

# STATES OF JERSEY



Jersey

## DRAFT ELECTIONS (APPOINTED DAY) (JERSEY) ACT 202-

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Lodged au Greffe on 27th February 2025  
by the Privileges and Procedures Committee  
Earliest date for debate: 1st April 2025

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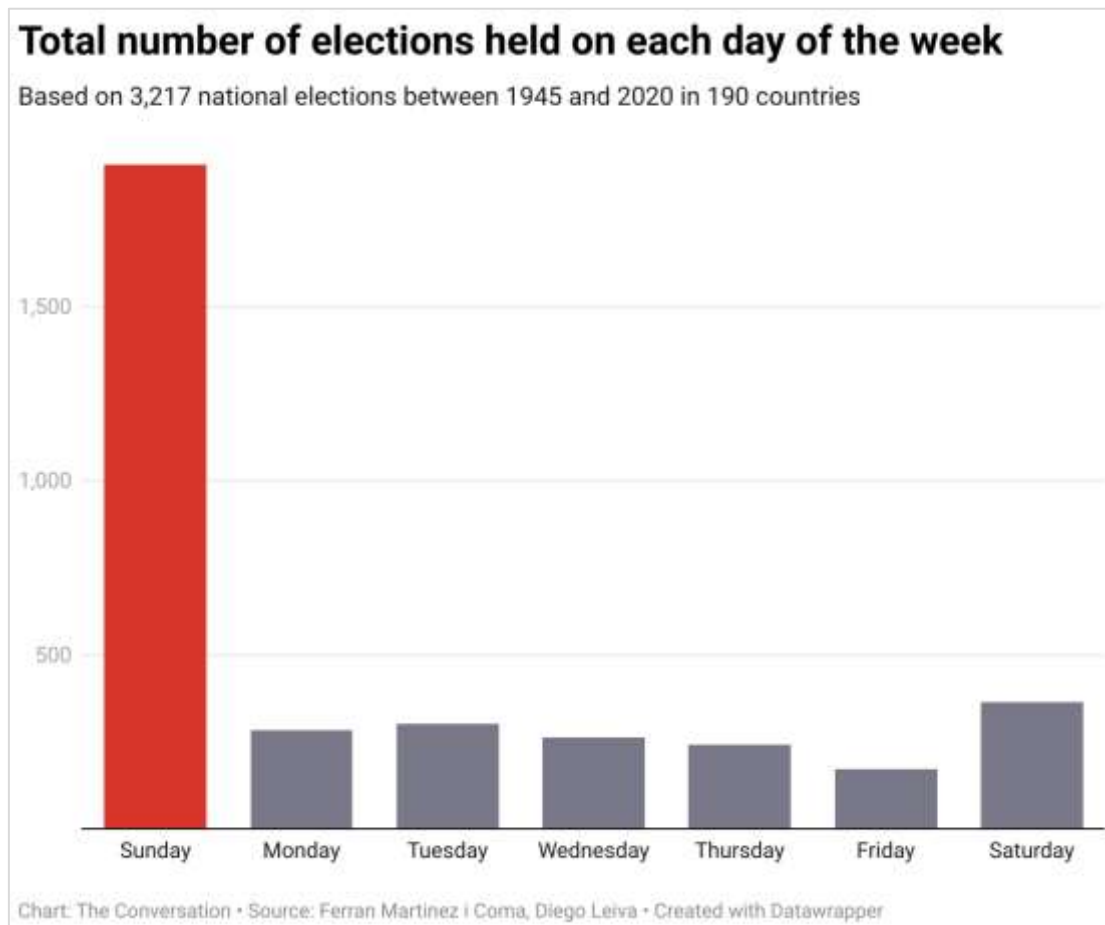
STATES GREFFE

## REPORT

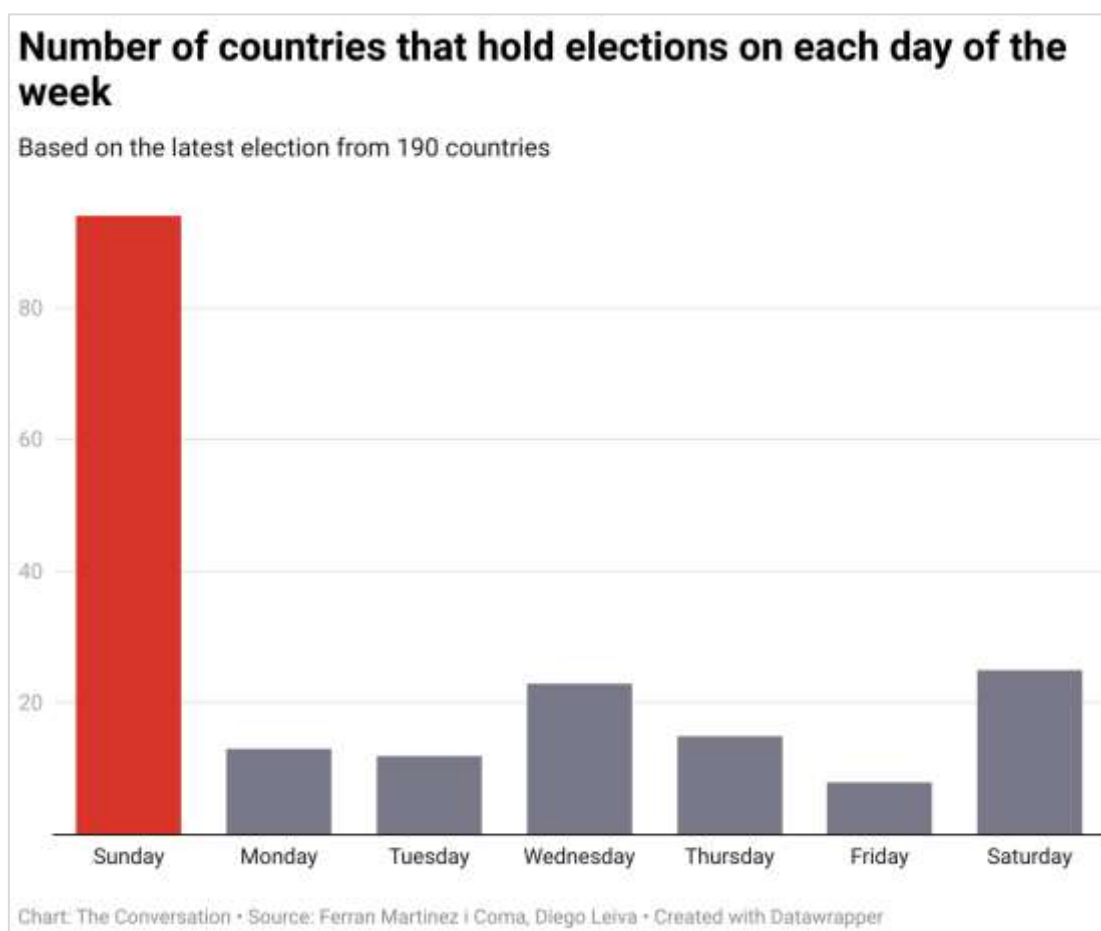
### Introduction

The Committee notes that, despite the efforts of the States Greffe, [vote.je](http://vote.je) and the Jersey Electoral Authority, voter turnout remained low at the last election. The Committee has looked at other jurisdictions where voter engagement is higher, and recognised that in many, particularly France and Portugal, elections take place on a weekend.

Although the electorate currently can vote early via pre poll or apply for postal votes, both of which offer flexibility for those who may not be available to vote on election day itself, the take up of both these options is relatively low. In recent times elections have been held mid-week on a Wednesday. A study by Postdoctoral Research Fellows at Griffith University, Australia in February 2024 posed the question ‘Which day of the week gets the most people to vote?’.



Thousands of international elections were analysed. The graph shows, in general, voting takes place on weekends (more than 60% of elections), with Sunday being the preferred day. The day on which the fewest elections are held is Friday.



The graph shows that 94 countries chose a Sunday for polling day, while just eight went with a Friday.

### **So is there any relationship between the day on which you vote and participation?**

The studies currently available show varying results. Historically countries that go to the polls on Saturday or Sunday see higher turnout, to the extent of some 6 percent, than countries that go to the polls on weekdays. A 2004 study by Mark N. Franklin, Trinity College, Connecticut entitled ‘Voter Turnout and the Dynamics of Electoral Competition in Established Democracies since 1945’ which considered 29 countries, found that when the election was held on a Sunday, participation was higher. However, when the analysis was expanded to 63 countries, the day of the election did not seem to affect participation.

The Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA) has recently published a report entitled [New Blueprint for a Modern Electoral Landscape](#) outlining many recommendations for modernising the UK election system, including consideration of moving elections to weekends.

In the absence of firm evidence to the contrary and, given voter apathy to date, PPC considers that a move to a Sunday election should be trialled to see if it brings more people to the polls. Our democracy is not going to function well when only a third of eligible voters are participating and even a modest increase in voting will be worthwhile.

Whilst mindful that there could be some logistical issues associated with moving the elections to a Sunday, including some additional cost for staff working over a weekend, the Committee considers that the cost to our democracy in having chronic low voter turnout is far higher than a

modest increase in the monetary cost of administering elections. Real democracy is when all adults have an equal opportunity to vote. The current weekday poll disadvantages those in full time employment and young voters who are students. This is reflected in the Jersey Opinions and Lifestyle Survey 2022, conducted after the last elections, which revealed that 53% of over 65's voted, compared to just 17% of those aged 16 to 34.

Fewer people work on a Sunday than any other day and the Committee believes that weekend voting will be easier for working people, students and people with families. Early morning voting does not suit many people, often in a rush to get to work, and after a day's work people are not inclined to venture out again to vote. Weekends are normally more leisurely, time management more flexible and more electors might be nearer their designated polling places at the weekend. Children will be off school and so able to accompany parents to see democracy in action, whilst those empty schools could be used as polling stations without impacting on the school week.

To make society more equal and democratic we need to level the playing field to ensure all ages have equal access to vote. Holding the elections on a Sunday will give all ages greater access to the polls.

### **Financial and staffing implications**

It is anticipated that a Sunday election will increase the administrative cost of the process, given that officials and Parish staff will be working on a weekend. However, the Committee believes that this slight increase in cost will be worthwhile, if there is an associated increase in voter turnout.

### **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.

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

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This Act, if passed, sets Sunday 7 June 2026 as the date on which the next ordinary elections will take place for Deputies and Connétables. Ordinary elections were last held on 22 June 2022.

This Act comes into force 7 days after it is made.



Jersey

## DRAFT ELECTIONS (APPOINTED DAY) (JERSEY) ACT 202-

*Made* [date to be inserted]

*Coming into force* [date to be inserted]

**THE STATES** make this Act under Article 6(3) of the [States of Jersey Law 2005](#) and Article 2(3) of the [Connétables \(Jersey\) Law 2008](#) –

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### **1 Date of 2026 ordinary elections**

Ordinary elections for Deputies and Connétables are to be held on 7 June 2026.

### **2 Citation and commencement**

This Act may be cited as the Elections (Appointed Day) (Jersey) Act 202- and comes into force 7 days after it is made.