

# STATES OF JERSEY



## RE-INSTATEMENT OF SENATORS (P.2/2025): FIFTH AMENDMENT

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Lodged au Greffe on 11th March 2025  
by Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade  
Earliest date for debate: 18th March 2025

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STATES GREFFE

RE-INSTATEMENT OF SENATORS (P.2/2025) – FIFTH AMENDMENT

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**1 PAGE 2, PARAGRAPH (a) –**

After paragraph (a) insert the following new paragraph (b) and redesignate the subsequent paragraph accordingly –

“(b) that the election for Senators should be held in advance of the deadline for nomination of any other class of candidate for election as a States Assembly Member; and”

DEPUTY M. TADIER OF ST. BRELADE

**Note:** After this amendment, the proposition would read as follows –

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

- (a) that the office of Senator, elected on an Island-wide basis, should sit alongside the offices of Connétable and Deputy in the States Assembly, and should be re-instated by removing one Deputy from each of the nine electoral constituencies and substituting nine Senators in their place;
- (b) that the election for Senators should be held in advance of the deadline for nomination of any other class of candidate for election as a States Assembly Member; and
- (c) to request the Privileges and Procedures Committee to bring forward the necessary legislative amendments to give effect to this proposition in time for the General Election in 2026.

## REPORT

### Introduction

Between 1948 – 2011, the elections for Senators were always held separately and *before* the elections for Deputies. There were good reasons for this and today, there are also compelling reasons why Senatorial elections should take place prior to the nomination day for the other two offices, which I outline below.

For clarification, this amendment is agnostic on the question of the re-introduction of Senators, but asks that if re-introduced, the election for Senators should take precedence over the election for Deputies and Connétables in terms of timing.

### Senior Office

A view which is often put forward by the supporters of the role of Senator is that the politician who is eventually elected as Chief Minister *should have* an island-wide mandate. Whilst there is no official rule about this, it is certainly true that since the creation of Ministerial Government in 2005, all holders of that office have been Senators, of course until the role of Senator was abolished after the 2022 general election. It had almost become a convention that only Senators could hold the ‘top job’, and in my mind, it is unconceivable that the public would countenance a Chief Minister without an island-wide mandate if one existed. It is also worth noting that even after the abolition of Senator, that all the candidates for Chief Minister in 2022 and after the vote of no confidence in 2024 (Deputies Mézec, Moore, Farnham and Gorst) had previously held an island-wide mandate.

In the mind of the public, some of whom feel aggrieved that they cannot vote for the Chief Minister directly, the ability to choose six, eight, nine or 12 Senators was and is the opportunity to choose the pool from which the Chief Minister will be chosen.

### Focus

Given this logic, it makes good sense to have the Senatorial elections as a *stand-alone* election. This allows the public and the media to focus their attention on what is being said by those vying for *senior office*, without the distraction of *parish and district* elections. Similarly, it would assure that when those other elections do take place, the focus can then be on those elections.

For those who have taken part in the Senatorial elections, either as candidates or campaign supporters, they will know that it is an intensive period, with about 15 hustings in total, meaning that candidates will have to attend hustings most weeknights during the 5 weeks of the election period. The choice for the media is whether to cover all of these meetings, and how much column space/airtime to give to the other election candidates, who are, after all, in the majority. At a general election, interest invariably sits with the candidates that *every* voter can vote for - *the Senators*.

Another consideration, which may be considered beneficial, is that having the slate of Senators elected before the other roles would allow more time for the prospective Chief Ministerial candidates to put together their policy position and a programme for the term office. It could also allow those Senators-elect to campaign on behalf of those yet-to-be-elected Connétable and Deputy candidates who they may be hoping to have in their cabinet.

### **A Single Election day - The nail in the Coffin of Senators**

It was argued by some at the time, that the ‘final nail in the coffin’ of the Senators was when the States decided in 2010 to move to the single election day. A single election day highlighted, in the mind of the public- and of politicians, the fact that all three positions of Constable, Deputy and Senator, were effectively all the same, and diluted the focus between the Senatorial. All States Members could put themselves forward for any role once elected and have the same voice and same vote; this led to the obvious conclusion that there was no real difference between Senators and Deputies. Sure enough, during the 2018-2022 term, the island-wide mandate was finally abolished, and one of the arguments that prevailed was that it was confusing to ask voters to elect three different types of politician all on the same day when there was *no difference* between them once they were all elected.

The single election day was also seen by many to act as a disincentive for experienced sitting Deputies/Connétables from putting themselves forward for Senator. Firstly, contesting an island-wide campaign is usually much more financially costly for the candidate than contesting a district or parish election. Why would a locally popular Constable or Deputy put themselves forward for Senator for fear that if they did not get quite enough votes, they would be denied the opportunity to represent a constituency that they really love and where they may still be popular.

### **‘Stepping Up’**

At the recent St Brelade meeting held in February to discuss the potential reintroduction of the role of Senators, I counted 16 members of the public who were not current States Members, of which 2 were former States Members.

At that meeting, several members of the public stated that they thought that a Senator should first have served a term as Deputy, some even suggesting it should be a requirement.

On the matter of a separate election day, there was also strong support from those present. It was recognised that this would be likely to give the electorate a wider choice of candidates who would stand for election, as well as giving some Deputies and Connétables the opportunity to ‘step-up’ to Senator, after having served their *apprenticeship*. They were also clear that there were some Deputies they would not want to lose as more ‘local’ representatives, which might be the case were a popular Deputy unable to secure votes in other parts of the island, perhaps simply due to being *unknown* in other parishes.

### **Financial and staffing implications**

If this amendment is adopted, it would be necessary for a separate publication to be sent round to voters for a separate election period for Senators. It has been suggested to me that a realistic figure for this would be in the region of £20,000 for printing and postage. Some costs would potentially be saved as the subsequent booklet (containing Deputy and Connétables candidates) would be more streamlined.

There would be some manpower implications, for the staffing of polling stations for both pre-poll and on-the-day voting.

<b>Judicial Greffe - 2022 Election Costs</b>	<b>£</b>
Costs relating to the Pre-Poll and Postal	£73,433
Contribution to the Parishes Polling Station costs	£48,347
<b>TOTAL cost to Judicial Greffe</b>	<b>£121,780</b>

Based on figures for 2022, the cost relating to the Judicial Greffe prepoll and postal voting is estimated to be in the region of £125,000.

In terms of the balance of value for money and public interest, it is my belief that the benefits of having the elections for Senators separate to the those of other members outweighs any financial cost that would be incurred.'

### **Children's Rights Impact Assessment**

A Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) has been prepared in relation to this proposition and is available to read on the States Assembly website.

### **Re-issue Note**

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This amendment has been re-issued to provide updated Financial and Staffing implications, and to remove Part 2 of the amendment.

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