1]

chapter 16.800

[2]

chapter 16.800.15