

Press Release

16:00 Friday 18th October 2019

The Jersey Chamber of Commerce is urging States Members to heed the warnings of small businesses and the support of the Economic Affairs Scrutiny Panel, with their amendments to the Social Security Minister's Draft Employment proposition P.100 relating to amending family friendly legislation, scheduled for debate next week.

Chamber President Jennifer Carnegie supports the Panel: "The Scrutiny process has rightly identified the burden that will be placed on businesses, particularly the many small businesses in Jersey, who are already finding recruitment a real issue and are bracing themselves for additional Brexit related costs. Like Chamber, most employers want to support Family Friendly initiatives, but they must be realistic and achievable, if they force people out of business nobody benefits. Our States members must exercise caution and introduce changes in the sensible smaller steps suggested by the Scrutiny Panel and review these in a year, rather than bring impractical laws in and push some businesses over the edge"

Chamber has always maintained support for improving Family Friendly legislation and supporting all families and children. Vice President of Chamber, John Shenton thinks States Members should focus on all families and all children: "By putting too much pressure on small business to meet the requirements of impractical laws, many working families will have to work even harder to absorb the inevitable gaps left in many small businesses unable to get cover. These families and their children will be affected too, so we would urge a cautious moderate approach. Extending maternity leave to paternity leave is absolutely right but maintaining this at six months leave initially would show better balance to both family friendly and business needs."

With regard the amendment from Deputy Doublet, to support 52 weeks paternity leave, but review the impacts after twelve months, the Vice President John Shenton was not supportive: The Deputy wishes to bring in a law, knowing it will cause problems for some businesses, and wants the impact assessment to be done one year after it has caused the damage. Surely that is the wrong way around. The Deputy has suggested that Government could assist businesses that struggled with the law, but with no details of what this means or how it might operate it is simply meaningless."

The Jersey Chamber of Commerce President Jennifer Carnegie is calling on States members to take a sensible, cautious approach to improving Family Friendly legislation: "It is clear from many of our members and the various amendments lodged by States Members, there is widespread concern for small businesses. Chamber is supportive of extending the notice period to varying parental leave from 28 days to 42 days to allow businesses to better prepare for the possibility of recruiting cover and in also assisting those smaller businesses who would be hit the hardest by some of the changes."

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