

STATES OF JERSEY



STANDING ORDERS: TIME LIMITS ON SPEECHES DURING DEBATES

Lodged au Greffe on 4th January 2011
by Senator P.F. Routier

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

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

- (a) to agree that the Standing Orders of the States of Jersey should be amended to introduce maximum time limits for speeches made by members during the debate on any proposition;
- (b) to agree that time limits should be as follows –
 - (i) proposer of proposition – maximum of 30 minutes (except during any debate on the Strategic Plan, the Annual Business Plan or the Budget where the maximum would be 45 minutes);
 - (ii) any member speaking during the debate – maximum of 15 minutes (except during any debate on the Strategic Plan, the Annual Business Plan or the Budget where the maximum would be 30 minutes);
 - (iii) proposer replying to debate – maximum of 30 minutes (except during any debate on the Strategic Plan, the Annual Business Plan or the Budget where the maximum would be 45 minutes);
- (c) to request the Privileges and Procedures Committee to bring forward for approval the necessary amendments to the Standing Orders of the States to give effect to the proposal.

SENATOR P.F. ROUTIER

REPORT

Having looked at various jurisdictions and the rules and standing orders that apply to debating propositions in their legislatures it is common that there are time limits on the length of speeches. I am proposing that members' speeches are limited to reflect the principle of what is common practice in many jurisdictions. I have attached in the Appendix extracts of debating rules from other jurisdictions for the information of members.

Having compared the various time limits across jurisdictions I believe I am proposing reasonable time limits which are not as tight as some and do not infringe on members' ability to get their points across to enable them to influence a debate.

Members who have spoken to me and encouraged me to bring this proposition have had different reasons for supporting the principle of maximum time limits and I will leave them to articulate those to members.

For my part there are two main reasons:

Firstly, it is because limiting members to a specific time will require members to give clear focused speeches which are aimed at influencing the outcome of a debate rather than a speech which covers unrelated topics.

Secondly, there have been occasions in the past when a member has spoken for a long time and, because of time constraints on a particular day, other members have found it difficult and sometimes impossible to get their own points over in what would have been a short speech because the end of day adjournment has been looming.

This proposition aims to give all members an equal opportunity to take part in a debate and to influence the outcomes of the decision making process.

I am asking members to agree that Standing Orders be amended to allow time limits to be introduced and for the Privileges and Procedures Committee to bring forward the necessary amendments. If this proposition is accepted by members I would anticipate that PPC would also look at the practicalities involved and the possibility of having a visible time clock in the chamber so that members were aware of the time remaining available to them to complete their speech.

Financial and manpower implications

There are no financial and manpower implications other than if it is decided to place a new visible countdown time clock in the Chamber.

APPENDIX

EXAMPLES OF PROVISIONS IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS

UK House of Commons Standing Orders (Public Business)

Time limits on speeches

- 47.(1) The Speaker may announce that he intends to call Members to speak in a debate, or at certain times during that debate, for no longer than any period he may specify, and he may at any time make subsequent announcements varying the terms of an announcement under this paragraph.
- (2) Whenever the Speaker has made an announcement under paragraph (1), he may, subject to paragraph (4), direct any Member (other than a Minister of the Crown, a Member speaking on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition, or not more than one Member nominated by the leader of the second largest opposition party) who has spoken for that period to resume his seat forthwith.
- (3) The Speaker may announce, at or before the commencement of any debate (other than a topical debate) in respect of which he has made or intends to make an announcement under paragraph (1) of this order, that speeches by a Minister of the Crown, Members speaking on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition, and not more than one Member nominated by the leader of the second largest opposition party shall be limited to twenty minutes and he may direct any such Member who has spoken for that period to resume his seat forthwith.
- (3A) The Speaker may announce, at or before the commencement of a topical debate in respect of which he has made or intends to make an announcement under paragraph (1) of this order, that speeches by a Minister of the Crown and any Member speaking on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition shall be limited to ten minutes and he may direct any such Member who has spoken for that period to resume his seat forthwith.
- (4) In relation to any speech, the Speaker shall add to any period specified –
- (a) under paragraph (1) of this order –
- (i) one minute if one intervention is accepted, plus the time taken by that intervention;
- (ii) two minutes if two or more interventions are accepted, plus the time taken by the first two such interventions;
- (b) under paragraph (3) or (3A) of this order, one minute for each intervention accepted up to a maximum of fifteen minutes.

Scottish Parliament – Standing Orders

Rule 7.2 Calling speakers and content of speeches

1. No member except the Presiding Officer may speak unless called upon to do so by the Presiding Officer. In deciding who should be called, the Presiding Officer shall have regard to the nature of the business under consideration. Normally, members shall speak standing at their places and shall address the Presiding Officer.
2. The Presiding Officer may allocate speaking time, whether for proceedings in relation to a particular item of business or for a particular speaker in any proceedings, and may do so whether or not the proceedings have started or the speaker has started to speak. The Presiding Officer may not allocate speaking time in a manner which would disrupt any timetable of business set out in the daily business list.
3. The Presiding Officer may order a member to stop speaking if that member continues to speak beyond any time allocated to him or her or to that item of business (whether by the Presiding Officer or in the daily business list or under these Rules) or if, in the opinion of the Presiding Officer, the member departs from the subject or repeats himself or herself.
4. A speaker may not be interrupted except by the Presiding Officer. The speaker may, however, give way to allow another member to intervene.

National Assembly for Wales – Standing Orders

Rules of Debate

- 8.1 Members called by the Presiding Officer to speak must address the chair.
- 8.2 Members may speak in English or Welsh and simultaneous interpretation facilities must be provided for speeches made in Welsh.
- 8.3 The Secretary of State for Wales is entitled to participate in plenary meetings but not to vote. The Presiding Officer may call the Secretary of State to speak in any debate in which the Secretary of State is participating.
- 8.4 Speeches must be relevant to the business before the Assembly, and avoid tedious repetition.
- 8.5 The Presiding Officer may announce a time limit on Members' speeches and may direct a Member who has spoken for too long to stop speaking.
- 8.6 A Member, other than the proposer of a motion or an amendment who is exercising a right of reply, may not speak more than once on any matter except, with leave of the Presiding Officer, for the purpose of briefly explaining some material point of his or her original speech.
- 8.7 A Member who is speaking may allow other Members to intervene for the purposes of clarification before resuming a speech.

- 8.8 A Member may not speak after the proposer of a motion has exercised a right of reply.

Canadian House of Commons – Standing Orders

Time limit and comments on speeches when Speaker in Chair

- 43(1)(a) Unless otherwise provided in these Standing Orders, when the Speaker is in the Chair, no Member, except the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, or a Minister moving a government order and the Member speaking in reply immediately after such Minister, shall speak for more than twenty minutes at a time in any debate.
- (b) Following any speech by the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, a Minister moving a government order, or the Member speaking in reply immediately after such Minister, and following any twenty-minute speech, a period not exceeding ten minutes shall be made available, if required, to allow Members to ask questions and comment briefly on matters relevant to the speech and to allow responses thereto.
- (c) Except as provided in Standing Orders 95, 97.1(2)(c)(i) and 126(1)(a), following any ten-minute speech, a period not exceeding five minutes shall be made available, if required, to allow Members to ask questions and comment briefly on matters relevant to the speech and to allow responses thereto.

Period of debate divided in two

- (2)(a) The Whip of a party may indicate to the Speaker at any time during a debate governed by this Standing Order that one or more of the periods of debate limited pursuant to section (1) of this Standing Order to twenty minutes and allotted to Members of his or her party are to be divided in two.
- (b) Any Member rising to speak during a debate limited by section (1) of this Standing Order to twenty-minute speeches, may indicate to the Speaker that he or she will be dividing his or her time with another Member.

Canada – Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories – Standing Orders

Member speaking

- 21 Every Member recognized to speak shall stand in his or her place and address the Speaker.

Time limit and exceptions

- 22 No Member shall speak for more than twenty minutes at any time in debate, but this Rule does not apply to –
- (a) Members' Statements;

- (b) Emergency Debates;
- (c) Replies to Opening Address; and
- (d) Petitions.

Australian House of Representatives

1 Maximum speaking times

The maximum time limits that apply to debates, speeches and statements are as follows –

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Time (max)</i>
<i>Address in Reply</i> Each Member	20 mins
<i>Adjournment of the House or Main Committee – to end the sitting</i> Whole debate in House on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday Whole debate in House on Thursday Whole debate in Main Committee Extended debate (if required by Minister to reply etc) Each Member – no extension of time can be granted Member who has already spoken to the motion may speak again for one period if no other Member rises to speak Minister in extension of debate <i>(standing orders 31 (House) and 191 (Main Committee))</i>	1 hour 30 mins not specified 10 mins 5 mins 5 mins 5 mins
<i>Bills – Main Appropriation – second reading</i> Mover Leader of Opposition or Member representing	no limit no limit
<i>Bills – Other Government – second reading</i> Mover Leader of Opposition or Member representing Minister at conclusion of debate	30 mins 30 mins 15 mins
<i>Bills – Private Members' (All) – presentation</i> Presenter <i>(standing order 41)</i>	10 mins
<i>Bills – Private Members' (Government) – second reading</i> Mover Prime Minister or Member representing Leader of Opposition or Member representing	30 mins 30 mins 30 mins
<i>Bills – Private Members' (Non-Government) – second reading</i> Mover Prime Minister or Member representing	30 mins 30 mins
<i>Bills – All – second reading</i> Any other Member not specified above <i>(standing order 222)</i>	15 mins or lesser time determined by the Selection Committee
<i>Bills – All – consideration in detail</i> <i>Bills – All – consideration of Senate amendments or requests</i> Each Member – unlimited number of periods	5 mins

<p>Censure of or no confidence in the Government (if accepted by the Government under standing order 48)</p> <p>Mover 30 mins Prime Minister or Minister representing 30 mins Any other Member 20 mins</p> <p>(if otherwise, e.g. under suspension of standing orders, see Other debates – not otherwise provided for)</p>	
<p>Committee and delegation business on Mondays</p> <p>Announcements of inquiries Committee chair or deputy chair</p> <p>Reports Each Member</p> <p>(standing orders 39, 40, 192)</p>	<p>as determined by the Selection Committee</p> <p>10 mins or lesser time determined by the Selection Committee</p>
<p>Condolence motion Each Member</p> <p>(standing order 49)</p>	no limit
<p>Dissent motion Whole debate 30 mins Mover 10 mins Seconder 5 mins Member next speaking 10 mins Any other Member 5 mins</p> <p>(standing order 87)</p>	
<p>Elections of Speaker or Deputy Speakers Each Member</p> <p>(standing order 11)</p>	5 mins
<p>Extension of time On motion, determined without debate, a Member may continue a speech interrupted under this standing order, for one period</p>	10 mins, but extension may not exceed half of the original period allotted
<p>Grievances Whole debate 1 hour Each Member 10 mins</p> <p>(standing order 192B)</p>	
<p>Matter of public importance Whole discussion 1 hour 30 mins Proposer 15 mins Member next speaking 15 mins Any other Member 10 mins</p> <p>(standing order 46)</p>	
<p>Members' statements</p> <p>90 second statements Whole period on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays 15 mins Each Member (but not a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary) 90 seconds</p> <p>(standing order 43)</p> <p>3 minute constituency statements Whole period 30 mins Each Member 3 mins</p> <p>(standing order 193)</p>	

<i>Other debates – not otherwise provided for</i> (e.g. censure of a Minister, reference to committee, approval of public works) Mover of a motion Any other Member	20 mins 15 mins
<i>Other statements – by permission from the Speaker</i> (e.g. adding to answer, personal explanation, privilege) Member	at the discretion of the Speaker
<i>Other statements – by leave of the House</i> (e.g. ministerial statements and responses to them, committee reports) Member	no limit
<i>Private Members' business on Mondays</i> Whole debate Each Member <i>(standing order 41)</i>	as determined by the Selection Committee
<i>Question Time</i> Each question Each answer <i>(standing orders 100 and 104)</i>	45 secs 4 mins
<i>Suspension of standing or other orders without notice</i> Whole debate Mover Seconder (if any) Member next speaking Any other Member <i>(standing order 47)</i>	25 mins 10 mins 5 mins 10 mins 5 mins
<i>Taxation or duty proposal</i> Mover Leader of Opposition or Member representing Any other Member <i>(standing orders 178 and 179)</i>	20 mins 20 mins 10 mins
<i>Thanks motion</i> Each Member <i>(standing order 49)</i>	no limit
<i>Urgent matters – allotment of time for debate</i> Whole debate Each Member <i>(standing order 84)</i>	20 mins 5 mins

Australia – Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory

77. SPEECH TIME LIMITS

The maximum period for which a Member may speak on any subject indicated in this Standing Order and the maximum period for any debate, shall not, unless otherwise ordered, exceed the period specified opposite to that subject in the following schedule.

In the Assembly

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Time</i>
Election of Speaker or appointment of Chair	
Each Member	5 minutes

Address – in – Reply	
Each Member	30 minutes
Mover in reply	20 minutes
Ministerial Reports	
Whole period for Reports	30 minutes
Minister making report	5 minutes
Opposition Member and one Independent Member	2 minutes
Minister in reply	1 minute
Discussion of a definite matter of public importance	
Whole debate	2 hours
Proposer	20 minutes
Member next speaking	20 minutes
Any other Member	15 minutes
Bills – second reading	
Mover	45 minutes
Member next speaking	45 minutes
Any other Member	30 minutes
Mover in reply	30 minutes
Bills – third reading	
Mover	10 minutes
Member next speaking	10 minutes
Any other Member	5 minutes
Mover in reply	10 minutes
Debates not otherwise provided for	
Mover	30 minutes
Member next speaking	30 minutes
Any other Member	20 minutes
Mover in reply	20 minutes

Motion for adjournment of the Assembly to close the business of the day	
Each Member	5 minutes

In Committee

Each question before the Chair	
Member in charge of a Bill	No limitation
Other Members	Unlimited, each speech not to exceed 10 minutes

In the Assembly or in committee

Extension of time – with consent of a majority of the Assembly or of the committee a Member may be allowed to continue a speech interrupted under the foregoing provisions of this Standing Order, on motion without debate for one period of debate (except a speech on a motion for the adjournment of the Assembly)	For one period not exceeding 10 minutes
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