



OFFICIAL REPORT

OF THE

STATES OF DELIBERATION

OF THE

ISLAND OF GUERNSEY

HANSARD

Royal Court House, Guernsey, Friday, 27th February 2026

*All published Official Reports can be found on the
official States of Guernsey website www.gov.gg*

Volume 15, No. 6

ISSN 2049-8284

*Published by the States' Greffier, The Royal Court House,
St Peter Port, GY1 2NZ. © States of Guernsey, 2025*

Present:

Sir R. J. McMahon, Esq., Bailiff and Presiding Officer

Law Officers

H. Pullum (H.M. Comptroller)

People's Deputies

C. P. A Blin	M. Malik
Y. Burford	A. D. S. Matthews
T. L. Bury	L. J. McKenna
A. K. Cameron	P. S. N. Montague
H. L. Camp	A. J. Niles
G. M. Collins	G. A. Oswald
R. P. Curgenvén	J. M. Ozanne <small>OBE</small>
D. F. Dorritty	C. N. K. Parkinson
S. J. Falla	S. R. Rochester
A. Gabriel	T. M. Rylatt
J. A. B. Gollop	A. S. Sloan
S. T. Hansmann Rouxel	G. A. St Pier
M. A. J. Helyar	J. D. Strachan
B. R. Kay-Mouat	L. C. Van Katwyk
A. Kazantseva-Miller	S. P. J. Vermeulen
M. S. Laine	S. Williams
M. P. Leadbeater	

Representatives of the Island of Alderney

Alderney Representatives E. Hill and E. A. J. Snowdon

The Clerk to the States of Deliberation

S. M. D. Ross, Esq. (States' Greffier)

Absent at the Evocation

Deputy H. L. de Sausmarez (*relevé à 9h 33*) ; Deputy L. T. Goy (*absent de l'île*) ;
Deputy R. M. Humphreys (*absent de l'île*) ; N. R. Inder (*indisposé*)

Business transacted

Evocation.....	5
Billet d'État III.....	5
6. Revised Age Limits for Body Piercing – Proposition carried	5
3. CPA BIMR Election Observation Mission Report 2025 - Debate commenced.....	35
<i>The Assembly adjourned at 12.28 p.m. and resumed its sitting at 2.31 p.m.</i>	<i>44</i>
CPA BIMR Election Observation Mission Report 2025 - Proposition carried.....	44
7. Schedule for Future States' Business	55
<i>The Assembly adjourned at 3.35 p.m.</i>	<i>56</i>

PAGE LEFT DELIBERATELY BLANK

States of Deliberation

The States met at 9.30 a.m.

[THE BAILIFF *in the Chair*]

PRAYERS

The States' Greffier

EVOCATION

Billet d'État III

REQUÊTE

6. Revised Age Limits for Body Piercing – Proposition carried

Article 6.

The States are asked to decide:-

Whether, after consideration of the Requête entitled "Revised Age Limits for Body Piercing" dated 5th January 2016 they are of the opinion:-

1. To approve the proposals set out herein and in the draft ordinance in Appendix 1 entitled "the Tattooing, Piercing, Acupuncture and Electrolysis (Guernsey and Alderney) (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025.

2. To direct the preparation of such legislation as may be necessary to give effect to the above decision.

The States' Greffier: Article 6, Requête, Revised Age Limits for Body Piercing.

5

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez, you have managed to sneak in during the course of roll call. Was it your wish to be relevé?

Deputy de Sausmarez: Yes, please, sir.

10

The Bailiff: Thank you very much.

I am going to invite the lead requérant, Deputy St Pier, to open the debate on the requête, please.

15

Deputy St Pier: Thank you, sir.

Firstly, I should apologise to you and Members, sir. There is a typo in Proposition 1 in which the date at the end should read 2026 and not 2025, and I am hoping, sir, that this can be dealt with without the need for a formal technical amendment.

20 **The Bailiff:** I think everyone can see that the draft Ordinance is dated 2026, so the typo can just be read in appropriately.

Deputy St Pier: Thank you very much, sir.

25 I will be candid. This issue is not the most important issue the States faces. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) Not by a long shot. It is not a priority. It is not part of the Government Work Plan, and that is precisely why a requête is the appropriate route to address the problem. Indeed it is probably the only means of doing so.

30 In short, we should be able to walk and chew gum at the same time. In other words, yes, we need to walk by dealing with the big problems to be addressed through our priorities and super-priorities in the Government Work Plan, but we should also be able to chew gum by dealing with the small issues where policy or legislation is no longer fit for purpose.

35 Before I go further, I would like to thank my fellow requérants and also all those who contributed to the consultation, as set out in the Rule 4 note. The approach that we have adopted by attaching the draft legislation is intentionally innovative. It was done to remove the objection that, if the requête succeeded, it would divert resources in St James's Chambers. More realistically, based on past performance, what would have happened is the resolutions would have joined a long list of drafting directions which, with no priority, would probably have languished and not been acted upon for a considerable period of time.

40 I should emphasise that in drafting the legislation ourselves, no public service resources were used other than some helpful comments from the head of legislative drafting, who contributed as part of the consultation.

45 For those who are concerned about process, I would say that of course, first and foremost, before we are Committee members we are here as legislators. Perhaps this approach can become a template for moving forward with other lower priority issues that will never otherwise get any airtime. Actually lowering the age of decriminalising 12 and 30-year-olds riding e-cycles might perhaps fit the Bill. I do not know.

50 It is worth noting that the understandable inability of the Committee *for* Health & Social Care to address this issue means that it has been picked up and put down by the Committee and its officers at least three times since the problem was first identified nine years ago in 2017, including by Deputy Bury in the first half of the last term, and by me in the second-half.

55 So we are creating our own inefficient failure demand, wasting time and resources by failing to be able to address some of these less important minor issues. What is the problem we are trying to solve with this requête and law change? The current law prohibits body piercing on individuals between the ages of 16 and 18, regardless of the nature of the piercing or parental consent. Remember that this cohort of our community are enabled by law to give sexual consent, to vote, to join the armed forces, and to get married with parental consent. But they cannot apparently opt for a nasal stud or a piercing in their upper ear. It is absurd and its overreach of Government in the lives of individuals.

60 I would hope that those who claim to be libertarians and supporters of small government rather than big government will support this requête as an opportunity to demonstrate their credentials in this regard. But more importantly than the civil liberty issues are what the current law means in practice, is that our youngsters are piercing themselves or each other. The consequences are botched jobs by these amateurs using non-sterile equipment. This is the public health hazard that we are seeking to address.

65 The key points from the requête that are worth re-emphasising in opening debate are these. The law change would allow non-intimate body piercings for individuals aged 16 and 17, and remember that this is with the prior written consent of a parent or guardian, but only performed by a registered operator. Surface piercings, stretches, and flesh tunnels would not be permitted, and all of these terms are set out in the draft legislation.

70 The change aligns with practices in other jurisdictions, including Wales. The change addresses the public health concerns held by our own public health experts while maintaining safeguards for minors. As a minor point, it would also enable HSC in future to make further amendments by regulation without the need for a further Ordinance. A technical change, but one designed to reduce the hurdles that have prevented change in the last nine years.

75 I do hope that Members will regard this as a relatively simple and uncomplicated matter, which they can support, and I look forward to responding to debate.

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Under Rule 28(3), there is an order for those Committees that have been consulted, starting with the President of the Policy & Resources Committee. So Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Thank you, sir.

85 The Committee does not really have a Committee position on this. I think it understands the rationale as set out in the requête. The only comment that I would make is, and Deputy St Pier has indeed just addressed this in his opening, on the procedural irregularity. I would not want it to set a precedent for a lot of freelancing of legislation necessarily, especially on larger items. But I do understand the rationale as set out by Deputy St Pier. But I do not think I have a Committee position per se to articulate.

90 **The Bailiff:** The other Committee that has been consulted is the Committee for Health & Social Care. So, Deputy Oswald.

Deputy Oswald: Thank you, sir.

95 Members will have read our Letter of Comment. This is not a priority for Committee and Committee members are free to vote as they choose on this matter.

The Bailiff: Thank you very much.

There is one amendment that has been circulated in respect of the revised age limits for body piercing.

100 Deputy Oswald, is it your wish to move that amendment now?

[Amendment 1.](#)

In Proposition 1, to insert immediately after "2025" the following:

", subject to –

- deleting the words "cartilage and" in paragraph 5 of the Requête,

- deleting the definition of "cartilage piercing" inserted into section 1(3) of the Tattooing, Piercing, Acupuncture and Electrolysis (Guernsey and Alderney) Law, 2000 ("the 2000 Law") at clause 1(2) of the draft Ordinance in Appendix 1, and

- deleting the words "cartilage piercing and" in substituted section 8(2) of the 2000 Law set out in clause 1(3) of the draft Ordinance in Appendix 1".

Deputy Oswald: It is, sir.

105 **The Bailiff:** Do you want to have it read?

Deputy Oswald: Yes, please.

The Bailiff: Thank you very much.

110

The States' Greffier:

In Proposition 1, In Proposition 1, to insert immediately after "2025" the following: ", subject to deleting the words "cartilage and" in paragraph 5 of the Requête; (b) deleting the definition of "cartilage piercing" inserted into section 1(3) of the Tattooing, Piercing, Acupuncture and Electrolysis (Guernsey and Alderney) Law, 2000 ("the 2000 Law") at clause 1(2) of the draft Ordinance in Appendix 1, and (c) deleting the words "cartilage piercing and" in substituted section 8(2) of the 2000 Law set out in clause 1(3) of the draft Ordinance in Appendix 1".

The Bailiff: Deputy Oswald then, please.

115

Deputy Oswald: Thank you, sir.

Members of the Assembly will have seen and read the proposed Tattooing, Piercing, Acupuncture and Electrolysis (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026 to be put to this Assembly for approval by our colleagues, Deputy St Pier, Bury and others. They will have seen the Letter of Comment dated 3rd December 2025 from my Committee whereby our view is that this is not a Committee priority, but effectively Committee members would have a free vote on this issue.

120

Accordingly, what I am about to say are my personal views, albeit that I have discussed this with colleagues on the Committee.

I thank Deputy St Pier for his introduction to the amendment, and there is much of what he says that I take no issue with. You may wonder, however, why I am now raising an amendment to change the Proposition of Deputy St Pier and others.

125

Quite rightly, the requérant sought advice through the HSC Committee on the potential health impacts of their requête were it to be successful, and quite rightly they adapted their proposals to match the advice they were given by officers of HSC. Specific piercings, including the use of stretchers and flesh tunnels, would remain unavailable to those under the age of 18.

130

I, however, remained uncomfortable with the idea that cartilage piercing would be available, albeit with parental permission to those under 18. Although this was not an area of interest for me in my medical career, I was aware of the potential risks involved with this.

The specific risks of cartilage piercing are perichondritis, which is an indolent destructive infection of cartilage, or of keloid formation, which is otherwise known as hypertrophic scarring. Both of these conditions can be very difficult to treat. The helix of the ear is particularly prone to these complications, although the nose is not excluded.

135

I became more uncomfortable when I read in the proposed Ordinance that cartilage piercing, defined as piercing the cartilage tissues, including but not limited to a whole list of anatomical terms which I will not read out, were specifically to be allowed in the Ordinance as applied to those aged 16 to 18, again albeit with parental consent.

140

I undertook a literature search using PubMed, which is an internationally recognised medical search engine and is not AI, which documented significant complications in up to one in 20 for the combined totals of those having piercings of either nasal cartilage and/or the cartilaginous parts of the outer ear.

145

Why had we on the Committee not raised these concerns before? I realised it was because at no stage either with previous Committees' deliberations or our own deliberations had we consulted with those who had to deal with significance or serious complications of such piercings when they arise. These professional experts are, of course, the ear, nose and throat surgeons. Accordingly, I communicated last weekend with all three ENT surgeons resident on Island. Two of these are currently practising and one is recently retired. They were unanimous in their view as to the potential harms this change in the law may incur.

150

I quote from their comments:

I have long been concerned about piercing through cartilage and their potential for significant complications, which include serious infection and permanent irreversible damage to the pierced cartilage and neighbouring structures. I have managed too many of these to have any view other than such piercing should not happen ever and certainly not in young people. I have seen too many young people scarred permanently from such piercings, and without exception they regret what they have done and the long term and serious consequences of their actions. The only logical conclusion is that the proposers of this amendment do not themselves understand the risks. It makes no medical sense to essentially lower the age at which someone can have a higher risk cosmetic procedure performed.

155

There is a lot more along these lines, which I shall not trouble with you now. It is also important to point out that although treatment for complication is of course available, it would come at a cost to either the patient or, more likely in the case of those under age 18, to their parents. Treatment of complications related to procedures carried out for purely cosmetic reasons is not covered by the secondary healthcare contract.

160

Clearly, when young people reach the age of 18, they can make their own minds up as to what they do to their bodies. Hopefully, they will be properly advised upon the risks of any such procedure and appropriately consented. But just because in other jurisdictions cartilaginous piercings in those over age 16 are legal, we locally should not follow this line blindly. This Assembly should take responsibility and protect our young people, if only for a couple of years, from harm that could be inflicted.

165

I thank the Greffe and the Law Officers for the help in drafting this amendment, which I am told will mean that cartilage piercings of any kind will not be allowed under 18 years of age. I urge my fellow Members to back my amendment, as seconded by Deputy Malik.

170

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Deputy Malik, do you formally second amendment number 1?

Deputy Malik: Yes, sir.

175

The Bailiff: Thank you very much.
Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: Thank you, sir.

180

As a requérant, I am speaking early in this amendment as I would like to explain to Members why, if they are tempted by the amendment, it might be preferable that they just vote against the whole requête, because it does rather just make a bit of a dog's breakfast of things in all practical senses, and I think it would make it very difficult to work with or explain in the real world.

185

While often we are working in legal terms making our decisions in here, as we discussed quite lengthy yesterday, we also have a responsibility to think about practicality and how our decisions will play out in practice. The impacts of this amendment – and, to be clear, this is for 16 and 17-year-olds with parental consent – by removing cartilage from the proposed Law, it would remove the ability to have any other part of the ear, other than the lobes, pierced, which is where we are now in terms of the Law, and arguably are the most popular piercings after lobes. But it would remain that 16 and 17-year-olds, with parental permission, could have their lips pierced, their navels pierced, and it removes nose piercings, but only the bits of the side of the nose. You could still have the central septum done, because that is not cartilage.

190

I think that is very unclear and hard to justify in the real world setting when you imagine a parent and a 17-year-old walking in, 'I would like to have my nose pierced, please'. 'Well, you cannot have that bit done, but you can have this bit done.' Sorry for people that are listening, I am doing a lot of pointing to make sure that my colleagues are clear. I am not sure that that necessarily supports the argument that Deputy Oswald and the ENTs are making.

195

While I do respect that Deputy Oswald has informally sought the opinion of a few local ENTs, I do not think it should be taken as writ because that is not formal consultation. We also have not been given any indication if those ENTs have any data on whether the piercings gone wrong that they are dealing with refer to professionally done ones or ones done at home. That is the very point of the requête, is to try and make safe regulated piercing more accessible to lower the instances of home things, and hopefully prevent the very types of situation that Deputy Oswald and his ENTs are referring to from occurring.

200

But if this is the sort of consultation we are basing things on, then I could do a bit of my own. I have at least 20 people in my life that I know that have cartilage piercings. I have several myself

205

and none of them have had any 'long-lasting and potentially life-changing complications' as is expressed in the explanatory note.

210 My point being that when it is stated as a significant risk, we have absolutely no idea how that is quantified and how likely this risk is of occurring. Is it as risky as leaving the house? Is it as risky as crossing the road, driving a car, getting on a plane, skydiving? There is just no real detail to back it up, and it is hard to find stats on it. But I found some from a survey done in 2008 by the UK Health Security Agency where out of 754 piercings in those aged 16 to 24, hospital admission was required with seven. That is less than 1%. Again, there was not any information about whether they were
215 home done or professionally done.

I do not know if 1% counts as a high risk. I guess that is subjective on your risk appetite, but it does seem quite low to me. Remember that the proposal is for 16 and 17-year-olds with parental permission.

220 Is there risk involved? Of course there is; there is risk involved in all sorts of decisions that we allow parents to make on behalf of their children. If we allow 16 and 17-year-olds to do plenty of things without parental permission, that might have what you would call long-lasting and potentially life-changing complications, like having sex, driving. There are some particularly acute stats around young male drivers, in particular. They are four times more likely to die, but we let them do that without parental permission and we, as requérants, have received alternative views
225 from medical professionals that work closely with our young people and see the effects of home piercings very regularly.

These teenagers tell them that they buy the piercing kits and guns online and this often ends up in several poorly-placed holes and scars. They say that in lots of cases where children pierce themselves, infection sets in, and a local GP just last year was requesting to raise awareness with teenagers about the issue because of our local Law.
230

Risk is involved in piercing, full stop. People are aware of that going into it, and reputable piercing studios inform people of this and provide aftercare information and support to do their utmost to prevent it. As I have said, the point of the requête is to try and make safe and regulated piercing more accessible to young people who wish to access it, to lower the instances of home piercings that go wrong and lower the risk to young people.
235

This amendment, despite being well-intentioned, goes against that principle and muddies the waters to the point of incomprehension. So I would ask Members not to support it on that basis.

Thank you.

240 **The Bailiff:** Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Thank you, sir.

I am certainly open minded about this amendment and interested in the debate, especially having heard the comments of Deputy Burry. It struck me, when Deputy Oswald gave us his opening
245 comments on it, that the advice was that – the phrase I wrote down because it was so striking is, 'Such piercings should not happen ever'.

Subject to the comments that Deputy Bury has made about consultation, etc., it does strike me that actually probably the better way – this might be a solution to the wrong problem. Because if that is the case and if that can be substantiated, then it strikes me that the better approach to
250 dealing with it would be to put more regulation around them generally for everyone rather than keep them in the high-risk category of young people wanting to or feeling as though they have got no option but to do them themselves.

I wonder if Deputy Oswald, when he replies to debate, could maybe comment on whether this is an issue that the Committee may well look into generally, if such piercings are of such great
255 concern. But at the moment, I cannot see how this solves the problem without exacerbating the original problem that the requête is indeed trying to address.

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

260 **Deputy Leadbeater:** Thank you, sir.

I am not going to be supporting this amendment at all. If you look at just a quick ChatGPT, what 16-year-olds can do in Guernsey: leave school, work full-time, they can consent to medical treatment but they cannot get their cartilage or their ears pierced. It is bizarre. They can join the armed forces and they can get married. I really do not understand the difference between a 16 to 265 18-year-old and above 18-year-olds; the different effect it is going to have on the body. It is going to have the same effect on the body.

Like Deputy Bury, I know countless people with these sorts of piercings. Countless. I do not know anybody that has had any long-term problems from it. I think we should be able to give these youngsters choice.

270 I looked at the explanatory note and it says:

Expert opinion indicates that piercing through cartilage put those who undergo these procedures at significant risks.

‘Expert opinion indicates’; I have heard this kind of stuff so many times and it often comes from people within the medical profession that have their opinions not backed up by evidence, but it is 275 their opinions. Because there was an email that I got sent by Deputy Oswald not long ago, and this was from somebody in the medical profession in Guernsey. This statement they made was the biggest problem facing physicians in Guernsey at the moment is medicinal cannabis. I thought how bizarre. I thought it must be the ageing demographic or the fact that we cannot retain staff or the fact that we have got a hospital to build that we have not got the money for.

280

Deputy Oswald: Point of correction, sir. I am not sure whether this –

The Bailiff: Deputy Oswald.

285 **Deputy Oswald:** Sorry. I am not sure whether straying into the area of the rights or wrongs of cannabis at this point is appropriate to this amendment.

Two Members: Hear, hear.

290 **The Bailiff:** Well, strictly speaking, that should be raised as a point of order about relevance. I do think that one needs to focus, Deputy Leadbeater, on what the amendment seeks to do to the requête.

Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, sir.

295 I accept your judgement on that. But I was just trying to make the point that the expert opinion indicates it is completely subjective. That is an opinion from someone, like this opinion that I heard in that email. There is no evidence to back up that opinion, as there is no evidence to back up this opinion in this explanatory note. That is the point I am trying to make.

300 So I apologise. I was not trying to turn this into a cannabis debate. I was just trying to make the point that there is no substance to this claim here whatsoever. So I would advise people to dispense with this amendment and we can just crack on, support the requête, and then go on to the next piece of business and go home. Deputy.

The Bailiff: Deputy Sloan.

305

Deputy Sloan: A bit of levity; there we go. It was in danger of degenerating, this debate, I note, but I will say this. This medical opinion provided by a doctor who is the President of the HSC Committee, this strange, previse world where it was quite clearly articulated that a doctor had gone

310 and spoken to three Island surgeons and he had done research using academic published literature and said, 'This is my medical opinion' and that is trumped by AI. Well done. I am amazed.

Deputy Leadbeater: A point of correction, sir.

315 **The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: Deputy Oswald's opinion was not trumped by AI. AI helped assist me find out things that 16 to 18-year-olds could do. I did not use AI to criticise the opinion on here. I said that the opinion on here is not backed up by any evidence.

320 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Sloan.

Deputy Sloan: I think some people are rather dependent on AI for their every waking thought, but that is another matter.

325 The other thing is – and we talked about also – in terms of risk. I heard that the opinion expressed was a one in 20, and one in 20 cases is 5%, not 1%; 5%. That is quite significant risk.

Deputy Bury: Point of correction.

330 **The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: The 1% I referred to was different statistics.

The Bailiff: Deputy Sloan.

335 **Deputy Sloan:** The statistics I actually heard was one in 20, which is a high percent. There was not a consultation about it, either you take the opinion of medical experts that are in the room who have spoken to other medical experts – to then suggest it is such an inconsistent approach to not do so. I cannot see how we do not follow the advice of those laying the amendment, and if we do not then throw the whole thing out.

340 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Strachan.

Deputy Strachan: Thank you, sir. I will be brief.

345 This is a question of risk; you pointed out the risk. Deputy Oswald has laid an amendment which tries to reduce that risk. I do not think it is muddled. The regulation says X, the regulations says Y. The amendment is just asking for a small change in that risk to the requête, so I would strongly urge the Assembly to listen to the medical experts. They are not opinions; they are the experts that we have on the Island to listen to, and I do value their input on this issue.

350 We do not want to create more medical issues than this. We are just tweaking the risk here, and I hope you feel that this amendment's small change can be supported.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop.

355 **Deputy Gollop:** In discussing the amendment it is hard not to veer into general debate because there is an interrelationship, in my view, so I will speak a little bit pertaining to both.

360 I think we are in a very unsatisfactory situation with this whole requête and the amendment that comes from it; I will explain why. I had already seen it before it came to here because I had the privilege of sitting on Deputy Camp's Scrutiny Legislation Panel. We had our own issues because on strict interpretation of our mandate and our work with the foreign advocates indicates that it is

our role to review legislation that has been drafted after resolution by the States through a Committee. This of course did not come into that category.

365 We, nevertheless, looked at it and it was useful to have that discussion and analyse the medical and other definitions. But it has raised other issues. Deputy St Pier actually touched on them about how we prioritise workstreams through the Government Work Plan and others, and indeed on this occasion there has been examples over the years of resolutions that go nowhere and legislation that spends a long time in coming back.

370 Very helpfully, and in an agile and innovative way the requérant actually drafted their own legislation, which is kind of before us. But it raises another point, perhaps an internal point but one that Policy & Resources and all of us need to consider, and I was a former member of this Committee myself. There is a Legal Law Prioritisation Committee. Some would say, based on yesterday's debate, that it is arguably professional-led or officer-led to a certain extent. But we have arguably bypassed that with this, and now we have an amendment which has come at a relatively late stage.

375 I am afraid to say the requête before us, and the good arguments – I am sure – of Deputy Oswald, are not verified by a lot of substance in terms of evidence we can scrutinise. We have had no presentations on this, no meetings with professionals, or indeed stakeholders, or indeed the young people that Deputy Bury and others have outlined. It is coming at us all a bit blind and we are almost having to point to our ears.

380 I actually consulted Deputy Oswald in a former life as a patient and I probably did not take the advice because I did not give up the sweet foods. I have lived to regret that with my cellulitis and other problems. I have not gone down the piercing route, but what I can say is that we have a culture – perhaps we should have a culture, to a degree, of looking at the evidence and listening to professionals. We have got two professionals from the medical sphere proposing and seconding this with Deputy Malik.

385 Deputy Leadbeater, who is always a doughty fighter and a strong arguer of things, he might not necessarily make the same arguments about legal professionals or law enforcement, because we have to listen to their evidence and we cannot necessarily second guess. As a politician you always have to balance – and we certainly will when we get to the cannabis requête – the views that we think are publicly acceptable the way society should go, and what diverse professionals tell us.

390 Here we have different statistics that have been given to us, to assess risk we have to protect young people because actually our laws are not entirely consistent. You have abuse and breach of trust for a relationship if somebody is under 18 but not over. We do not allow people under 17 to drive a motorcar. Indeed, there are some environmentalists who would like to see the age of driving raised. So there is inconsistency here. It is not perfect.

395 My instincts are libertarian and so I do support the requête, but I do not think there is a substantial block of backup evidence for it. So I am also minded at this stage to support the amendment and see how we go. I assume that the requête, if it is successful, will liberate some people between 16 and 18 with parental consent to have treatments that they are not legally currently able to have, and I note in the requête it said 30 people complained about the current rules.

400 The amendment goes the other way and dampens that down a bit, and perhaps it is a sensible compromise because if we find that there is overwhelming evidence and/or popular demand that we can go further then we can. But I think at this stage perhaps going for a more cautious approach – as outlined by Deputy Sloan – is the best way forward, but I am open minded.

405 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Ozanne.

Deputy Ozanne: Thank you, sir.

410 I am one of the original requérants, and when I spoke to Deputy or Dr Oswald over the weekend I was persuaded originally to support the amendment, but having heard Deputy Bury this morning I have changed my mind. I think this is a question of a risk. Of course the best attitude to risk is to have no piercings whatsoever, but that just is not practical in our society. We have young people –

whether we approve of it or not – who will get piercings. For me the greatest risk is those being done at home. What they are likely to do is go online, Google, get a kit and think they can do it and save some money.

The biggest barrier I think we have to remove is that step of feeling that they can do it themselves versus getting it done in a professional way. That is what this requête is trying I think at its heart to do. So I will not be supporting the amendment. I think the greatest risk we have is allowing young people to think they can get away with just doing it on their own. We need them to consider going and seeking professionals to do this, and the best way of doing that is having an uncomplicated piece of legislation, which is what is at the heart of what we are debating in the main debate.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Rochester.

Deputy Rochester: I do not think it will come as a surprise to Deputy Oswald that on this our views differ a little, so I thought I would just stand to explain why I will not be supporting the amendment.

I think as a community, with the legislation that we have, we have said that it is acceptable for cartilage piercing risk to be carried by the individual, so then my logical next question is why would 16 to 18-year-olds carry that risk in the way that anybody over 18 can carry that risk. In my mind, it can only be that we, in some way, do not think that 16 to 18-year-olds are capable of taking appropriate care of themselves after the piercing has been exercised. But the compensating measure for that is that it is parental consent and parental involvement.

So in the round I think I probably agree with Deputy de Sausmarez that if there is a significant risk posed by cartilage piercing we should address that across the community rather than just at a 16 to 18 level, because that feels like we are discriminating a little, in my mind. I suspect, when we look at the hard facts in the light of the day, for the reasons that the HSC Committee has not brought forward this change to legislation, the risk will not be significant enough that we prioritise this as a piece of Committee work.

For those reasons, I will not be supporting the amendment but it has been an interesting debate and some worthwhile points have been brought forwards.

The Bailiff: Deputy Curgenvén.

Deputy Curgenvén: Thank you, sir.
I will be very brief.

I am just really expanding on an argument put forward by Deputy Bury, and expanded on by Deputy Ozanne. Kids are going to do what they want. We have all been there. We are all a little bit silly when we are children. I think this really boils down to do you want kids piercing themselves in a safe and regulated environment, or with a cocktail stick after a litre of cider?

Thank you.

Sorry, if it is not clear, I will not be supporting this.

The Bailiff: Deputy Blin.

Deputy Blin: Thank you, Sir.

As one of the requérants, I really do value the words of Deputy Oswald as a doctor, as well as President of HSC, but in this case I cannot see how this kind of risk justifies the prohibition, because it is more than this now: it is the proportionality; it is the consistency, and we are now doing a sign of the cross of pointing at all the bits that you can do and you cannot do; and it is the enforceability. I am just putting it as a summary like that. I take on board exactly what Deputy Oswald has said for his amendment, but I think we have to look beyond.

465 If any youngsters – and I do not call them children, but young people – were listening in, there will be a real frustration to how we are dealing with this. I would also like to remind that the whole point of this was to actually do this through in a different manner rather than taking a lot of the time of everyone to come to a conclusion where we actually do something, where this is a risk but we have that situation because of the inconsistency of all the other aspects of what you can do at a certain age, and we have some protection and support.

470 Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Camp.

Deputy Camp: Thank you.

475 I will support the amendment on the basis of if we just think, 'Well, let us just let people do things because they do things anyway' then why do we still not allow 16 and 17-year-olds to drink legally, why do we still not allow them to smoke and vape legally, because they do that anyway too. So why is it sometimes we care about the health of those we call children and other times we think, 'Let us roll the dice on risk with those very same children.' After all, 16 and 17-year-olds are defined in law still as children, so I will support.

480

The Bailiff: Deputy Burford.

Deputy Burford: Thank you, sir.

485 Very briefly. It is a fascinating debate; I have changed my mind at least six times (*Laughter*) and I may do so before the vote as well.

The point that I wanted to actually stand up to say – and this may cross into general debate and I forego my right to speak in that – is on the matter of the process, and requérants creating their own legislation and the effect that it has on the Legislation Review Panel (LRP). This is something that SACC has discussed and we will be talking about further, to see if we can look at an approach that is accepted by all.

490

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Matthews.

495

Deputy Matthews: Thank you, sir.

I think I will support the amendment. It is – as Deputy Burford said – one of those things where I think I am on a knife edge and could go either way. But the 16 to 18 age group is a very difficult age, and I think as a society we have not really decided whether people in that age group are adults or children, because we have a variety of different age restrictions at 16, and some at 18. Some of them have changed. During my lifetime, for example, the age for smoking has moved from 16 to 18, so we at some point decided that 16-year-olds were not mature enough to make that decision to smoke and raised the age there.

500

Some have moved downwards; so the age of voting has moved from 18 down to 16. You can do quite a lot of damage by voting if you vote the wrong way. But I think that, as Deputy Oswald pointed out, there are some risks associated with piercing cartilage which are not associated with other types of piercing, and perhaps establishing that differential might be of value. For that reason, I think at this stage it is quite useful to support the amendment.

505

Thank you.

510

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Sir, I was a little bit uneasy by what I sensed was a mockery of what would be constituted as medical – I would not say it is medical advice but it is a medical opinion certainly coming from, first of all, the President of the Committee *for* Health & Social Care, that

515

again the Assembly has elected, thanks to his subject expertise. But also consideration of the opinion of others, whether it was three, and the research that Deputy Oswald undertook. So I felt there was a bit of a sense of mockery that that was not constituting a medical opinion.

520 Well, actually if you look at the requête there is absolutely nothing – and I think there is literally nothing – that points to any kind of consultation that has taken place with the medical provision. I will give way to Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: I thank Deputy Kazantseva-Miller for giving way.

525 I just want to point out, if it was my speech that she was referring to about mocking Deputy Oswald’s opinion, I was not mocking Deputy Oswald’s opinion. I was stating that there is no evidence to back up the opinion that was in the explanatory note. It just says, ‘Expert opinion indicates there is no evidence’.

530 So I was not mocking Deputy Oswald and I was not doubting his credibility as a medical professional. I just want to put that on record.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Thank you, Deputy Leadbeater.

535 I actually was not necessarily referring to his speech, but equally his intervention points me to the fact that in the explanatory note of the requête there is nothing that points to a medical opinion. What a Rule 4{1} points to in section (a) is that Propositions are consistent with public health objectives and reflect public and industry support for the reform.

540 There is no evidence of any consultation or consideration in relation to a medical opinion. I am currently extremely uneasy, probably not where we are with the amendment but actually with the whole approach of the requête because it is failing to address – which I think is an important part of – when something like this is brought to the Assembly I think we need – it seems to be quite one-sided. It is failing to present what would be an evaluated approach in terms of the risks associated and evidence provided to consider this issue holistically.

I am probably straying into general debate, which I still would like to reserve the right to speak, but this does relate still to the importance of the amendment –

545 **Deputy Bury:** Point of order.

The Bailiff: Point of order, Deputy Bury.

550 **Deputy Bury:** Can we be clear whether Deputy Kazantseva-Miller is speaking to the amendment or in general debate, because she has strayed but now she said she would like to reserve her right to speak in general debate. How does that work please, sir?

555 **The Bailiff:** Well, if Deputy Kazantseva-Miller is speaking in general debate then she will not be able to speak in general debate. The choice is yours, Deputy Kazantseva-Miller, if you want to have the opportunity to speak in general debate then you must concentrate just on the amendment.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Thank you, sir.

560 I am trying to concentrate on the matter of the medical opinion, which I think draws references into potentially other parts but I am still trying to actually speak to the amendment.

The Bailiff: The difficulty with that is that it is only part of the explanatory note. The explanatory note has no standing; it is the amendment that matters, so the wording of the amendment. So if you are addressing the issue of expert opinion in relation to the explanatory note you are speaking in general debate.

565 **Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** That is fine, sir.

I think if I am straying into general debate, that is fine, and I think it is important for me to continue elaborating on that line, because I think it will inform the vote on the amendment and the wider vote.

570 The requête points to Proposition 4 – sorry, not Proposition 4 but in the humble petition, if the Members know point 4, which is the Committee *for* Health & Social Care considered the matter in 2019, identified three broad options for reform, one of which was supported by registered body piercers, while addressing public health concerns and maintaining safeguards for minors.

575 Well, there is no explanation whatsoever given to what those three broad options were and why maybe this particular option – which seems to be just one of the things that was considered – was taken forward. Again, there is absolutely no information provided as to the former work, considerable work, undertaken by the Committee *for* Health & Social Care. Point 6 suggests that this approach aligns with –

580 **Deputy Gabriel:** Point of order, Sir.

The Bailiff: Point of order, Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: 17(6) is not relevant to the amendment, this is general debate.

585

The Bailiff: But Deputy Kazantseva-Miller is now speaking in general debate. That was made clear, so it is relevant to general debate.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Yes.

590

So section 6 suggests that this approach aligns with practices in other jurisdictions, such as Wales, and balances the need for regulation with public demand and health protection. But again, that is just words, there has not been any further explanation given to what is the approach potentially in other jurisdictions, and what is the approach potentially taken elsewhere that we could be considering.

595

I think on balance, and this leads me to – while I applaud the process in terms of bringing this to the States, I do have concerns in terms of what Deputy de Sausmarez was saying in terms of the freelancing of legislation. Because this is extremely specific, what it is trying to do; legislative drafting through a requête is quite an advanced stage. It is being done, I feel, without proper consideration and engagement with our health professionals.

600

So overall, although I think there has been a really good job done on the requête, I do really significantly feel it is one-sided and it is not bringing to the attention of the Assembly the medical side of the equation, which is still very important for us to consider. With this in mind I am minded – I hear the arguments specifically in terms of cartilage, but again I feel I have not been given the right information and engagement with the medical community and the Committee *for* Health & Social Care in the drafting of this overall requête. So I am minded to probably just abstain on the amendment but actually not support the requête for the reasons I have outlined.

605

The Bailiff: I am going to turn next to the lead requérant, Deputy St Pier, to speak on the amendment.

610

Deputy St Pier: Thank you very much, sir.

615

I would start by saying I am disappointed that this amendment has come so late because it really has not given the requérant any kind of chance to properly test it. This is an example of policy by anecdote. In this case it is professional anecdote, I accept that, but it is no different from the other anecdotes we have heard or the number of people we know who may have had piercings who have had problems with those piercings. That is policy by anecdote as well. What we are seeking to do is base decisions on evidence, and I will address Deputy Kazantseva-Miller's points in general debate.

620 But in relation to this amendment, where is the evidence? Where is the data of the number of botched jobs for 16 and 17-year-olds, or indeed for the over-18s by which we can have any kind of comparison? In relation to the consultation, and Deputy Kazantseva-Miller's point and others on this point about consultation with the medical profession, we consulted with the Committee that has the mandate for Health, namely the Committee for Health & Social Care. Clearly it is their responsibility to consider how they input and make any kind of recommendation.

625 But of course much of the work was done in 2019, and again I will refer to that in general debate, but clearly there was an opportunity for, if this was such an issue of concern for the ENT specialists, to have come forward when the requête became public. They chose not to do so until they were approached. If this was such a problem they would have brought it to the attention of the Committee for Health & Social Care before now as to the number of botch jobs they were seeing and how they wanted greater control of that.

630 They have chosen not to do so and, as Deputy de Sausmarez said, if this was such an issue then clearly the solution is not what we do with 16 and 17-year-olds, but actually what we do with the adults and whether it should be a permissible procedure at all.

635 My question for Dr Oswald in responding to the debate is would he agree that the risk of unregulated cartilage piercings is far greater than regulated cartilage piercings, because that, in essence, is what we are talking about. Deputy Bury, and indeed Deputy Rochester – as others have done – in essence, talked about the real world and the practicality. This is about lowering the incidents of home piercings.

640 When Deputy Curgenvin referred to a cocktail stick and a pint of cider, a vision flashed into my mind of Deputy Sloan and his piercings. (*Laughter*) I have no idea whether they involved either a cocktail stick or a pint of cider but I shall put that image out of my sight, but now I have had it I have shared it with you.

645 Deputy Gollop referred to the Prioritisation Committee, and I think he was speaking in general debate on this, but that of course is about the directing of legal drafting resources, and that is simply not engaged where the drafting has already been done.

650 Deputy Camp referred to 16 and 17-year-olds not being able to drink legally; well of course they can drink legally. They cannot buy alcohol but they can drink legally, again of course with parental consent. Ultimately this proposal is about ensuring that the procedures can be done in an environment where the risks can be explained by a regulated operator in a regulated environment. That will not happen if 16 and 17-year-olds simply continue to do this themselves.

655 That ultimately is the decision here, and this is recognising that if this amendment goes through these piercings will still happen for 16 and 17-year-olds; they will simply do it themselves. We have a responsibility in this Assembly to minimise the risks for them in doing so. That is why the requête is required without this amendment, so I encourage Members to object to this amendment.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Finally, I will turn to the proposer of Amendment 1, Deputy Oswald, to reply to the debate please.

Deputy Oswald: Thank you, sir.

660 I think probably about half of the Assembly has actually commented on this amendment, which is somewhat more than I expected in response. I have divided the respondents into certain categories. The first is the definition of risk and involvement of both amateur and professionals, and if there is a difference in risk between them. The second relates to age of consent and whether 16 and 18-year-olds are responsible for their own bodies and to make the appropriate risk. There are obviously procedural issues, which I will not comment on, and there are practical considerations too.

665 I thank all the people who have spoken because a lot of what they said I have no issue with. I will start off with Deputy Bury, who gave a long talk on this. I have got no issues particularly with much of what she said, and particularly when she refer to piercing of a nasal septum, and I accept the fact

670 that this is a non-cartilaginous procedure when done appropriately. But as she probably knows, the
anatomy of the nose – particularly its cartilage – is very difficult, and inadvertent cartilage piercing
can occur when you pierce a nasal septum, at which point the complication rate does rise. She
quotes from her own research seven hospital admissions. It depends how you classify a hospital
admission. If it is an inpatient admission that indicates a really very serious risk, so seven out of
675 whatever number it is, if that is genuine hospital admissions, in-patient treatment, that is serious
complications.

In terms of what I quoted, which it is quite right to point out that the evidence base is lacking.
PubMed is an international medical search engine which I trust a lot more than AI. There were
references to much of it was American, and the risk I quoted, one in 25, I think it was, was actually
680 a combined risk of both ear and nose piercings when put together. So it was not specifically one in
25 nose piercings or one in 25 ear piercings; it was a combined lot together. So in fact the risk is
lower but it is still a real risk.

We talked about the difference between a professional piercing and an amateur one, and I totally
accept that clearly if you are going to use – this is a new one on me, Deputy Curgenvin, and I thank
685 him for his input there. I had never heard of a cocktail stick being used, but certainly all of us in our
younger days were aware of our colleagues doing all sorts of daft things to each other or to
themselves, and clearly the risk is much higher. I specifically asked ENT surgeons about risk between
amateur and professional piercing. Again, there is a lack of data on this but the general view from
the ENT surgeons, there was probably a lower risk with professional piercing done by accredited
690 piercers, but the risk of keloid remains the same.

Keloid is a very difficult issue to treat. It does not usually require in-patient admission, so it will
not have figured in the statistics that Deputy Bury quoted, but it is a very troublesome and expensive
condition to treat.

Deputy de Sausmarez also said should these piercings happen ever. Of course, the opinion of
695 one ENT surgeon in particular was that they should never happen, but we have to recognise – as
others have raised – the practical issues here. We cannot put the genie back in the bottle and stop
all piercings. These will happen whatever. I think the idea of preventing all those sort of piercings
happening ever is never going to occur.

Similarly, back to Deputy Bury's point about the major aim of this requête is to stop do it yourself
700 piercings. I am not convinced that this requête will stop do it yourself piercings because I think, as
other Deputies have said, the major driver is cost. If you are 16 to 18 and have not got very much
money, it is a darn sight cheaper to get a kit over the internet and have a go at doing it yourself
than going to one of the licensed piercers. So I am not convinced that the requête satisfies that
issue.

705 Deputy Rochester talked about classification of risk and can 16 to 18-year-olds consider risk. As
we have already discussed, they can do a lot of other things which we do not approve of, and this
was covered by several other Deputies as well. But I think Deputy Camp's point is that we still classify
16 to 18-year-olds as minors is very appropriate. We have a responsibility to try and reduce the risk
in those circumstances.

710 Deputy Leadbeater referred to anecdotal medical opinion and that is true, but we have three
ENT surgeons who have all got experience in this issue locally and they are absolutely unanimous
in their view, and I am sure if you did a survey of national ENT surgeons on this point they would
probably agree with this.

Deputy Strachan, I agree with everything she said. Deputy Gollop was on procedural matters,
715 which I am not going to go into. Deputy Ozanne talked about practical considerations. I accept that,
and the difficulty putting the genie back in the bottle and stopping piercing altogether; that is not
going to happen.

Deputy St Pier, obviously last but not least. I think in terms of his comments, yes, I accept the
fact this is a late amendment, and I had been dwelling on it for a while. My original view was to
720 actually oppose the requête altogether, but I thought, no, I have got no problem with 16 to
18-year-olds having their belly button pierced, should they so wish, with parental request.

I specifically asked about lip piercing, but I was told by the same professionals who told me that ear piercing and nasal piercing is a problem that lip piercing generally speaking was not a problem. If there is a problem with lip piercing it is mainly a dental issue with the stud on the inside of the mouth grating on teeth. If a dentist came back to us and said, 'We want to raise this' then obviously we would, but they have not.

He asked why the ENT surgeons had not come forward beforehand. I cannot answer that question in relation to previous Committee considerations. I suspect nobody actually probably thought about asking them at the time. In terms of this current requête, the way that this legislation is coming to the Assembly as in terms of a requête rather than a laid amendment from HSC, meant that it probably went under the radar. To be honest, when I spoke to them they did not know that this was coming up.

I apologise for the fact this is at short notice, and I accept that point, but my final point here – which I am quoting perhaps selectively from Deputy St Pier's comment – we need to take responsibility to minimise risk. I accept that, and I accept the reason why this requête is brought up but I do not believe that the risk of amateur piercing would go down significantly as the result of the requête. But I do think we need to appreciate the opinion of those who had to deal with the consequences and take that into account. I would urge Members to support my amendment.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Members of the States, it is now time to vote on Amendment 1 to the requête on revised age limits for body piercing, proposed by Deputy Oswald, seconded by Deputy Malik, and I will ask the Greffier to open the voting please.

There was a recorded vote.

Not carried – Pour 16, Contre 19, Ne vote pas 1, Did not vote 0, Absent 3

Pour	Contre	Ne vote pas	Did not vote	Absent
Camp, Haley	Blin, Chris	Ozanne, Jayne	None	Goy, David
Gollop, John	Burford, Yvonne			Humphreys, Rhona
Helyar, Mark	Bury, Tina			Inder, Neil
Kay-Mouat, Bruno	Cameron, Andy			
Kazantseva-Miller, Sasha	Collins, Garry			
Laine, Marc	Curgenvin, Rob			
Malik, Munazza	de Sausmarez, Lindsay			
Matthews, Aidan	Dorrity, David			
McKenna, Liam	Falla, Steve			
Niles, Andrew	Gabriel, Adrian			
Oswald, George	Hansmann Rouxel, Sarah			
Parkinson, Charles	Hill, Edward			
Sloan, Andy	Leadbeater, Marc			
Strachan, Jennifer	Montague, Paul			
Van Katwyk, Lee	Rochester, Sally			
Vermeulen, Simon	Rylatt, Tom			
	Snowdon, Alexander			
	St Pier, Gavin			
	Williams, Steve			

The Bailiff: In respect of Amendment 1, proposed by Deputy Oswald, seconded by Deputy Malik, there voted in favour 16 Members, there voted against 19 Members, 1 Member abstained, 3 Members were absent at the vote. Therefore, I will declare Amendment 1 lost. We now move into general debate.

Deputy Cameron.

Deputy Cameron: Thank you, sir.

I approach this as both a Deputy and a parent. I am a father to two teenagers. Like many teenagers, they were experimenting with piercing well before the age of 16, rarely in regulated settings. That reflects a simple reality: prohibition does not eliminate behaviour. There is a strong public health argument that a trained, registered professional is safer than a friend with a safety pin in their grubby hands.

But as Deputy Oswald has already stated, cost is usually one of the main factors. However, if we lower the age to 16 we are formally permitting adults to carry out procedures on minors, often in private treatment rooms. That inevitably raises safeguarding questions. In other professions where adults work unsupervised with under-18s we require enhanced DBS checks for teachers and school staff, childcare workers, sport coaches, driving instructors, and supervisors for work experience placements. We impose that additional layer of protection because the person involved is a minor.

This proposal addresses hygiene and written parental consent, but it is less clear whether child protection standards are properly aligned with those other regulated professions. As far as I can see, local regulation of body piercers currently only cover hygiene requirements. It does not include the requirement for any level of DBS check. That does not appear to be the case in other jurisdictions that allow 16-year-olds to be pierced, including Wales.

I am concerned that this requête may be attempting to close the door on one safeguarding concern – unsafe informal piercing – while opening the door to another by lowering the age without clearly strengthening the safeguarding framework. My concern is consistency. If we lower the age threshold are we re-enforcing the protections that should sit alongside that decision? I apologise that this point was not raised when the requête was presented to the ESC Committee. It was a concern brought to me only yesterday.

Unless the requérants can reassure me that these safeguarding issues will be addressed, including proper alignment with standards we apply to other roles working with under-18s, I find myself unable to support this requête.

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Deputy Camp.

Deputy Camp: Yes, I really appreciate the pragmatic process that this has followed. The problem is our law does not really allow it. I note under the amendment under 4(1), Information, under (b) it says that the Legislation Review Panel has been consulted. To an extent, that is correct but it is an informal and voluntary basically discussion between the LRP members. The LRP does not have the legal power to have undertaken that consultation so it is somewhat incorrect, I think, to just say that we have done that. The Law is quite clear, the Reform (Guernsey) Law is quite clear:

'... Ordinance presented to the Committee by a Law Officer of the Crown at the instance of the States or of some Authority, Board, Committee or Council of the States ...'

At that point the Legislation Review Panel has the formal capacity to review it. None of that has taken place. This has not been presented by a Law Officer, it has not been presented by those correct authorities.

So I think the difficulty – what I am trying to say – is whatever happens today this will, in my view, have to come back to the Legislation Review Panel. I suppose my point really is whether I vote on the requête or not I think is less important to me at this point, but I think what I do want to say in general debate is that speeding up a process does not necessarily help the process when actually the Law is designed not to allow this process to really take place in the way it is envisaged.

The Bailiff: Deputy Niles.

Deputy Niles: Sir, I was not sure whether I was going to speak in this debate but I will, quickly I hope.

Sir, I will be voting against this requête, not on moral or medical grounds but simply on those of cost and priority. I would like to assure Deputy St Pier that I am able to do more than one thing at a time but perhaps not with the same focus.

810 We are facing structural fiscal deficits. We are debating tax reform. Health and social care we are told continue to rise and yet we are allocating legislative time to reviewing cartilage and lip-piercing rules. Even if described as minimal, this is not cost-free. Legal review, policy work and implementation will absorb thousands of pounds of public resource. This is not zero. More importantly, it is about opportunity cost. Law Officers' time is finite. Health policy resource is finite.

815 The Proposition itself acknowledges that this has not been prioritised due to constrained resources. This should give us pause at least. And there is another cost; the cost of the debate itself. By my calculation the combined salary cost of everybody sitting in this Chamber together with the resources that we have waiting nearby is over £2,000 per hour. In the language of professional billing rates that is roughly £200 every six minutes. Every hour we spend on a matter that is not
820 urgent is a material and direct cost to the people of Guernsey before we even consider drafting or enforcement.

In a period where we are asking the public to accept difficult and serious fiscal decisions we must demonstrate discipline in our own priorities. This is not urgent, it is not essential and is not the best use of our public money and the limited legislative bandwidth or public resources that we have. For
825 these reasons I will not support it.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Oswald.

830 **Deputy Oswald:** Thank you, sir.

It will come as no surprise that I cannot support the proposal, and I have a different argument now. I know such procedures could only be undertaken with parental permission. Would I allow any children of mine, were I to have any of this age, albeit I do remember struggles with one of my own children in the long distant past over precisely these questions to have such procedures? The answer
835 would clearly be, 'No.' I can envisage the situation in many a Guernsey living room where parents being properly informed of the risks, rare as they may be, will be put under significant pressure by their teenage children to go through with what they, as parents, might consider to be an ill-thought out procedure.

In the past they could have hidden behind the law or, if the children still wanted to go through with this, they would need to fund what we all know to be an expensive travel off Island. We have
840 considered the alternative amateur approach, which clearly I would support the supporters of this proposal to dissuade everybody from doing that but such a route to peaceful domestic living will no longer be available if this proposal is passed.

Thank you.

845 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: Thank you, sir.

I think most people in here and anyone listening will be able to identify with the following
850 statement:

The teenage brain is wired up to want to explore identity and no amount of warning of the consequences will deter them from expressing themselves. They don't think with their reasoning brain at this age, whether or not you think of that as yourself or as a parent.

That statement was made to some of us by the medical professional that I mentioned earlier who works closely with our young people and sees the negative effects of our current Law in practice
855 on regular occasion. We need to be realistic. Our decision to make here is that we either make

piercing more safe and accessible or they do it themselves unsafely. We cannot be naïve to think that we will stop it by prohibition.

860 To Deputy Oswald's point; no, of course it will not eradicate home piercings completely but it will certainly reduce the barriers and allow them to reduce. Our current Law is quite unusual in the way in which Government is dictating to parents as to what they should do when on many levels we would not dream of it. In fact we will let a parent decide if their child could get married at 16 or 17, so we think that parents are responsible enough to make that major life-changing decision but we do not think that they can decide if they can have a small piece of jewellery at the top of their ear.

865 As I said previously, we let young people of the same age that we are talking about here vote, have sex, and drive all without parental permission and all of which need careful consideration and can have lasting impact. Another angle to this is that small, local, reputable businesses are missing out on business because of this law. I have done it with my teenager. One of the medical professionals that contacted us had done the same, and I know that many other parents have too.

870 In my situation, luckily I found the home piercing kit that had appeared and, thankfully, had not been used yet, went into negotiation mode, 'Can you wait? Do not do it yourself but when we next go away we will have it done properly and to boot I will pay for it. How about that?' That was my offer and thankfully it was taken up.

875 So then I do the research, make sure I am going somewhere reputable because I am now in a place I do not know and I am taking a bit of a risk, and I will not be able to go back to them for aftercare either, but I managed to get some verified recommendations, took my child and they got their piercing done. While I was there, I had been meaning to get my second lobes done for a while so I got them done too, about £150 spent off Island that I would have much preferred to spend here in a reputable business that I know well and I would have been able to go back to if we had had any problems. Thankfully all was well.

880 In terms of process, I do understand some people's perspectives and concerns on this, and perhaps they feel it is something that is jumping ahead. However, I must say that this matter, having been discussed through three different HSC Committees over three terms going back as far as 2017, it is not exactly in its infancy as an issue. It is just unfortunately one of those things that will not ever reach the top of the pile, ever, and that pile, well, we do not always get to decide what is in it or what is at the top.

890 Out there, sir, everybody thinks that in here Deputies are in charge of everything but we in here know, and some of us are probably starting to learn quite quickly, that we often are not. We work in a system that often constrains us, does not work as fast as we would like. Put quite simply, we do not appear to be able to influence what is at the top of the pile or not.

895 This requête submitted with the Ordinance drafted was simply a way to try to work within that system and alleviate any major additional work for the drafting team for something that will not ever be seen as critical. It is not critical by any stretch of the imagination, but that does not mean that it should not be done. In my experience, and for newer Members I am sure this is becoming apparent too, there are many things like this that occur. Matters that will not reach the dizzy heights of Moneyval or free trade agreements, but that could still make a real, tangible difference to the lives of our local businesses and our community members and we have no real way of dealing with them or getting them done.

900 So here is an attempt. Since the start of this term there has been a lot of talk about efficiency and better way of doing things, and I would hope that the Assembly would recognise this as such an attempt and perhaps see it as a testbed, testing it this way with something that is not absolutely critical to see if it works. If it does not then no major loss or failure but, if it does, maybe it opens some doors to us to getting these smaller matters through the system or even gives us a new way of getting some more fundamental things done more quickly. I would hope that would be food for thought and seen as an opportunity to take rather than sticking with, 'That is not how we do things here'.

905 Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

910

Deputy Gabriel: Thank you, sir.

We have already heard from many speakers in the requête and the amendment that the age of consent at 16, young people are already trusted with significant responsibilities. They can work, drive vehicles and make medical decisions and, in many cases, consent to sexual activity and then marry, albeit with parental consent. Allowing piercings respects their right to make those choices about their own bodies without needing unnecessary parental permission for something I perceive, and with what we have heard today, is relatively low risk. It also gives those young people growing autonomy and body agency. It empowers them and reinforces a healthy sense of responsibility and self-determination.

915

920

The body piercings that we have heard about I believe are not inherently dangerous when they are performed by trained professionals and that is the key, sir, and proper hygiene standards are followed, which we know reputable, regulated businesses are. That is exactly what we are trying to create; a healthy environment where young people can have that agency and responsibility over their bodies.

925

We know, as I said, our reputable studios already follow strict health and safety guidelines. Age restrictions do not stop under-18s from getting piercings elsewhere, just from anywhere accountable and this requête, sir, could also encourage responsible parent-teen communications. We have heard a little bit about that. That has been touched on with Deputy Bury and Deputy Oswald. I do not have any teens in my household, and it has been a long time since I have had teens in my household, but allowing legal piercings does not mean that those parents are cut out. It just does not require official parental permission for those older teens. Instead, it could encourage more open conversations, more trust-sharing decision-making, which I believe is healthier in the long run than forcing secretive decisions or ordering home kits to be done after the litre of cider or in perhaps a peer-related pressure situation.

930

935

For many young people, piercings can be a form of self-expression, a confidence boost to some and a way to explore personal identity. Denying this can unnecessarily infantilise them during a key development stage. Legalising piercings for 16 to 18-year-olds clarifies the liability for studios, ensures compliance with the health codes if they are using a reputable supplier, and again it recognises their maturity and rights, and it improves safety by keeping them in these regulated environments. Let us hope it reduces risky DIY or unregulated piercings and again, as I said, encourages healthy communications between their parents and themselves and again would match other societies. As a requérant, sir, I will be voting to support this.

940

Thank you.

945

The Bailiff: Deputy Matthews.

Deputy Matthews: Thank you, sir.

Sir, I will support the requête. I do think it might have been useful with the previous amendment to have differentiated between cartilage piercing and not, but I do not think that was really a decisive factor for me. I think the important thing is that in that difficult age between 16 and 18 it is actually quite a useful feature to be able to say that while people at that age are not fully autonomous they have some ability to be able to negotiate with their parents, and it also gives parents that opportunity to pass on the benefit of their wisdom, perhaps, and manage that transition between 16 and 18 as helpfully as possible. I think parents have a duty and a responsibility to do that as best they can.

955

I think Deputy Cameron mentioned about the limitations of our current regulation, and I think that is something that we ought to look at and see if there are any additional features that we can add into the regulations that could make piercing studios potentially better regulated.

960 I think the local studios that we have got are probably all very good, but you should not always
rely on that and it would be useful to set out where the regulatory boundaries are. We actually have
an awful lot of work to do in HSC in terms of care regulation in general and I think this is something
that we should add to the list and look at. Where regulation can be improved it should be improved
but, in general, I support the requête and I will be voting for it.

Thank you, sir.

965

The Bailiff: Deputy Strachan.

Deputy Strachan: Thank you, sir.

970 I am quite torn on this issue. I would like to thank the requérants for responding to constituent
needs and for addressing this narrow issue in a measured way. I actually do not have an issue with
what the requête is trying to achieve, and I do appreciate the pre-drafted Ordinance reduces the
drafting time required, however, as Deputy St Pier has noted, we in the Committee *for* Health
& Social Care have many priorities. Most importantly we are directed by the Government Work Plan
to reimagine health with a new sustainable healthcare model that will address our escalating costs
975 with our ageing population, but this also includes moving forward long-delayed legislation which
our officers are continuing to manage with our Law Officers.

Following the roll-out of electronic patient record (EPR) we have a large digital transformation
programme, which will save money and improve service user experiences and, as directed by a
successful amendment to the Government Work Plan, we have been directed to find 1% cost savings
980 when our costs have been growing faster than inflation. I want to assure my fellow Deputies that
we, on the Committee, and our officers have been working tirelessly behind the scenes to address
these key challenges. So you can see a theme: addressing priorities, saving money and improving
user experiences.

985 So, yes, as the P&R Vice-President has challenged, we can walk and chew gum at the same time
but our finances are, as we have been discussing, a burning issue for the States. I can assure him we
are running and chewing and much more.

I struggle to support a nice-to-have issue that does not address these key challenges, that is, to
reduce our costs and improve our user outcomes. However, on balance, I am willing to experiment
with this process, as Deputy Bury is correct. The issue is of importance to a small group of our
990 Islanders and it would never have reached the top of the pile. How do we support these needs if
not through this process? Does there need to be another process to do so? I do want to clarify that
this will not be free; it will take resources to put in place and it does not address the two priorities
I mentioned.

Thank you.

995

The Bailiff: Deputy Collins.

Deputy Collins: Thank you, sir.

1000 I am a signatory to this requête. I will not be too long, sir. I am obviously very supportive of it.
As you know, sir, it probably was not in my manifesto. It probably is not one of the top things on
my list but to be honest, sir, it is wonderful. Is it not absolutely wonderful that we have Members
that have the ability to bring an item to this Chamber? In Westminster, they have 13 sittings every
session on a Friday between 9.30 am and 2.30 pm to bring Private Member's Bills because comrades
and all of you in the room, we have perhaps different issues that we think are important. So for me
1005 I will always be willing to sign a requête to bring something to this Chamber to have a debate,
because that is what we are. We are a debating Chamber, sir. So absolutely happy and we will bring
to this the ability to hear both sides.

1010 I was just going to pick up the other point that, as requérants, we have very limited resources
available to us. I will just put it on record the excellent work and support that we do get, but we do
not have researchers, we do not have the ability to get a lot of work, and by consulting Committees

that is our opportunity to attach a million and one documents if they wish to, to hear both sides of the argument. So do not criticise us for putting two sides of an argument, because really we are coming to you with one argument and Members should be arguing the other way.

1015 One of the main reasons I signed this or agreed to this was because the legislation was drafted, and why was that? Because I do want to set a precedent because personally I am adjusting still to coming from working in the private sector for the last nine years and really having a budget and perhaps being called a client. When I phone up someone to do a bit of work they go, 'Yes, sir. When would you like it? Next week?' to constantly being told at the moment, 'Unfortunately we do not have resources. Even though you do have a budget with respect to St James's Chambers there is a list. You are not on the list. It cannot be done' and I am thinking, 'Well, in the world I am starting to live in, and in the AI world that we live in, surely some of this stuff could be done a lot quicker, a lot sooner'.

1020
1025 So for me I do hope it starts a new process thinking way, and I do hope SACC will take the opportunity of this being a Private Member's Bill if legislation is attached to it, and I totally agree, and I am a member of the Legislation Review Panel, that absolutely this – the legislation part – is for a second sitting. It should not be in two parts, and I never agreed with always agreeing that policy and the legislation should be dealt with at the same sitting. There should be an opportunity to have a pause, review it and come back and have a second sitting.

1030 I am really interested in that list, and I think our President of P&R has mentioned before, we will have an opportunity to see that list. I do not know what that list comprises of. I do not know where that list is about legislation and the priorities of it and the ability to do it.

1035 I think that is all I really wanted to say, sir. I think my colleagues have outlined the valid reasons to support this, so I will not go over this. I just wrote down here, I have got a mate who reminds me about his medical opinion. His doctor said to him, 'I think you need to lose a bit of weight. Go out and walk a bit more' and unfortunately he fell in a hole and broke his leg and he had the opportunity to tell the doctor that his advice was maybe not the best thing.

1040 I jest, sir, but of course with all advice it is advice, and if you talk to two different experts you might get two different opinions. This is why in America you have countless numbers of people giving advice, because these things are not exact science. Somebody will have an operation and be fine and somebody will have an operation and not be fine. Some of these things we do our best.

1045 I really will stop waffling, sir, and sit down, but I do ask Members to support this. Really the message I want to bring is that Members should feel if there is an issue they want to bring to this Assembly please do so. We are here, we have the ability. It is not all about Government and Policy Letters from Government. It is about the ability of parliamentarians to come here and bring things that we want to do and sometimes jumping lists.

In reply to one colleague, if that is how he feels please accept my apologies. If I feel something is not worthy I might lay a sursis against it but, in all honesty, there is time in this Chamber to debate things. We knew we were here for three days, so I think that is a valid point.

Thank you.

1050

The Bailiff: Deputy Rochester.

1055 **Deputy Rochester:** I am really grateful that this has been brought before us and I think, in listening to the general debate, the majority of commentary has been on the process and not on the topic. I think that tells us something. I think it signals our collective frustration at not being able to deal with the small things – chewing gum – at the same time as the priorities that Deputy Strachan set out, which are so pressing.

1060 As ever I am keen to ponder on what the solution might be. I will support this because I think what has been brought as a suggestion has limited scope for unintended consequences and limited downside risk, and so I will support it. But in thinking about how we might use this tool constructively, and I am very conscious that getting in the way of agreed collective priorities by using requêtes would be disruptive and, as Deputy Niles said, would have an impact on allocation

of limited resources, it strikes me that it would be good for us to consider what resources we need to put in place to ensure that such requêtes have high-quality evidence, high-quality consultation and high-quality legal and regulatory alignment. I think that is providing the appropriate professional resources for the requête process to be properly supported.

While slightly off topic, I think that is a point that it would be really good for us to reflect on. Yes, it is an additional cost but it would give us the ability to deal with the small but important matters, such as the age of electric bikes, such as noisy vehicles, all sorts of things that we really want to address for our community. But we are somewhat hamstrung by knowing that we have a choice in front of us of dealing with the big problems or of dealing with the little problems. I am very excited by this. I think it is a wonderful opportunity to think about how we can deliver change better, and I would urge the Chamber to support it but also to think about how we make the process work better for the next time, which of course I have somewhat of a vested interest in.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Sloan.

Deputy Sloan: Sir, thank you.

Thank you very much to Deputy St Pier earlier for his allusion to cider in talking about tattooing parts of the body that other drinks cannot meet or reach, I should say.

I am minded to the arguments of Deputy Kazantseva-Miller when she referred to the fact that actually when speaking on the amendment that the actual requête itself did not provide any medical evidence nor was there any clarity about any consultation process to have any medical evidence inputted into that process. That was an argument used to disabuse evidence that had been provided in favour of the amendment.

I am minded, sir, to reference in homage to Deputy Montague, Alexis de Tocqueville, although the argument he will know was popularised by one of his favourite people, John Stuart Mill, about the tyranny of the majority. Sir, that is what we have witnessed this morning. Thank you very much to Deputy Collins for his encouragement to debate these finer points because the argument effectively is, and it is not to say that I actually disagree, I have already said this. I do not disagree with the actual proposal itself. I do not really care what people do with their own bodies, like I have said, except the argument really has been presented is it is okay for us. There is a process for it here.

What we are saying is it is okay for us to inconsistently apply an argument when it comes to evidence. It is okay for us to inconsistently apply a legal process that we have set out. There are strong reasons why processes are set out. I agree and support my colleague, Deputy Rochester; we need to find ways around them but finding ways around them – or not finding ways around them, but to improve them – they are there for a reason so therefore there was some rationale that went into that process in the first place and you just do not throw the process out because you agree with the end. The end does not always justify the means.

Sir, as a parent, I must admit the argument that, 'Hey, the kids are going to do it anyway whatever' is a slippery slope to anarchy in that respect. I have had my time in anarchy. It was fun but at my age I prefer less of it. Sir, like I said, I do not mind the actual proposal of the requête. I would have liked to have seen it amended but I do object to the manner in which it was done. I find I cannot support the manner in which it was done because we are seeing, sir, an uneven application of rules or an uneven application of arguments. We saw it today and we saw it yesterday with the debate on the sursis, so therefore I will either oppose or abstain.

The Bailiff: Deputy Hansmann Rouxel.

Deputy Hansmann Rouxel: Thank you, sir.

Since there has been much debate over process, and this is something that is on SACC's radar, it is not necessarily just about the rules. It is that the rules themselves develop over time and our system of government has developed around them. There is also a legislative drafting black hole

1115 that grows and grows where we find a problem and, in the requête's case there is a problem, an
issue, that comes to Committee but never gets addressed, or we as the body decide on the policy
that will resolve that problem. We send off to get the legislation drafted but because it is not a
priority it never gets done so we never solve the problem. So we are spending an awful amount of
time discussing the problem, finding a solution but then never actually solving or directing the
1120 problem.

If there was not a legislative black hole where things are not actioned, we decide what the
problem is, we get the legislation in place and, bang, we can see whether it is working or not. If
there was not such a slow process in the first place we would not be looking for workarounds such
as this. We are all looking for creative solutions and, particularly when we have so few resources,
1125 we have to allow ourselves the ability to think creatively and understand what the processes, are
and that sometimes perfect is the enemy of progress.

I have changed my mind several times during the debate and I listened very carefully, and I was
almost minded to support the amendment from the excellent points raised by Deputy Oswald,
however, it strikes me that we are here to recognise and solve issues. Although there is not a full
1130 comparison with the other jurisdictions, the idea, the concept that we align with other similar
jurisdictions, makes perfect sense. I understand the reticence and the arguments that are made but
in this case there is nothing that would prevent me, there are no massive red flags, that have been
presented by anybody that has spoken that would lead me to believe that this is not going to
resolve a problem or have unintended consequences, so therefore I will be supporting the requête.

1135 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Blin.

Deputy Blin: Thank you, sir.

I think there have been some absolutely excellent speeches, and I always appreciate it when
1140 people have a change of views and opinions as they go through as they hear it. I am going to keep
it short. I think I will probably be one of the last ones. I think I just want to focus on the core of it
and, in my version, to summarise what I felt is happening.

First of all, I really want to start off by saying that there is almost a feeling – and I was talking to
a colleague a little bit earlier about how we are voting and to be consistent. Is it about process?
1145 Because if it is about procedural process then I should not be a requérant signatory. I should be
sticking on the basis of what we did yesterday where I said allow process to finish to do things.

However, here I am going to use a little analogy, and I do not know why it struck me, from
Deputy Hansmann Rouxel about just a black hole. This is just a little oddity and we found a way
round to fix it with something that will happen and make a change almost immediately, unlike some
1150 of the debates yesterday when it is on about the GST or the territorial testing removed. This is
something we can do there. The current Law imposes this blanket prohibition on the piercing under
18 yet allows piercing under 16 with parental consent. We have to listen to everything as Members
and, as many have often said, sometimes within our own Assembly we have experts in a field and
we are probably most privileged to have Deputy Oswald, who is not only Deputy President of HSC
1155 but also a doctor, so one listens carefully to the advice he gives on a specific aspect. Everything he
said I took on board, and if I really felt there was a risk the first person I would acknowledge would
be his expert opinion.

But here I have to go further. There are risks. It was made very clear medically there are risks
associated with cartilage and lip piercing and the infections and complications, and no one, I do not
1160 think, in this Assembly is denying that. That is the key but it does not necessarily justify the criminal
prohibition until 18, but I can fully also support the fact that as President of HSC there is no option
for Deputy Oswald but to oppose this.

But to the beginning of Deputy Oswald talking on the amendment, he did actually say, for
example, he will speak on it but he has allowed the other members of his Committee to have their
1165 own view. That is also for me very important. He has accepted his professional skillset but he has

allowed the others to apply, so that it is applied basically not just on the medical risk but on everything else.

1170 The reason I supported this as well is because I think it is going to have an effect. It is tightly framed; it only applies to 16 and 17-year-olds. It still requires written consent. It restricts procedures to the practitioners. It excludes certain piercings. The surface piston stretches, some of these I do not even know what they are but they are in there. It is not for us to be able to know everything our community does. It is the way it was put together explained it and made it clear.

1175 So under-16s remain fully protected. So here we have got something moving forward, so therefore with a choice. It is not between the risk and no risk, it is between regulated and activity that may occur without proper oversight and I cannot take another thought in my head of the cocktail stick and the cider, but that is a different thing.

1180 At the end of the day, safeguarding. This comes up again and again; so it is a safeguarded framework that strengthens the health oversight. I have one teenage child left and I do not want the situation where there is going to be risk, and I think this has been shared by other parents.

1185 The other thing I would just like to add, because I am very aware I am always talking about growth and economy and drive, but here my colleague, Deputy Niles, spoke about the time, and normally I am the one saying, 'Let us focus on the business and the growth of things' but I suppose maybe as time goes on we have serious challenges; Deputy Niles referred to that. No one suggests that this is among those most powerful effective ones for the Government for income and everything else, but what I am feeling more and more now, especially in my case I have had the opportunity and the privilege of starting a second term, we represent the whole community and that whole community goes a lot more. So not only the largest issues but it is the everyday realities of lives and everything in our society and our community matters.

1190 I refer back to Deputy St Pier, like the one of the walking and chewing gum, and that is what we do, but we have to take into account everything. But I do value the fact that there are the priorities. So this Assembly represents the whole community on all the issues. I believe this is measured, it is safeguarded, it is limited in its scope, and I just find it is a really good opportunity and a different way of getting something sorted. It does lead to other questions but I truly do hope that this passes.

1195 I would like to thank you, the requérants.

The Bailiff: I do not see anyone else rising so we will go in reverse order, which means I will turn to the President of the Committee *for* Health & Social Care first to make any further comments on behalf of the Committee.

Deputy Oswald.

Deputy Oswald: I have no further comments to make.

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez on behalf of the Policy & Resources Committee.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Thank you, sir.

1210 Again there is no Committee position *per se* on the content of the requête so I am going to confine my comments to the process. I think there is a little bit of conflation between the idea of a requête and being able to bring forward a topic for discussion and the ability to make decisions, which I am very much in favour of.

1215 Deputy Collins likened it to a Private Member's Bill and I think that is a good analogy but the UK system is very different. It is up to Members whether they have a problem with requêtes. I am personally very supportive of requêtes. I think they are a really valuable tool, and that is great. The bit that is procedurally anachronistic, and which I am much less comfortable with is the idea that legislation is brought at the same time. Because in our system we have the debate first, and that is often based on consultation and then the consultation and the debate can draw out the kinds of issues that actually we have been grappling with.

1220 Changing legislation, legislation has to be really precise, and Deputy Camp and Deputy Sloan have talked about why we have got the procedure that we have. It is really important when it comes to legislation that we are precise about the wording that goes in. My personal view is that it is a much safer system to have the debate on the policy and the policy intent, which then forms the basis of the legislative drafting instructions. My specific concern here is about putting the cart before the horse or at least the cart alongside the horse by bringing legislation at the same time as the policy intent.

1225 I appreciate this is a very minor, in many respects, and a very narrow issue. In this instance the legislative drafting was not necessarily that complex, although actually I think the debate on the amendment did illustrate that it was more complex than perhaps we might have originally assumed. So it is for this reason that I personally am very uncomfortable with the idea of Members bringing draft legislation, irrespective of the impact on our in-house resource, so I agree with Deputy Strachan's point that actually there needs to be – I think it would be helpful to have a system.

1230 I have been involved in a number of issues myself where I know that the industry related might be able to help or there are people in the community who might be able to help with the legislative drafting. My personal view is I think if we are getting valid and credible and sound offers of help from people who genuinely can help, and it helps to reduce the pressure on the Law Officers to some respect, knowing that they will always have to be involved as per the process that Deputy Camp set out, then great. But I do think it is problematic to bring draft legislation at the point that we are asking the Assembly to make the decision on the policy direction itself.

1235 I think we would probably get away with it in this circumstance because it is very narrow and, speaking personally, I do not have a problem. I appreciate the problem the requête is trying to resolve, but I do think that actually if this is taken as a precedent it could become much more problematic, and that is why I am very uncomfortable with this approach. But I do appreciate it may be helpful to think about ways we can resolve that fundamental issue, which does not necessarily engage those problems. So I am very grateful to Deputy Burford's confirmation that this is something that SACC will be looking at.

1240 I give way to Deputy Collins.

Deputy Collins: I thank you for giving way.

1245 Can the President of P&R confirm or deny that the Law Officers asked for additional resources this year and, if so, were they accepted or rejected?

1250 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** There is always a perennial demand for more legislative drafting resource and thus it has ever been, but that is precisely – but I do not know if we necessarily solve it by outsourcing legislative drafting. It is a really complex area because actually a lot of the bottlenecks, and this is an important point, we should not be just placing this all at the door of the Legislative Drafting Team.

1255 In order to develop legislation there is a really important set of interactions that needs to take place between the policy experts, subject matter experts, often within certain Committee mandates, sometimes industry or professional expertise and the legislative drafters. The legislative drafters, to their credit, in my experience, do work very quickly. But often when they hit the bottlenecks it is because we have not got our ducks aligned or the ducks are not aligned for whatever reason between the legislative drafters being able to get the information that they require from the policy people or the professional expertise or whatever it is.

1260 So I would urge Members not to look at this as an overly simplistic issue. It is not just a case of, 'Well, all we need to do is put more legislative drafters into the team'. That does not necessarily unblock some of these problems. I am on a long record of standing up every time the list of what is being drafted – I usually get to my feet and complain about the time taken and lack of resource and all the rest of it, but it is a more complex problem and it is not one that can be easily resolved by throwing more money at the problem or whatever, so I would urge a little bit of caution in oversimplifying the issue in that respect.

1270 To Deputy Collins's other points, that is something that is brought forward every year. There is
a big Policy Letter that will be brought forward when we have had the input from Committees. So
Committees are currently working through their priorities. That feeds through in terms of the
1275 legislation, and then P&R will collate that and bring that to the Assembly for debate and
endorsement. Then there is an addition annually, a list of the ongoing legislation in drafting which
again comes to the Assembly. In addition to that, in order to better manage resources and address
the problem that Deputy Hansmann Rouxel alluded to, there is also a more forward-looking
approach that was agreed actually in April last year to try to get some of those issues resolved and
manage resources at an earlier level in terms of the primary legislation, for example, that is going
to be required over the course of the political term.

1280 So there will be plenty of opportunities for Committees, and indeed the Assembly, to influence
the prioritisation. I would also just like to put some words of reassurance about the known issue
that it is not just a case of it is all a straight foot race, because if it was just a straight foot race in
terms of prioritisation nothing beyond health legislation or maybe the finance or Brexit-related,
really critical legislation, Moneyval or whatever, would ever get a look in. So the system is designed
1285 to have three different lanes, if you like; a high priority lane, a medium priority lane and a slow lane,
and it is designed in a way to make sure that even lower priority items can get to the top of the pile,
irrespective of their relative importance compared with high priority items.

I give way to Deputy Matthews.

1290 **Deputy Matthews:** I thank the President for giving way. Does the President accept – I sat on
Health & Social Care with Deputy Bury, and Deputy Bury was in the position I am in now as the
Vice-President of Health & Social Care. I appreciate the frustration that was felt at this item that had
been on the waiting list, and I think it was in the Government Work Plan but it was never prioritised
and it never got anywhere, and the difficulty that Members face in getting these smaller items
1295 anywhere near the legislative process. I know it is more of a matter for SACC but I think it relates to
Policy & Resources as well.

There ought to be some resource for Members to be able to advance parts of legislation. This
was something actually that we discussed at Health & Social Care because I think the President at
the time, former Deputy Brouard, had shared a similar experience with some legislation on, I think,
1300 it was high hedges for parishes, that he eventually had got frustrated and just written himself in
order to get it through.

I believe that is the process we are looking at to some extent with this requête. It is just the case
of, well, if that helps it advance, if it does something to move it along, maybe I will just go ahead
and do it myself. But if we wanted to avoid that, perhaps providing some resource for Members to
1305 be able to access some legislative drafting might be a useful way forward.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Committees absolutely have the option to assign a higher prioritisation
to things that they are getting frustrated with and not moving through the system, and indeed the
Assembly also has that ability. As Deputy Matthews will have heard, I am supportive of finding a
1310 way to resolve this issue. That is not the way we have just done it through this requête because
I think the specific – hold on, let me just finish the sentence and I will give way to Deputy Rochester
(*Laughter*) because I think there is a specific – I think it is problematic the way that it is done
simultaneously in this instance. I am supportive of finding other ways. I am very sympathetic to it
because I have had many issues which I would argue are possibly even more important than high
1315 hedges I would have liked to have taken a similar approach to.

I would also just say that actually it has been a particularly noticeable problem of late because
the twin impacts of – well, actually, it is more than twin, is it not? COVID, Brexit and Moneyval have
caused really significant additional pressure on legislative drafting resource generally but I am – and
there is now a queue, so I can give way.

1320

The Bailiff: A point of order. Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: Apologies, I have not really wanted to do it but because there is now a queue I believe that Deputy de Sausmarez is supposed to be responding to the debate with the P&R position on this matter and we seem to have deviated quite far from that.

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Just a minute. In relation to that, Deputy de Sausmarez did not speak in general debate so if she also gives her personal view in relation to matters then she is permitted to do so, but it is still within the 15-minute time limit that she would have in speaking on behalf of the Committee.

Deputy de Sausmarez: And to clarify, this is the Committee's concern, so this procedural issue is very much the Committee's concern. The Committee is not unsupportive of what the requête itself is trying to do, but this procedural issue was indeed the only matter on which the Committee had a view.

I now give way to Deputy Rochester.

Deputy Rochester: Thank you very much.

I just wanted to take the opportunity to ask for your thoughts on the policy and legislative resources sitting in the parliamentary team to support these requêtes as part of this conversation. **(A Member:** Hear, hear.)

Deputy de Sausmarez: That is a matter for SACC. SACC is going to be looking at this and I would strongly urge Members to have those conversations with SACC, so I am not going to speculate on that now.

I now give way to Deputy Ozanne.

Deputy Ozanne: I am very grateful to the President for giving way.

I wonder if she, because she has brought it up, could help us understand how things are prioritised by P&R in terms of requesting legislative support. I know yesterday that our final Proposition that we voted on in the GST debate was to direct St James's Chambers to bring forward legislation on something that we may not need because we may vote it out in the summer, so I do not understand why some things get prioritised and other things do not. I would like to understand how that process works.

Thank you.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Sorry, I thought I had already answered this but I will give it another go because it is confusing. In quarter 2, or possibly early in quarter 3, this year there will be something called the 2026 to 2029 Legislation Development Programme, which will be brought in the form of a Policy Letter, and that draws on the GWP and the Committee Work Plan's priorities. So Committees will feed into P&R their views on prioritisation, anything relating to their mandates, and they will have the opportunity to prioritise those items accordingly.

There is also an opportunity every year. P&R is mandated to bring the list of ongoing legislation to the Assembly. Again, that is another opportunity for the Assembly to have sight of that and influence it as they see fit. Then there is also something which is new and has not happened yet because it was directed only in April last year, that we get a bit ahead of the curve in respect of better managing our resources and there is something that is more forward-looking as well.

I think what I will do, because obviously this is confusing and it is something that is a matter of great interest, is I will make sure that there is some information that clearly sets all of this out circulated to Members. Because I agree it is really important. It has been a matter of much personal frustration of mine that we have often been incapable, it seems, or certainly have proved unable, to put legislation in place within the same political term as the decision itself has been agreed, and

1375 that causes big problems in terms of continuity. Because often, especially when it comes to big bits
of legislation, big bits of primary legislation in particular, the policy debate was had by a different
Assembly to the one that is then asked to approve the legislation. That does become quite
problematic, so I am very keen that we make this process as efficient as possible.

1380 Returning briefly to the subject of the actual requête. I do very much appreciate the input that
has been afforded by everyone who has spoken in debate and I do take seriously – I am speaking
personally now – just to be absolutely clear, the words of Deputy Oswald in saying that he is not
sure how much this will actually reduce the problem of teenagers self-piercing or DIYing their
piercings. But in my personal view, I am prepared to – I think that this has a chance of at least
reducing that problem, accepting that risk still remains, and that it has raised some interesting
broader questions as well.

1385 I am happy to support the requête, but I would caveat that with I appreciate why this process
has happened in the way it has. I think on this limited subject it has not been a big problem but
I would urge SACC to please review this to see if we can resolve the procedural issue in a way that
does not pose as much potential for problematic process later on down the line.

Thank you.

1390

The Bailiff: Finally I will turn to the lead requérant, Deputy St Pier, to reply to the debate, please.

Deputy St Pier: Thank you, sir; and thank you to everyone who has contributed to the debate.

1395 I think what has been really interesting about general debate is there has been no real objection
or dispute on the substance of the requête. Clearly the most significant part of the debate has been
around the process and objections to the process. I should say, as I said when I opened the debate,
sir, I described it as an innovative approach and therefore it is perhaps inevitable that it has caused
some grating of the gears with a system that is not perhaps designed in that way. However, I would
suggest that I would be very disappointed, but actually I would probably go further and say I think
1400 it would be perverse to throw the requête out simply because of objections to the process. If we
are happy with the substance we should approve the requête and worry about sorting out the
process for the future.

1405 I think in response to my President in relation – just to make it very clear we are not today
bringing legislation. That will come back. That is the purpose of Proposition 2. Proposition 1 is to
approve the proposals as set out herein and in the draft Ordinance, so that is in terms of the policy
decision. Clearly, as a requérant, I would expect the legislation to come back substantially in the
form that it has been appended, but to deal with Deputy Camp's point, Proposition 2 does ensure
that it will come back through the LRP in the approved way in accordance with the Law.

1410 The requérants decided to consult with the LRP again in this innovative way really as a courtesy
and, to some extent, I regret doing so because actually if we had not done so it would simply have
gone to the LRP at the next stage in any event and perhaps would not have caused quite the sense
of friction that perhaps it has. But I absolutely accept, and I am grateful for my colleagues on the
States' Assembly Constitution Committee, it is not a discussion I participated in but, as
Deputy Burford and Deputy Hansmann Rouxel have said, this is an issue that they very much wish
1415 to pick up and look at. If this has helped catalyse that in order, as Deputy Rochester has said, to
help us deal with some of these smaller issues then I will definitely take that as a win.

1420 Returning to Deputy Kazantseva-Miller, and indeed I think probably Deputy Sloan about the
absence of evidence in the requête itself, I do understand and take that point. Of course, most of
that was done at the Committee level in 2019 and of course I have had the benefit, having been a
member of the Committee *for* Health & Social Care, to have seen that work, and maybe it was a
flaw in the drafting of the requête not to have included some of the output of that work. The key
point, which has not been disputed either in the presentation of the requête or in debate, is the key
evidence is that the public health and our own public health officials support the need for change.
That is perhaps the key evidence.

1425 In terms of the options appraisal, again Deputy Kazantseva-Miller, with a very sharp eye, as I would expect from her, picked up the reference to there being three options. The three options were (1) do nothing, (2) make minor amendments to the law, and then there were three alternative suggestions: all body piercings on under-18s providing there is consent from a parent or guardian; all body piercings on anyone over 16 years of age; or the third option, non-intimate body piercings
1430 on 16 to 18-year-olds providing there is consent from a parent or guardian. That is exactly what we are doing here. So those, if you like, were alternative proposals.

Then the third option was make more significant changes to the law, including to definitions, age ranges for treatments, and covering other beauty and cosmetic interventions. The Committee at that stage looked at it and said that really is a significant piece of work, so if we are going to do anything, then it should be to proceed with what is in essence in front of the Assembly today.
1435

I do accept Deputy Kazantseva-Miller's comments, perhaps criticism, that the requête could have reflected that in more detail, and I take responsibility for that as the lead requérant in drafting the requête.

I was desperately trying to work out the cost of Deputy Niles's speech, the cost per minute of his speech having drawn attention to that. Certainly he is focused.
1440

Deputy Niles: Approximately £100.

Deputy St Pier: So, yes, some would say that was a bargain, some would not.

The point there is certainly about the cost and the prioritisation. What he did not refer to, and I did in my opening, is the fact that three Committees have had to pick this up and put it down with officer involvement, deploying officer time, and the cost and inefficiency of that in that period has not been accounted for. I think really what Deputy Niles was calling for is to say, 'I do not want to see before this Assembly things which are not priorities as deemed within the Government Work Plan', which is really a way of saying we should not really be having requêtes on anything that is outside that list. That obviously would represent a fundamental change in our system of Government. So I absolutely accept that is perhaps another process issue.
1445
1450

Deputy Matthews made a very good point about negotiating the transition for 16 and 17-year-olds, particularly with their parents, and it is far better that that is done openly rather than in a secret way, which Deputy Gabriel referred to.
1455

Finally, sir, this question of safeguarding, Deputy Cameron's point is a valid one. Unfortunately, having raised it in debate, have not really had sufficient time to be able to properly engage with it, other than we have identified that the leading studio – there are a number of practitioners on the Island but most of them are simply dealing with the simpler piercings. But the leading studio that would deal perhaps with some of the stuff that is in the requête has confirmed that they would certainly be very happy to obtain an enhanced DBS check. The reality is of course, given that written consent will be required, then parents are likely to be going with their children, their 16 and 17-year-olds, to have the procedure undertaken. So the practical interim step is the one I talked about, which is namely voluntarily obtaining that enhanced DBS.
1460

I think Deputy Matthews' point is a good one, it was actually the regulatory power of the Committee could certainly be used, and that is the regulatory-making power. So in particular, the new, if the legislation is approved as presented, 1(4), 'The Committee may by regulation amend subsection (2) for the purpose of varying', and this is the important part, 'the conditions under which piercings may be carried out'. So that would provide the medium and longer-term solution if indeed that is the appropriate route.
1465
1470

So I hope that has responded to the key issues that were raised in debate. I am grateful for everyone's participation and I hope that, as I say, given the very little objection to the substance that has been raised, Members will approve this requête, and the other processes will go away to look at improving on the innovation of this particular requête.

Thank you, sir.
1475

1480 **The Bailiff:** Members of the States, there are two Propositions. I am going to put both of them to you at the same time. You are not being asked to approve the draft Ordinance in appendix 1 to the requête. That will come back on another occasion and there will be the opportunity for any Member, provided that it complies with Rule 24(2)(a), to move an amendment to the legislation when it comes back.

So I am going to invite the Greffier to open the voting on both Propositions.

1485 *There was a recorded vote.*

Carried – Pour 29, Contre 6, Ne vote pas 1, Did not vote 0, Absent 3

Pour	Contre	Ne vote pas	Did not vote	Absent
Blin, Chris	Camp, Haley	Burford, Yvonne	None	Goy, David
Bury, Tina	Malik, Munazza			Humphreys, Rhona
Cameron, Andy	McKenna, Liam			Inder, Neil
Collins, Garry	Niles, Andrew			
Curgenven, Rob	Oswald, George			
de Sausmarez, Lindsay	Sloan, Andy			
Dorrity, David				
Falla, Steve				
Gabriel, Adrian				
Gollop, John				
Hansmann Rouxel, Sarah				
Helyar, Mark				
Hill, Edward				
Kay-Mouat, Bruno				
Kazantseva-Miller, Sasha				
Laine, Marc				
Leadbeater, Marc				
Matthews, Aidan				
Montague, Paul				
Ozanne, Jayne				
Parkinson, Charles				
Rochester, Sally				
Rylatt, Tom				
Snowdon, Alexander				
St Pier, Gavin				
Strachan, Jennifer				
Van Katwyk, Lee				
Vermeulen, Simon				
Williams, Steve				

1490 **The Bailiff:** In respect of the two Propositions, there voted in favour 29 Members, 6 Members voted against, 1 Member abstained, 3 Members were absent at the vote because they are not here, and therefore I will declare both Propositions duly carried.

STATES' ASSEMBLY & CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

3. CPA BIMR Election Observation Mission Report 2025 - Debate commenced

Article 3.

The States are asked:

To agree the following workstreams should be undertaken by the States' Assembly & Constitution Committee:

- (a) Consider the possibility of including a supervisory Authority to oversee complaints and appeals as part of the workstream to establish an independent Electoral Body;
- (b) Explore additional approaches that could be adopted to foster youth engagement in politics and elections.

1495 **The States' Greffier:** Article 3. States' Assembly & Constitution Committee, CPA BIMR Election Observation Mission Report 2025.

The Bailiff: I will invite the President, Deputy Hansmann Rouxel, to open the debate please.

1500 **Deputy Hansmann Rouxel:** Save the best for last, sir.

I am pleased to open this debate on behalf of the States' Assembly & Constitution Committee on the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, British Isles and Mediterranean Region Election Observation Mission final report 2025.

1505 Members will see that this Policy Letter has been brought under Rule 17(9). This is deliberate and it merely allows the Assembly to examine the report and read the recommendations and provide us with their thoughts on the election.

1510 SACC can go away, rather than allowing the Assembly to direct a direction of travel for the Committee, and then the Committee to come back and that not be the direction of travel that we want to go on. We want to go on a different direction of travel, which is unfortunately what happened in the previous term. Our doors are open at SACC, please always approach us, we are not going to ambush you with a direction of travel.

1515 So the 2025 General Election was the first opportunity for the observation mission to attend the Island-wide election in person, because in 2020 the mission was conducted virtually because of the pandemic. This report gives us the benefit of the on-ground observation. The overall tone of the report is very positive. It concludes that the general election was well managed and inclusive, and I want to take this opportunity to thank the many volunteers who gave up their time to assist voters at the polling station. Their commitment and attentiveness were specifically recognised by the mission.

1520 I would also like to place on record my thanks to the Registrar General of Electors. The smooth running of the election is a direct reflection of the careful preparation and co-ordination.

The report makes nine recommendations, most of these are either a repeat from the 2020 report or build on those recommendations made in 2020. The Committee is already progressing the majority of them through work that is underway, and for that reason there are only two Propositions we are asking Members to support specifically; two specific recommendations at this stage.

1525 The first is to consider including a supervisory authority to oversee complaints and appeals as part of the workstream to establish an independent electoral body. This comes from the recommendation that reads:

Consider developing a comprehensive legal framework to address current regulatory gaps including rules on party organisation, campaign conduct, third party involvement, in-kind contributions, media coverage during campaigns, and the resolution of electoral complaints and appeals. Establish a permanent supervisory authority to ensure consistent enforcement and accountability.

1530 That work is already in our work plan. Bringing complaints and appeals into a dedicated electoral structure would strengthen the oversight of campaign conduct and regulation. It would also address something Members will be aware of, at present responsibility for running elections does not sit within any single Committee mandate. It falls between areas of responsibility. That creates an awkward gap when it comes to oversight, including matters such as campaign returns. A properly constituted electoral body would provide clarity and avoid drawing resources away from Home Affairs or SACC's other mandated work.

1535 While I am on the subject of complaints, I want to clarify one point in the report. On page 12, footnote 9 suggests that no complaints were received by the police. The Committee has been made

1540 aware that in fact complaints were made and were received and investigated, but did not meet the threshold for criminal behaviour. The wording of the footnote may give the impression that there were no complaints at all and, for the record, there were complaints, they simply did not amount to criminal offences.

The second recommendation we are asking Members to support relates to youth engagement and broader participation. The recommendation is:

1545

Introduce targeted measures to foster youth participation in politics and the electoral process. This could include tailored messaging through media and social media platforms commonly used by young people, civic engagement, programmes in secondary schools, public awareness campaigns, democratic rights and responsibilities, dedicated support for young candidates.

Engaging young people in politics and sustaining that engagement beyond their time in education is fundamental to the long-term health of our democracy. The same applies to other under-represented groups. To take this forward, we will continue work with the Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture, of which I am a member, and along with support from the parliamentary team, to better understand the barriers to participation and how they might be addressed.

1550

This links to what is referred to in the report as recommendation 10, namely the extension of Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to Guernsey. The Policy Letter explains that this work formally sits with ESS, but I want to be clear that that does not mean SACC will not look to address the concern raised by the mission, which stated:

1555

There is also an absence of any special measures to promote the increased participation of women in political life.

That observation deserves consideration and it will form part of our wider thinking about participation and diversity.

1560

In summary, the CPA BIMR report confirms that the 2025 General Election was conducted effectively and in accordance with democratic standards. It also provides sensible recommendations for refinement. I look forward to hearing from all Members' contributions, not only their experiences of the process, but feedback and recommendations they would like to add.

I hope Members will support the Proposition so that SACC can continue progressing this work.

1565

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel, because that will give Deputy Rochester the chance to get to a seat. Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: Thank you, sir.

1570

I rise today to speak about the enduring importance of the CPA, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and in particular the essential role played by its small branches. In a world where democratic values are constantly being reshaped, tested, and on occasion strained, the CPA stands as a steadfast institution dedicated to strengthening parliamentary democracy across the Commonwealth.

1575

So let me introduce the CPA more widely. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, it is a global organisation divided into nine regions with approximately 180 member jurisdictions, representing many hundreds of millions of constituents, of which we are part of that organisation. The British Islands and Mediterranean Region, the BIM Region or BIMR being the one that we belong to. As that region's small branch's representative for more than the last two years, also the small branch's Vice-Chair and also the Guernsey Chair, I thought it is relevant that I would introduce it to you and its importance.

1580

The CPA is more than an organisation, it is a living network of legislators, clerks, researchers and parliamentary practitioners who share a common purpose to promote democracy, good governance, and the rule of law. Through its conferences, training programmes, benchmarking and technical assistance programmes, and importantly funding opportunities, the CPA ensures that even the smallest jurisdictions are never left behind when it comes to the advancement of democratic

1585

institutions. Indeed, I had the pleasure, sir, in October last year to successfully propose Sark with its population of 520 to becoming a fully-fledged member of the CPA.

1590 Further, I want to highlight another benefit of membership, in particular the continuing impact of EOMs. These missions do more than simply observe elections, they safeguard democratic integrity, support institutional strengthening, and help small jurisdictions like our own to ensure that every voter, young or old, can feel, see, be heard, and be represented. The CPA BIM Region EOM offers three core benefits to any democracy. They provide an impartial and authoritative assessment of elections according to Law, Commonwealth obligations and domestic legislation. 1595 This I believe enhances transparency and reinforces public trust in electoral processes.

Secondly, they produce practical evidence-based recommendations aimed at strengthening governance, improving electoral fairness, and modernising political participation. Indeed, the Observation Mission to Guernsey made those nine recommendations to improve democracy here. The Policy Letter has the findings of the report following Guernsey's fully in-person observed Island-wide election, and it offers an invaluable independent assessment of our electoral processes and highlights important areas of potential democratic development for our Island community. 1600

We should take pride in the positive and constructive nature of the mission's final report. The observers described the 2025 General Election as well-organised, well-administered and competent, reflecting credit on our electoral officers and the SACC Committee as well. Yet, as with any good observation mission, the real value lies in its recommendations, evidence-based areas where Guernsey can strengthen, modernise, and future-proof our democracy. 1605

Sir, we know that small jurisdictions understand the intimacy of democracy. In our communities, electoral accountability is not an abstract concept, it is personal, immediate, and tangible. Our constituents know us, approach us, and engage directly with us in ways that larger jurisdictions seldom experience. Constituents do not need appointments or intermediaries to reach us, their representatives. We meet them in the supermarket or on the beach or in the school playground. 1610

These missions we know are especially valuable to small jurisdictions where democracy is intimate and personal, as I have described. This closeness fosters a powerful sense of responsibility and integrity to governance and it is a perspective that enriches the CPA as a whole. We know that small jurisdictions face distinct challenges, limited resources, smaller administrations, and heightened vulnerability to external pressures. The CPA can provide that support, training, and the international platform needed to confront challenges. Through the CPA, sir, small branches can collaborate, share solutions and ensure their voices are heard alongside those of much larger nations. This is not just beneficial, it is essential to maintaining an inclusive, equitable Commonwealth. 1615 1620

Getting back to the Policy Letter, sir, it is placed before us, it highlights proposed workstreams, including the exploration of the creation of a legal framework governing party regulation, campaign conduct, third party involvement, and media oversight. I welcome the creation of any electoral body to investigate those recommendations. 1625

Perhaps we need to modernise. We know that we have got digital campaigning. We must ensure that legislation keeps pace with that too. This is an opportunity not for criticism, but for renewal. One of the most striking points to me in the 2025 final report was the low voter registration rate. Only 52% of eligible voters registered, the lowest level since 2000, albeit we had a 72% turnout. For a small democracy, one that prides itself on that close accountability I described between Deputies and voters, such a registration rate should be a constitutional warning light. But to help remedy that, the mission recommended the establishment of a permanent and continuously updated electoral role rather than our present system of registering for each election. I think that is necessary, coupled with of course expanded public awareness campaigns to remind and encourage Islanders to register, to get on the role. 1630

These recommendations deserve thoughtful and urgent consideration, ensuring that every eligible Islander is on the role is the first step forward towards ensuring every Islander has a voice and is heard. 1635

Deputy Camp: Point of order.

1640

The Bailiff: Point of order, Deputy Camp.

Deputy Camp: Thank you.

1645 Is this a debate on the report or is this a debate on two requests we have been made to consider?
I do not believe we have been asked to debate the detail of this report, which I believe Deputy Gabriel is doing.

1650 **The Bailiff:** In respect of what Deputy Gabriel is doing, because the Policy Letter that is attached to the single Proposition does cover all of the recommendations in the CPA BIMR Election Observation Mission Report, he is addressing those, and therefore he is permitted to do so.

Deputy Gabriel: Thank you, sir.

1655 So another area I wanted to focus on was youth engagement, which Deputy Hansmann Rouxel has already mentioned, and asking for comments on that. So we know that not only in our own report recommendations, but also previous EOM reports for other jurisdictions, they note a noticeable low engagement among young people during general elections.

1660 It does reflect a wider pattern across small jurisdictions, young people often feel disconnected from politics, even when our electoral systems are transparent, peaceful, and professionally administered. If we want to remain vibrant, we must tackle this challenge head-on, and the CPA BIMR report offers clear, actionable paths forward. We could encourage more youth-focused debates and forums that allow young voters to question candidates directly. So, should SACC encourage more partnership with schools, colleges, and also digital platforms to broadcast debates tailored specifically to youth interests? I hope so.

1665 We know that young people engage when they are invited into conversations that speak directly to them. Young people engage best when they feel talked with, not talked at. Could we do more with the Sixth Form Centre, Elizabeth College, Ladies College, Blanchetown schools, and the Youth Commission, to organise youth forum debates where Deputies and candidates can be questioned directly.

1670 The mission recommendation for civic education programmes in school aligns with our strategies too and our strengths. Mock elections, student parliaments and curriculum models can demystify political participation and subsequently make voting feel relevant. Enhancing educational materials too to define clear, accessible information on how elections work and why each vote matters to me is essential.

1675 I acknowledge that there is a shift towards digital campaigning. I did some myself over many digital platforms such as X, Facebook and TikTok, to name a few, while noting that traditional media still plays an important role for some people. Indeed, *The Guernsey Press* podcast interviews were well received in the print form, and also the podcasts. But to reach young people effectively, we should encourage political candidates to use modern digital channels, short-form videos, reels, youth-friendly explainers, podcasts, and perhaps even live Q&A sessions. Promoting digital literacy campaigns that equip young voters to evaluate political content online and avoid misinformation should be an aim. Young people live online. If politics does not meet them there, we risk losing their engagement entirely. We are digitally literate. Our democratic rights should be to speak the language of those inheriting it.

1685 We are not best placed to offer internships but that could be an idea. We do not have electoral offices like other jurisdictions, but maybe there is the opportunity within Parliament or even SACC itself to give young citizens greater first-hand experience of our institutions.

1690 The mission recommended developing a code of conduct for campaigns and candidates to promote respectful public discourse and reinforce candidate accountability, ensuring that candidates, when submitting applications, could be asked to sign to and adhere to an agreed code of conduct. That for me is important, as I mentioned in Question Time way back on Wednesday. We

are a small community. Interpersonal relationships and reputations carry significant weight. This recommendation is not about policing behaviour, it is about acting with respect, dignity and maintaining trust with the electorate.

1695 The report, sir, reminds us that our democratic right is not a static achievement but an ongoing commitment. The report recognises our strength but also challenges us to improve, innovate and adapt, and we should do that and follow these recommendations, because they are grounded in evidence, professionalism and impartiality, and that is very important, and what the CPA offers. It offers us a roadmap.

1700 It is therefore vital that we continue to support and participate fully in the work of the CPA. Our engagement ensures that our own democratic practices continue to evolve while also allowing us to contribute our experiences, our innovations and our perspectives to others across the Commonwealth. The report has provided Guernsey with exactly what an independent evaluation should; reassurance where our systems are strong and challenge where improvements would make us even more resilient. We know our elections are well run, our officers are professional, our traditions of open representation remain a model for many small jurisdictions, but we cannot ignore the areas calling out for change.

1705 These recommendations are not criticisms, they are opportunities, sir, opportunities to ensure that Guernsey remains robust, inclusive and future focused. By embracing the findings, we can affirm our commitment to democracy that works, not just for today's electorate, but for tomorrow's as well.

1710 Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Ozanne.

1715 **Deputy Ozanne:** Thank you, sir.

Sir, I must admit to being quite frustrated about this being a Rule 17(9) debate, as I fear it seriously limits our ability to amend the proposed workstreams that have come out of the full and frank CPA Election Observation Mission Report, particularly given our decision on Wednesday to hold a by-election on 29th April and the urgent need to address some issues, which I am about to bring up.

1720 Moreover, it deeply concerns me that there are only two workstreams that are being put forward out of a total of nine recommendations that were made as a result of the mission's findings. I appreciate that much came up that echoed findings from the 2020 report, however they did in fact flag one key new area that I do not believe came up, and that relates to safeguarding, particularly of our younger Islanders whose participation we are rightly keen to increase.

1725 Had I been able to, I would have wished to table an amendment to directly address recommendation 5 relating to the code of conduct for candidates, which I believe raises some very serious safeguarding issues as set out on page 10 of the report, and which will soon become a live issue with the forthcoming by-election. Specifically, this recommendation urged us to introduce a code of conduct for candidates, which, and I quote:

Could then strengthen the integrity of the campaign period, promote respectful public discourse and reinforce candidate accountability.

For me, this is particularly important with regards to ensuring that our younger voters are adequately safeguarded during the campaign period.

1735 As part of the section in the report on a proposed code of conduct, the mission noted:

An electronic copy of the new register is made available free of charge to contestants. Candidates could also receive a walking map indicating the location of registered households. Some concerns [and I emphasise this] were expressed to the mission that sharing of detailed information from the electoral roll together with the map may not provide for adequate data protection for voters, notably as some are as young as 16.

The report, if you look, then inserted a footnote that stated:

See section 4 of the 2024 Council of Europe guidelines on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data for the purposes of data for the purpose of voter registration and authentication.

1740

I followed the link to check these guidelines, specifically those relating to the legitimacy of data processing and quality of data in light of the legitimate purposes of voter registration and authentication, as per Article 5 of the Convention on the Protection of Individuals Regarding to Processing their Personal Data for the purposes of Voter Registration. I must say the titles of these Conventions are really quite long.

1745

There are literally dozens and dozens of directions about how we should be treating voter data, including training for those who access it, and I am not sure we got any of that. Most importantly, section 4.1.14 states:

In States where those under the age of 18 may legally vote, electoral management board should take special care to protect the personal data of young people according to Article 15E.

1750

Indeed, there is then another footnote that links this statement to yet another report which flags:

Authorities have to be attentive to specifically address children and vulnerable categories of people through adapted ways and languages.

1755

However, here in Guernsey, we see fit to get out electoral lists with people's private addresses, including those under 16, so that if someone knew the name of any 16 or 17-year-old girl, they could if they so wished be able to look up their address and have a map to help them find it. This is not the same as saying addresses are available in a phone book, because young people's addresses are not available there.

1760

I personally find this incredibly concerning and a major safeguarding risk. We have no real screening of potential candidates, save that we disqualify those who have (1) served a prison sentence for six months or more in the preceding five years, unless the sentence was quashed or reduced on appeal, (2) are serving a prison sentence of one year or more, or (3) if they escaped from custody and remain at large. That is a pretty low bar and, as we know, it is quite easy for paedophiles hiding in plain sight to stand and get elected.

1765

I therefore think we should urgently heed the mission's warning and look at how we treat this type of data, particularly the giving out of addresses of children and vulnerable adults. I, for one, would like to see it made far easier for people to opt out of sharing their addresses, indeed I suggest they have to opt in, and for us to be much more rigorous about how we protect people during the election. I myself would try to opt out because I receive an extraordinary amount of hate mail. I do not like my address getting out into the open and I find it almost impossible, and that is me as an adult. I know we encourage children to opt out, but it is far more difficult.

1770

For me, this all falls under the code of conduct recommendation, which has sadly been dismissed purely on the grounds that, and I quote:

If a candidate behaves in a way that is found unacceptable in the community, it is unlikely that they will be elected.

1775

Being quite frank, there is nothing to stop someone looking to stand just so that they can get the names and addresses of young people on the electoral roll, particularly say young teenage girls who may have no interest at all in getting elected. That is one of many reasons why we need a candidate code of conduct and a review as to whether it really is right that we give out such personal data so freely.

1780

I hope these recommendations will therefore be given serious consideration and action and not just put in the too-difficult box. If the question is who would oversee the code of conduct, then short of having an electoral body, I am sure that it could fall under the remit of the current

1785 Commissioner of Standards, albeit the stand-in Commissioner of Standards. There is always a way if there is a will.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Falla.

1790 **Deputy Falla:** Thank you, sir.

Sir, I thank SACC for bringing this report and it gives me the opportunity to say how much I welcome the workstream B to explore additional approaches to involve young people in engagement with politics and with elections.

1795 It was mentioned earlier this week that the campaign period for the most recent election did coincide with exam and revision time and might not have been the best for young people to be able to engage with us, but those that we did meet were incredibly impressive, incredibly articulate (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.) and, despite some of us trying to engage on modern digital platforms, much more could be done. I would ask SACC to please not waste any time in trying to give this more thought and to encourage contributions from others of us who are not on SACC. But not just at election times, but also during political terms.

1800 It is difficult because we probably do not seem that relevant to young people in Guernsey, if I am honest, and most of us come across probably as old fogies to the young people of the Island. The things that we are talking about are at times inaccessible to us, let alone to young people.

1805 I wonder if the debate we just had, we missed a trick because we could have gone into schools and engaged on that point and asked young people, because it did involve them, but those kind of situations and opportunities perhaps could be captured in a better way. Because, after all, the young people who will be able to vote in the next election are only 12 or 13 years old now, so it is not just sixth formers who will have the opportunity to engage. Much more can and must be done to ensure that politics in Guernsey remains relevant to young people.

1810 Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Camp.

1815 **Deputy Camp:** I am going to try and just stick to the two points we have been asked to speak about, because that is all that the Committee has asked us really to consider. They have not asked us to consider everything else, so I have not focused on that. I want to begin by acknowledging the positive tone of the report. It tells us that our elections are well run. It tells us there is trust in the administration of them. It tells us complaints were few. It tells us no recounts were requested. It tells us the outcome was accepted.

1820 I have a problem because that is not a system in crisis and yet here we are preparing to commission new oversight structures and new engagement initiatives as if democratic integrity itself were hanging by a thread. I have to say this feels out of kilter.

1825 Let us examine what we are being asked to do. We are being asked to authorise work on embedding a supervisory authority within a future electoral body, potentially a permanent oversight mechanism, and to develop targeted youth engagement initiatives. On paper these are modest. In reality they are statements of priority and that is where I have a problem. Because, outside this Chamber, our Island faces a structural deficit, a housing crisis, economic fragility, public services under strain, and a growing sense that Government is not delivering as it should.

1830 In that context, we are choosing to devote scarce Committee time and Civil Service capacity to refining a system that, by the report's own admission, is functioning well. Where is the urgency? Where is the evidence of systemic complaint failure? Where is the collapse of electoral legitimacy? Where is the crisis of ballot integrity? There is not one. Yes, there are regulatory gaps; yes, there are theoretical improvements that could be made. But we must be grown up enough to distinguish between incremental refinement and pressing necessity. We risk constructing regulatory architecture for problems that barely exist, while ignoring structural weaknesses that very much do.

1835

Let us turn to the supervisory authority. We are told complaints were few. None resulted in prosecution. None destabilised the outcome. Trust in administration remains high, and yet we are considering building permanent oversight machinery. For what? To regulate a handful of complaints every four years. To import a quasi-regulatory model from much larger jurisdictions into a community of 60,000 or so people. This is how bureaucracies grow.

1840

I will give way.

Deputy Ozanne: I thank Deputy Camp for giving way.

As someone who received an awful lot of hate and had to report some of it, I find her comments quite dismissive. I received a lot of hate online, on some posts, on forums that she herself is very engaged in, and on others. To dismiss those of us who have had physical violence threats as well as verbal violence threats, being called racist and many other things, is really quite disingenuous to those of us who have had the courage to go forward.

1845

Deputy Camp: I am going by evidenced reports, not subjective thoughts and feelings.

I would also clarify that my father was one of the people who received some quite bad behaviour during the election campaign, including a phone call from the police, so believe you me I am not dismissive of where the police are involved in election campaigns.

1850

So to go back, this is how bureaucracies grow. When we take subjective problems, which objective processes have said did not result in major issues, this is not me being dismissive, this is what a report is telling us. So we must resist the instinct to equate more structure with more legitimacy. Sometimes restraint is the wiser course.

1855

Now to youth engagement, of course we want young Islanders to participate, that is not controversial, but I am uneasy with the framing of today's request because it is selective. Registration fell by thousands compared to the previous election. Registration captured only around 60% of those eligible. That is not just a youth issue. If older voters, historically the most consistent participants, are disengaging, that is not a communications failure, that is not a TikTok problem, that is a trust problem. Public trust is not built through marketing, it is not built through targeted demographic campaigns, it is not built by trying to incentivise one age group to take part.

1860

Trust is built through competence, through transparency, through fiscal discipline, through effective governance, through visible reform where reform is needed. If people feel Government is fragmented, defensive or opaque, no engagement strategy will fix that. We are at risk of focusing on what is fashionable rather than what is foundational, which is governance credibility.

1865

Let me say this plainly, if we want to improve democratic participation, we would do far better examining the structure of Government itself. Our committee system diffuses accountability, our fiscal discipline is strained, our decision-making feels opaque, our public narrative too often drifts towards inevitability rather than agency. That is where democratic confidence is won or lost, not in whether we create a new oversight body to adjudicate a handful of complaints.

1870

Sir, this is a question of prioritisation. Every workstream we authorise displaces another. If SACC has constitutional energy to deploy, I would suggest it be directed toward examining the Machinery of Government, accountability, transparency, executive coherence, rather than layering additional regulatory structures on to an electoral system that is demonstrably stable.

1875

With respect to the President's response from earlier in this debate, sorry, I do not know why I have written that, that makes no sense. This must have come from somewhere else.

We must be careful not to send a message to the public that, at a time of economic strain and housing crisis, we believe the urgent task before us is to refine campaign complaint pathways and design youth messaging strategies. That risks reinforcing the very disengagement we claim to want to address. But it is not opposition for opposition's sake, it is a warning about drift, a warning about proportionality and a warning about confusing activity with impact. If we want to rebuild confidence in this institution, let us focus on how we govern, not merely how we vote.

1880

1885

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Can I just test how many people are likely to want to speak in this debate? We will now adjourn until 2.30 p.m.

1890

*The Assembly adjourned at 12.28 p.m.
and resumed its sitting at 2.31 p.m.*

**CPA BIMR Election Observation Mission Report 2025 -
Proposition carried**

The Bailiff: Who wants to speak? Deputy Burford.

Deputy Burford: Thank you, sir.

1895

Just briefly to pick up on some of the points that Deputy Camp made, in particular section 6 of the Policy Letter about the regulatory gaps. This is a resolution stretching back to 2021, but I can assure Deputy Camp that the Committee is very alive to the balance between bringing in yet more bodies and oversight and essentially expense, and just needing to possibly address a few areas. So it is something we would carefully consider. If you read the context of the Policy Letter, it makes it very clear that a lot of it is in the conditional, and also anyway it would return to this Assembly.

1900

But there are one or two areas where it would benefit from some changes. One particular one is that, since moving to Island-wide voting, what is happening is that a lot of the work that normally would have been done by candidates themselves or by the Douzaines or the parishes is now undertaken by central Government as a matter. So that is also something else that needs consideration, but I just really wanted to set the Deputy's mind at rest, sir, that this is not just going to be another massive expense, we are alive to that situation.

1905

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop.

1910

Deputy Gollop: Yes, I am a member of SACC too and was for a while a member of two previous SACC Committees, one was called House, and I agree with Deputy Burford, indeed she praised me, and we are a democracy on SACC. We say what we think, to say the least, and I am often the person who says, 'Let us spend more money', and others say, 'We cannot justify that as a priority at this stage'. Indeed, we had an interesting debate this morning about legislation and parliamentary resources, and inevitably the election is part of the nature of a parliamentary committee and parliamentary oversight, but there are additional costs. We have got two able parliamentarians working for us today, but we do not have 22, unlike some places, and that has to be considered.

1915

I would add, Deputy Camp made a nuanced point really about how far Members like Deputy Gabriel could talk generally about the merits of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in this report. With the benefit of hindsight, we did not include in our Proposition – I did not spot it – that we are not technically noting the report. We are agreeing two outcomes, which is more practical, but I suppose you could argue that statements we have not discarded, but we have laid to one side, are less relevant to this debate.

1920

But on the other hand, it has been clear since we started this process in January that we wanted a fair and as frank a debate. We did agree, we all agreed collectively, not to have amendments under 17(9), Deputy Ozanne raised that issue, but it also says in the same area of the report that submitting this Policy Letter in this manner provides Members through debate to make any suggestions and, if the Assembly so wish, to agree to the Committee's next steps.

1925

Now, that means the suggestions made today and maybe subsequent to it will all be very valid and it is useful to have the election observers. Jersey apparently decided they did not want them and then they did, so they add to our process. I should say that, unlike the other SACC members,

1930

I sit on Deputy Leadbeater's Home Department as the VP, and with Deputy Vermeulen and others, and some of these points here are as pertinent, if not more pertinent, to the Home Department. 1935 One of them under 3.3, page 4, is the operational matter of the electronic electoral roll. It was trialed in some areas, and it is within the remit the Committee *for* Home Affairs.

We have very able support from the Registrar General of Electors, but of course the officeholder there has a general role across the Senior Leadership Team and will work with other Committees, and perhaps in the future it would help if we had a body that was under one Committee and one 1940 Committee of responsibility. I remember Deputy McKenna, who was ahead of the game and sat on both Committees in the last term, made a strong argument for consideration of co-ordination at a political level, and we did not listen to him, but never mind.

Other things in this, while I am on the Home Department area, we very much are aware that the establishment of electoral legislation, an electoral body, is very pertinent to that workstream and, 1945 yes, under page 10 the permanent electoral roll falls under the mandate of the Committee *for* Home Affairs. It has long been an ambition of that Committee as well and, to some extent, although SACC is responsible for the Electoral Commission, the electoral body would have to take on board those points.

Deputy Camp is understandably sceptical of the costs and burdens and bureaucracy of 1950 regulation, but I would point out that this is a gap that we have, and there were certainly behavioural issues, as Deputy Ozanne and others have highlighted, that perhaps the code of conduct would be too heavy. I personally would like to see the code of conduct extended to Douzeniers and parish officials at some point, maybe done in this way because they are not parliamentarians, but they are sitting in the States of Election.

But also the point is made that candidates who behave badly are unlikely to be elected. We 1955 cannot guarantee that. In the event of a candidate being elected, we need to have clarification that their behaviour as a candidate, when not an incumbent, might not be covered technically under the legislation because it would be what they did before they were elected. We need to consider where that fits into the spectrum.

Also perhaps a candidate who is not elected has a duty, as we know, all of us do, to hand in our 1960 electoral returns, and that might need to be strengthened, that whole area of declarations and issues for parties and so on. But it follows that a candidate who is unsuccessful for election, but has breached the expenditure limits or some other area, may well get a conviction. There was a historic conviction to 20-odd years ago, and they might be prevented from standing for election for the 1965 next term if they have behaved badly, even if they are not elected. So there are things we could look at. Now is the time, but it is not pertinent to what we are doing today.

I obviously support looking at an affordable electoral body. What I was going to say to 1970 Deputy Camp is – I go back in history here, but I wonder how many people remember the Harwood Report – the first Harwood Report – that had distinguished local people on it. Some of its recommendations were implemented, some were not, but they advised in 1999-2000 the need for an electoral body to oversee behaviour. Because there were one or two controversial candidates who got in – I hope I was not one of them – but there were issues about how they managed their campaign. There was a rumour mill, nothing came out of it, but we had that recommendation then, and it has been parked for many years. As we are going to conduct a survey very shortly, a 1975 professional survey, on how our electoral system works, that is pertinent.

Much as I would like a media code, it is not practical at the moment, but I certainly would say that there were issues in the last election a little bit. There was one media outlet, which I took 1980 advantage of an offer, which included advertisements as well as coverage. But that was not necessarily offered to candidates who did not pay for adverts. There was another very respected international broadcaster who did some quality work for all candidates at a public centre, but they took an executive decision not to broadcast in any form apart from a brief summation of their introductions, neither live nor online. That was a bit regrettable. That is not breaching a code, but in the UK, if a national broadcaster had not broadcast hustings on question time or something, it would have been different.

1985 I risk going off the point if I talk too much about the Convention of the Right of Persons with
Disabilities or the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, but
I would like to see us fulfil the desire of the observers to implement that and work with P&R,
1990 Employment & Social Security. We do need to move forward with a statutory right to claim equal
pay for equal value, as covered in 4.3, and statutory protection from discrimination on the grounds
of sex, and education in goods and services, and go a bit further with the Convention on the Rights
of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). I do not think the costs would be as great as some people have
identified, but obviously it needs to be a different workstream.

I think it would be embarrassing for us if election after election this keeps on coming back. In
any case, I believe Jersey have got themselves on to the good list and have not necessarily done
1995 everything, so we can surely work a bit with that. We are aware, as Deputy Hansmann Rouxel has
already reminded us, we should not be changing the rules prior to the election campaign.

I will finish with two points. I am not officially replying on behalf of the Committee in any sense,
but I was interested in the key safeguarding points Deputy Ozanne identified, and maybe there is
2000 further work to do there. The thing is, we have allowed – in fact I was on the Committee that
sanctioned it 20 years ago when the then Deputy Flouquet chaired the Committee, we took a little
bit of a political gamble and we decided, because of the need to engage young people in Guernsey
with the Guernsey political tradition and systems and law and order, that it was on balance a good
thing to encourage 16 and 17-year-olds to be enrolled as voters.

We were ahead of anyone else. Scotland, Jersey and others caught up. In so doing of course,
2005 unwittingly, we had a situation where younger people who are under 18 would find themselves on
the electoral roll. As a curiosity, when there were Douzaine elections in Guernsey, the people who
sit on the polling booths who might be Douzeniers, constables, or volunteers, will have access to
the electoral roll during those sessions. I believe Douzaine candidates – in fact I know – have a right
to a copy of an election roll, not necessarily the walking orders, so there are other people in this
2010 conversation. I understand that in the by-election we are going to have no walking order rolls will
be available for candidates. That decision had already been made for other reasons. But it is an area
to look at. Electoral rolls in some areas are public documents. In Guernsey, you used to be able to
look at a roll not only as a States' Member, but also in libraries and post offices. That is not quite
the case now. On the other hand, we have had economic development leaders, both in Jersey and
2015 Guernsey, possibly including Deputy Kazantseva-Miller, who would argue the electoral roll should
be available to credit reference companies or others. It is useful for people to have other services
offered.

So it is part of a bigger conversation of data management. I certainly agree there are question
marks about candidates having knowledge of where younger people live, but it is something we
2020 have clearly got to look at. My other issue is the broadest one that Deputy Falla and others identified
about engaging with young people. The report is actually pretty interesting here, because they
reference some data, which unfortunately they do not seem to give a link to, that from a
demographic point of view, engagement with the electoral roll is 60% is not as good. It is the lowest
since 2000. Deputy Oswald actually made an interesting point about the forthcoming by-election
2025 maybe having a really poor turnout. Well, the turnout in Denton and Gorton was actually 0.5% less
than the general election, 47% playing 48%. So maybe we can engage people if the candidates are
interesting enough.

But what the main report identified, without evidence but I have seen the evidence elsewhere, is
we do not just have a problem with youth engagement. We have it with other minorities. Youth to
2030 many people is 16 to 19. In some other areas, it is up to 25. I would argue it is up to people in their
20s, 30s, and maybe even 40s. 9.2 says:

To mitigate apathy and disengagement, it is important to focus on Islanders in their 20s and early 30s, as well as
school-age voters and prospective voters.

2035 So when we are looking at ideas, and I know the electoral team actually went to organisations – I was there at one point – for the Young Business Group to try to get professionals who are both local and who have moved here to engage. Many of them were not registered to vote. So we actually have to find a way of building trust, as some others have already said, with the younger generation.

I cannot come up with an instant strategy now, but I am sure any comments would be welcome for us on the Committee to consider. In Deputy Rylatt, we have a champion for the younger person in any event. Nobody is keener than him, not just to reach out for the perspective but more importantly to look at innovation in broadcasting and television. I would not like to be televised, I would look scruffy.

Thank you.

2045 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Thank you, sir.

2050 First of all, I wanted to mention that I have got an issue in how this Policy Letter has been laid under Rule 17(9), which for all intents and purposes is supposed to be a green paper, and usually under the green paper Policy Letters, you do not seek approval of specific propositions that give specific direction to the States of Guernsey. However, what we have got is a combination of both. So something that is supposed to invite debate, but actually the way the Propositions are structured, it is asking for very specific approval of two very specific workstreams, and also the way it has been laid you cannot actually separate (a) and (b), you would have to vote for just the one Proposition.

2055 The other problem with laying this under 17(9), as outlined by Deputy Ozanne, is no amendments could be laid to this Proposition. From a technical perspective, I do not actually think this has been technically sound and submitted in the right manner. So I do hope that the way SACC will take this debate would be under Rule 17(9) and would listen to the debate overall that relates to all parts of the Policy Letter and the report. This is how I intend to also conduct my speech. I hope they take this criticism in a constructive manner.

2060 To me, the integrity and the strength of our electoral process is crucial to the integrity and strength of our democratic systems. That is one of the pillars of our democracy. It stands alone from the system of government, but it is fundamental in how it feeds our legislature, our parliament. This is where, I think, the value of being part of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association also comes in for small parliaments like ours, is that membership allows us to tap into the resources that are available through this global network and their ability to source, I think, at a reasonable cost, reports like that, which allow us to benchmark our little Guernsey and our very unique system of government. My apologies, I have got something with Deputy Ozanne, between us. (*Laughter*) But allows us to benchmark in a very unique way how our electoral system works.

2070 I personally really value this kind of report, and I think it is important in terms of being able to take proportionate Guernsey action in relation to where gaps and opportunities for improvement are highlighted. So, I would like to focus on a number of areas where I do feel we have got work to do, and I would start with the issue of our electoral roll. I do think the need for going on an electoral roll way ahead of the election is a fundamental barrier that is preventing voter engagement, but also actually fundamentally links to the many issues that have been discussed today, such as what Deputy Ozanne is talking about, and I am sure maybe others will talk about today.

2080 The fact that only a select group of people in Guernsey go on the electoral roll, it is not the whole population, means that then what we are trying to say throughout when the regulated window opens is that you are only supposed to go and engage with those people on the electoral roll. So you are somehow missing out, potentially, the rest of the population who are entitled to vote, and you are supposed to be only canvassing the people who are on the electoral roll. The fact that there is this massive spreadsheet with names and addresses attached to them; I do not know how this has passed data protection actually and security laws. I do think this is a fundamental weakness in our current system of government.

2085 As far as I know, the States have been under the resolution to move into a different system for
actually quite a while. I really think we have got to absolutely move to a new system. My
understanding is that it sits under the mandate of the Committee *for* Home Affairs. The issue is that
I do not want us to look into creating a separate electoral roll system. What we have got, as
2090 Government, and the work that is being done under the digital strategy by the States of Guernsey,
is we are creating a register of contacts which will basically have the information of all the citizens
of Guernsey and pretty much everyone has a social security number. The States of Guernsey already
has access to the details of everyone on the Island. I think what we need to do, and this is where we
move into the concept of the digital ID for citizens, the personal digital ID, is that your data, your
core data, is maintained at that level. You can decide, you can opt in and out of what kind of levels
2095 of details you want to be given access to.

If we move into the system where we have got this digital ID, which allows you to basically turn
up on election day, that becomes your electoral roll, it allows us to do all sorts of other things. For
example, we can do other referenda in a much more frequent manner. This is the kind of things that
could improve voter engagement and general engagement of our population with the democratic
2100 process in a more regular fashion than having just general elections. Those kind of systems are in
place in many countries where you could have a referenda on different matters where you engage
Islanders on specific issues. I really encourage SACC and Home Affairs to take the electoral roll issue
as an absolute priority, that we really have to move on by 2029 with a new solution.

The second item is around the electoral legislation. One of the specific items highlighted was
2105 the need for any new changes to be announced at least a year in advance of elections. I think that
is really important to give enough time for those standing but also for parties to make sure they
are abiding by laws and regulations. The report specifies the issue that one of the parties – well it
was not a party, it is still not a party, Future Guernsey had around the time when new regulations
came in and basically then all the gymnastics than we had between Future Guernsey and Forward
2110 Guernsey.

This links me to the third element that has been highlighted, which is around the regulatory
gaps. For me, there are a number of issues that have been highlighted, and I think I wanted to
specifically highlight the importance of strengthening guidance and legislation around party
financing, around expenditure, around benefit in kind, all of those things. Because again, I have got
2115 huge respects for all of my colleagues from Forward Guernsey. I think they would have been elected
without being part of a party. But I think the gymnastics between Future to Forward Guernsey
undermines the strengths in our electoral and democratic process. This does not serve anyone, not
least the people in those parties, for whom I do have huge respect.

I do think that is something that has to be strengthened, party financing, party expenditure.
2120 I think within that, whether there is a more independent evaluation of a complaints process, I think
that also fits into that.

Last but not least, I do want to still mention the second recommendation, which is around
strengthening – well, extending the Convention of Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against
Women. There are elements in that, that are under the Committee *for* ESS mandate. But I do want
2125 to mention something that was referenced by Deputy Hansmann Rouxel in her opening speech,
which is that technically the Propositions in front of us are suggesting that SACC is seeking to
increase youth engagement and broader participation as well. However, that is not specified in the
Propositions and that is not specified, I am talking about broader participation, as a
recommendation actually anywhere else.

I think this links back to the speech that Deputy Rochester gave in the by-election Policy Letter
this week as well. I do feel that Government should take a stronger stance, potentially at looking at
more ways, positive measures, to encourage broader representation. I think it is important we
encourage female representation as well. I do want to put on record the great work that third sector
organisations such as Women in Public Life play with completely no taxpayer funding at this stage
2135 to promote both engagement but also representation at all levels of public office.

2140 I think there is a real question, and I know it is the work that that organisation is undertaking right now, to define what is the role of the third sector and voluntary organisations versus what is the role of Government and the legislature in actually promoting a more diverse representation and participation. Given that this is not highlighted in the Propositions and is not specified in the Policy Letter, I would like to seek a clarification from Deputy Hansmann Rouxel in her summing up in terms of whether this will be on the agenda for SACC, because in her opening speech she did mention that the Proposition is about not just youth engagement but about broader participation. So I do want to understand better what she meant.

2145 While we should not be worried about the strengths of our democratic institutions at this stage, I do think we need to be watching the strengths of our processes like hawks, because it is a very slippery slope when we do not. I am sure everyone would agree we do not want to be in a place of some other jurisdictions and countries and the direction they are going on.

2150 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Strachan.

Deputy Strachan: Thank you, sir.

2155 I just wanted to note my appreciation for the election observers, and I agree with many of their recommendations and thank SACC for those recommendations. It has been a fascinating set of discussions as a new parliamentarian. I just wanted to touch on one, which has already been touched on by Deputies Falla and Gollop and others, that is recommendation 7, the youth participation and the aspect of education there.

2160 Yes, I agree it is important that we get more youth engagement with voting, but I would note that during the election campaign, along with all the other candidates, I was fortunate to attend a sixth form event with many of the Island's 16 to 18-year-old students. While I was impressed with many of the students I met and their passion for the Island, I was also struck how few of them had really thought about what they wanted from Government, nor understood how our Government works. So without this basic education, I cannot see how they can fully engage as voters at age 16. Therefore, I am very supportive of any efforts we can make to encourage a real understanding of the democratic processes by our young people.

2165 I was also fortunate enough to receive a tour of the UK Parliament recently and, while having a tour of Westminster, I observed a continuous stream of young and slightly older students having tours of the buildings and being talked through all of the processes. This meant that their education in the UK was starting at a young age. So I would be interested to hear from SACC and indeed the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture, how we as parliamentarians can support this education and engagement and, indeed, I would be very keen to be involved in supporting that effort. This is not just a nice-to-have but it is also important for the development of our democracy, as these are our current and future voters and we need to invest in them.

Thank you.

2175 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: Thank you, sir.

2180 I have one question and two points to make. It has been brought up a few times but I am not sure if the question has been directly asked around the rolling electoral roll. Like Deputy Kazantseva-Miller, and as I brought up earlier this week in the by-election debate, I think this is absolutely critical. So whether or not it is Deputy Leadbeater on behalf of Home Affairs or Deputy Hansmann Rouxel, because they are working together seamlessly, can answer, is this going to happen by 2029? It would be really great to know because it has been on the list for quite some time. So that is my question.

2185 The first point has been raised by others, but I think I would like to specifically just correct what I think is an inaccuracy really in the report, which is around conduct of candidates and specifically complaints to the police. In the report it does make reference to the conduct of some candidates.

2190 It states that some concerns were raised about abusive or misogynistic comments made online by one candidate, yet there are no clear guidelines or mechanisms to address such behaviour unless it is raised with the police as a criminal complaint.

In footnote 9 it then goes on to say that the police informed the mission that they did not receive any election-related complaints during the process, and that is not accurate. This has been raised with the CPA by a member of the public and with SACC, and that member of the public advised the CPA that they knew of at least half a dozen complaints made to the police regarding the conduct of one candidate in particular, and they absolutely 100% knew for a fact one of those complaints because they made them themselves.

2200 The CPA double-checked and advised that the police representatives did then acknowledge that they were made aware of comments and abuse on social media during the campaign period. But, déjà vu, the emphasis in their response was on the fact that none of the reports were taken forward because they did not meet the threshold for further action. The CPA responded by amending the report slightly. But to my mind, the text still remains a bit unclear, so I wanted to draw Members' attention to it.

2205 Also to be clear, I am not raising this because I am necessarily suggesting a code of conduct for candidates, because without any sort of official or legal recourse then it is pretty much meaningless. As it says at 7.4 in the Policy Letter, if they broke the law it can be reported to the police and they can advise if further action should be taken. That is all well and good, but not if you do not have sufficient laws to cover it and that they leave people unprotected.

2210 Then moving on to my final point, which again has been raised by others, and it would be remiss of me as the President of ESS not to refer to the sections that talk about CEDAW and the UNCRPD, which is recommendation 2. CEDAW being the snappily titled Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the CRPD being the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

2215 In section 4.3 the Policy Letter relates to information from the Committee about CEDAW but I do think again in the Policy Letter and report it is slightly misinterpreted, so I would like to clarify the situation. Election observers recommend that Guernsey seeks to extend CEDAW, and Guernsey has been working on signing up to CEDAW for more than 22 years. But there are still two major areas where we do not comply and that is pay for work of equal value and the lack of sex discrimination legislation in relation to goods, services and education. The latter being in ESS's priorities to address this term.

2220 But what is really important to note is that these areas of non-compliance with the Treaty have nothing to do with how we should and can behave during our elections. So the Articles in the Convention that relate to elections are 4(1) and 7(b). 7(b) includes the statement that:

States Parties shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government.

2225 4(1) says that:

Temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination.

2230 So Guernsey is completely at liberty to act in accordance with those two Articles now. In fact, that is exactly how UN conventions work. Jurisdictions take the active steps to move in line with the Articles and then seek ratification. So you need to meet the criteria before you can get the stamp, not the other way around. So I wanted to clarify the fact that we cannot sign up to CEDAW just yet in no way prevents SACC from taking action to address the under-representation of women in this Assembly and, like Deputy Kazantseva-Miller, I am disappointed to see that in the Propositions youth are singled out specifically but that other quite clear under-representation that we have is not factored in.

2235

While the President did mention it in her opening speech, it is not the same as having a resolution on the statute. Let me be clear, I am simply talking about straightforward actions to encourage more women to consider standing. Of course, it will then be left to the Guernsey voters to decide who should actually be elected.

2240 Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Deputy Sloan.

Deputy Sloan: Thank you, sir.

2245 With the sun shining outside a lot of us would like to be elsewhere, so I will be brief. It is a curious debate, we were discussing it at lunchtime, 17(9). We had some of the newbies had to get the rule book out and remind ourselves what it was, and it did not seem particularly appropriate for this report, not when there is a report accompanying a report etc.. I share many of the views expressed by Deputy Kazantseva-Miller and Deputy Bury just now.

2250 As to, again, the resolutions picking out the focus on the youth engagement, less than one in four people eligible to vote in Guernsey voted in last year's general election, which is a sorry state of affairs. I think it is overall engagement and it is a reflection on people's views on the current success and otherwise of Government. I think it is a general issue of voter engagement and voters' belief in the efficacy of Government. But we did spend some of lunchtime discussing about this, because a few of us brought a sandwich back and we were chatting away – I am looking at the culprits for my suggestion. But it was pointed out that actually this debate can – you have in your opening – sir, through you, that the President had in her opening actively was seeking suggestions. So I have a suggestion.

2260 It came from discussion with many people around the room, because there is one line in the report, and again Deputy Kazantseva-Miller mentioned this about the gymnastics. It was curious because you have, like you said, there are nine recommendations. Yes, we are doing a lot of that work. Okay, we are doing it anyway, but we hear a lot of that a lot of the time. But there is a line in the report that says:

Some independent candidates raised a concern that the only political party contesting the June polls gained an advantage from its links with and support from an associated think tank.

2265

It was also highlighted that there was a lack of transparency in some instances, etc. Now the conversation meant many of us said, 'That was the big elephant in the room. We seem to remember it being a bit of a big public issue at the time, it has been a bit of a public issue since campaign finance, how was that not brought out to one of the Propositions?' It seemed a bit of a curiosity to us, particularly – and it is a shame that Deputy Inder is not here, because he does like to pull the leg about Future Guernsey, Forward Guernsey. I sometimes called it Forward Guernsey or Guernsey Forward, and the only way I remember is because the arrow, Gavin's arrow, Deputy St Pier's arrow, used to point upwards to me in the book, so basically it was – I always used to joke, it was Vote Forward Guernsey, Vote Sloan, that way, because we were next to each other in the columns, I am sure you remember.

2275

I like political parties, and I have been a member of lots of political parties myself. Obviously, probably as much as –

Deputy Burford: Point of correction, sir.

2280

The Bailiff: Point of correction, Deputy Burford.

Deputy Burford: Sorry, this is a rather delayed point of correction. It is not about how many political parties Deputy Sloan has been a member of, because I have no idea. But I think he said only one in four people who were eligible to vote voted in the general election last year. So the

2285

figure was approximately 40%. So one in two and a half people, if you want it in those terms, but certainly not only 25%, as implied by Deputy Sloan.

The Bailiff: Deputy Sloan.

2290

Deputy Sloan, I said four in 10. Did I not? Sorry, it should have been four in 10. My apologies. Sorry, sir. But yes, not as much as SACCs, I have done some maths and some probability. This is where the mischievous Sloan in me goes. So if it was purely by chance, the constitution of the SAC Committee containing two members of the one political party and two members of a previous political party would be, if purely by chance, one in 149. I make no comments on that. If you are a gambling man, you might not have laid a bet on those odds.

2295

I like fairness, but you talk about suggestions and I have thought about this. I think it would be nice, given the issue, given that many people have mentioned it, I am looking around the room because it was a conversation among lots of us, if SACC could come back, say, within a year, within 12 months, with a report that sets out its views on a regime, a full regime of regulation of campaign finance, including political parties, including think tanks and lobby organisations. I think that would be quite a nice thing to do.

2300

That is my suggestion. You ask for suggestions and that is mine.

Thank you very much.

2305

The Bailiff: Well, as no one else is rising, I will turn back to the President to reply to the debate. Deputy Hansmann Rouxel, please.

Deputy Hansmann Rouxel: Thank you, sir; and thank you, everyone, for their contributions.

2310

It has been a livelier debate than anticipated, especially since we did not escape before lunchtime. So first off, to clarify around Rule 17(9), the rule itself is:

Where a Committee originating a matter for debate before the States is of the opinion that the proposals it is submitting to the States are of general policy, and 27 where it is desirable that the principles of that policy should be considered, the Committee may have its Propositions considered by the States without amendment on the understanding that if the Propositions are accepted the Committee would return with detailed proposals which could be accepted or rejected with or without amendments. Where a Committee invokes the provisions of this paragraph it shall make express reference to it in its Propositions.

2315

So the use of 17(9) really was to spark these discussions. The reason why we use 17(9) on this, and with the host of recommendations, is because if you look back to the 2020 report, which was the first time we had Island-wide voting, the first time we had the election observers come and make recommendations, the majority of those recommendations are the same as they are in the 2020 report. So we were not seeking an endorsement of all of those recommendations because a lot of those recommendations are already in train and have been taken.

2320

We were highlighting some of the different areas with the Propositions, but the most important thing was to have the debate so that we can carry on with the work, but instead of having a list of directions, that we carry on the train that we are already on and come back to the States with the more formal Propositions to finalise the work. I think highlighted in the polar opposite debates from Deputy Ozanne and Deputy Camp, if we had had that debate and perhaps there was an amendment from Deputy Ozanne or Deputy Camp to null – no, we do not need an electoral body and, Deputy Ozanne, perhaps an amendment to have a code of conduct and an electoral body to oversee that code of conduct.

2325

If one of those Propositions then won by a very slim majority, we would be under direction to carry on that train. So either we absolutely are not going down the route of a electoral body and it does not resolve all of the issues which are coming up that are created by not having an electoral body or we decide to have an electoral body and there is very specific direction from that Proposition. If I can just finish my point before.

2330

2335 We would then be coming back to the States with that direction. At that point, the Assembly could then reject that and send us back to work. That is exactly what happened in the previous term and why we ended up in a situation where we were making fundamental changes to the electoral system less than a year, in fact only a few months, before the general election. We absolutely want to avoid that this term. I give way to Deputy Ozanne.

2340 **Deputy Ozanne:** I am very grateful to you for giving way. I am sorry to interrupt your flow. I thought you had stopped just before.

You mentioned myself and my desire for amendment, the reason being is that we have a by-election in a few months' time and we have a report that flags a safeguarding issue. For me, taking action on that safeguarding issue would have been a responsible and proper thing to do. I cannot do that. All I can obviously do is flag.

2345 In your Policy Letter in paragraph 2.7, you do ask for suggestions from the Assembly about next steps. But for me, there was an urgency because we had agreed a by-election. That is why I am so frustrated that we were bound. I get that there are bigger issues. But when there is an urgency and an immediate need for something, I would have thought we could have had it.

2350 **Deputy Hansmann Rouxel:** Thank you, Deputy Ozanne, for clarifying. I appreciate that.

There is no reason why for the by-election we cannot look at those concerns, whereas a resolution would not affect the by-election, a resolution would be for us to be looking at the general election, but I appreciate the concerns raised. It has been very useful having those concerns raised at this point because we can react. I have been asking officers questions behind the scenes and we are alive to what we can and cannot change for the by-election, but we can certainly be more cognisant of it.

2360 Deputy Gabriel gave us a history of the CPA and I appreciate, as the President of a local branch and I do not know all of his titles, that he would be very keen to express this. Deputy Kazantseva-Miller also flying the CPA flag in her response. Both of them highlighting the value that we do get from being part of an organisation like that. Many Members mentioned the electoral roll, and I am sad that the President for Home Affairs had not stood because it does fall under Home. Issues that were raised regarding access, candidates have access to the electoral roll. I give way to Deputy Leadbeater.

2365 **Deputy Leadbeater:** I thank Deputy Hansmann Rouxel for giving way.

It is on our radar to meet with the States' Assembly & Constitution Committee to discuss this. I believe that the electoral roll should not sit with Home Affairs, I think it should sit with SACC and I think that is something that we should discuss.

2370 **Deputy Hansmann Rouxel:** So, with the electoral roll, candidates do have access. However, before a candidate is allowed access to the electoral roll, they must sign up as a data controller and all the regulation that relies around that. Yes, it does not stop nefarious characters, however, using the electoral roll for purposes other than for canvassing in an election is against the code that you have signed up for. It is an area that is difficult in our unique system where we do not have well-established political parties, who would vet their candidates before you have a candidate come on, and they have a code of conduct within their party. Because we are all independents, it gives us unique problems.

2380 This is one of the reasons why we, in our current system, and I think Deputy Burford mentioned this, moving to the Island-wide system. We moved from parish-based elections where each parish would have – I believe it was the Constable who was the Elector General of the parish and would be in charge of that election in the parish. Moving to Island-wide, a civil servant who is now the statutory General Registrar of Electors and therefore that gap is now more prevalent than ever before.

2385 So, yes, I take Deputy Camp's points, and I think Deputy Burford did try to reassure Deputy Camp that it is not a case of us just blindly commissioning a new electoral body, we absolutely need to identify the problems, the gaps in the legislation, and find solutions that actually plug the problem. If it is that we do need to have an electoral body, how pragmatic and how cost-effectively can that be done? It is not an easy piece of work and, again, that is something that has been on SACC's book since the previous 2020 report.

2390 Many people mentioned youth engagement, obviously, in the Propositions. I would just like to pick up on that point, Deputy Sloan and a few others mentioned engagement in general in our elections is obviously – it is a concern, and it is a concern to all of us. I cannot solve the issue of public trust, nor can any of us on our own. We can only solve that together as an Assembly, but that is not just under SACC's mandate. As much as I would like to solve that problem on my own, I think
2395 SACC's mandate is engagement for elections and we will do as much as we can within our mandate to encourage participation.

I hope that the Assembly will take the opportunity, now that we have agreed a by-election, to go out there and encourage people, particularly people that were not registered for the 2025 election to get registered. I will be looking to try and encourage participation. Even though there is
2400 fatigue for elections, I think we do need to have that enthusiasm ourselves in order to encourage as many people to participate in the democratic exercise.

Deputy Bury mentioned the complaints. I did highlight that in my opening speech, but I am glad that Deputy Bury elaborated on the process that had gone on with the observer's report, because initially, it gave the impression – and even still, the footnote, which I did mention in my opening.
2405 I think if you just read in the report, there are no complaints, so there is nothing wrong.

It did get picked up by Deputy Camp in her speech, 'Well, there is nothing wrong, therefore we do not need an electoral body'. It was a small point but if the report says there are no complaints, it does not highlight that there is actually an issue. I think having amended that, that is better.

Deputy Sloan. He sits right next to me, so I get the full force of his impassioned speeches. His suggestion around political parties, I am going to ignore the gentle inference that he chose to make, because it is tired and sad, about impartiality of political parties. However, I want to assure the Assembly that I, and we as SACC, are very cognisant that we have a massive gap with how we deal with political parties. The regulations, the campaign finance, political bodies. Deputy de Sausmarez mentioned that in questions to SACC at the beginning of the States' meeting, which seems so long ago. So it is absolutely on our radar, and just because it is not a Proposition does not mean that it is not in our workstream. Yes, the Update Statement gave some idea of our workstreams.
2410
2415

I am just trying to see if there is anything else so I can let you all go. Just to Deputy Bury and CEDAW, I am glad that she mentioned it. Again, just to reiterate, just because it was not in the Proposition, it is a piece of work that we are doing, and we have already met with women in public life. But that is not to say that we are leaving it to them. I think there is absolutely a piece of work where Government needs to understand what structures and support Government is responsible for and putting in place to encourage a more diverse Assembly, as well as what the third sector role is. At the moment there has been a lack of clarity on the structural support that Government should be providing in order to do that.
2420

2425 Again, there are a lot of issues with our electoral system and where that responsibility lies. If there was a separate electoral body, that body might have more scope, because they are outside of Government, to fulfil that that function.

Just to finish off, I hope I have not left any glaring gaps out. However, because of the nature of this debate, we will take everybody's speeches and put them in a big shaker pot. (*Laughter*) But we would be churlish and foolish because we still have to come back to the Assembly with the direction, and I welcome any feedback, if you have not had a chance to speak today, anything that you would like to provide. I know other Members have sent me emails outside of that. So, please, let us vote on the two Propositions and do keep in touch.
2430

2435 **The Bailiff:** Members of the States, there is a single Proposition; you can vote for or against it or abstain. I will ask the Greffier to open the voting on the Proposition, please.

There was a recorded vote.

2440 *Carried – Pour 27, Contre 1, Ne vote pas 3, Did not vote 5, Absent 3*

Pour	Contre	Ne vote pas	Did not vote	Absent
Blin, Chris	Camp, Haley	Bury, Tina	Curgenvin, Rob	Goy, David
Burford, Yvonne		Hill, Edward	Dorrity, David	Humphreys, Rhona
Cameron, Andy		Snowdon, Alexander	Helyar, Mark	Inder, Neil
Collins, Garry			Oswald, George	
de Sausmarez, Lindsay			Van Katwyk, Lee	
Falla, Steve				
Gabriel, Adrian				
Gollop, John				
Hansmann Rouxel, Sarah				
Kay-Mouat, Bruno				
Kazantseva-Miller, Sasha				
Laine, Marc				
Leadbeater, Marc				
Malik, Munazza				
Matthews, Aidan				
McKenna, Liam				
Montague, Paul				
Niles, Andrew				
Ozanne, Jayne				
Parkinson, Charles				
Rochester, Sally				
Rylatt, Tom				
Sloan, Andy				
St Pier, Gavin				
Strachan, Jennifer				
Vermeulen, Simon				
Williams, Steve				

The Bailiff: In respect of the Proposition, there voted in favour of 27 Members, 1 Member voted against, 3 Members abstained, 8 Members did not participate in the vote, and therefore I would declare the Proposition carried.

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

7. Schedule for Future States' Business

Article 7.

The States are asked to decide:-

Whether, after consideration of the attached Schedule for Future States' Business, which sets out items for consideration at the Ordinary States Meeting on 25th March, 2026, they are of the opinion to approve the Schedule.

2445 **The States' Greffier:** Article 7. Policy & Resources Committee, Schedule for Future States' Business.

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez, is there anything you wish to say on this?

2450 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** Not really, sir, except to note that by comparison to this week, it is relatively light, but I ask Members to approve it.

The Bailiff: Well, there have been no amendments lodged to the schedule, so I will ask the Greffier to open the voting on the schedule, please.

2455 *There was a recorded vote.*

Carried – Pour 32, Contre 0, Ne vote pas 0, Did not vote 4, Absent 3

Pour	Contre	Ne vote pas	Did not vote	Absent
Blin, Chris	None	None	Dorrity, David	Goy, David
Burford, Yvonne			Helyar, Mark	Humphreys, Rhona
Bury, Tina			Oswald, George	Inder, Neil
Cameron, Andy			Van Katwyk, Lee	
Camp, Haley				
Collins, Garry				
Curgenven, Rob				
de Sausmarez, Lindsay				
Falla, Steve				
Gabriel, Adrian				
Gollop, John				
Hansmann Rouxel, Sarah				
Hill, Edward				
Kay-Mouat, Bruno				
Kazantseva-Miller, Sasha				
Laine, Marc				
Leadbeater, Marc				
Malik, Munazza				
Matthews, Aidan				
McKenna, Liam				
Montague, Paul				
Niles, Andrew				
Ozanne, Jayne				
Parkinson, Charles				
Rochester, Sally				
Rylatt, Tom				
Sloan, Andy				
Snowdon, Alexander				
St Pier, Gavin				
Strachan, Jennifer				
Vermeulen, Simon				
Williams, Steve				

2460 **The Bailiff:** So in respect of the schedule there voted in favour 32 Members, no Member voted against, no Member abstained, 7 Members did not participate in the vote. I will declare the schedule carried.

That concludes the business for this meeting and I will ask the Greffier to close the meeting, please.

2465

The Assembly adjourned at 3.35 p.m.