

Election 2022 Jersey Evangelical Alliance Questionnaire

(Please respond by 2 June 2022 to secretaryjea@gmail.com)

1. Would you be in favour of expanding voting rights to all resident Islanders over the age of 16 and eliminating the two-year residency requirement before a person is allowed to vote in elections?

This is not something I have considered before but would be open minded to it.

2. What are your views about legislation which would regulate speech or the freedom of assembly?

I would be very concerned about this and would not want to see a reduction in civil liberties.

3. Would you describe yourself as a free speech absolutist or should there be certain limits on free speech?

I do not believe there is such as thing as 'absolute' freedom of speech, because there will always be things you are not allowed to say. For example, it is illegal to say things which incite murder. I think there should be a general presumption in support of free speech. But of course, that does not mean that those who speak should not expect to face social consequences if most people find what they say objectionable!

4. Currently "religion or belief" is not included in Jersey's equality law as a protected characteristic. Would you be in favour of amending the law to make it illegal to discriminate against anyone because of their religion or belief?

Religion and belief are already protected characteristics in the UK's Equality Act and it would be sensible to consider extending our own discrimination legislation to cover this.

5. How important is it to you that Jersey maintains the role of the Dean in the States Assembly?

I believe that only elected people should sit in the States Assembly. This would mean the Dean no longer having an automatic place in the States to speak and contribute to the parliamentary proceedings. That being said, if the current Dean stood for election as a Deputy, I'd be sorely tempted to vote for him!

6. Are you in favour of maintaining tax-payer support of parish churches?

I am in favour of a separation between church and state and would prefer for matters of funding to be resolved privately. But this is highly unlikely to come up in this term of office and is not on my political agenda.

7. Are you aware that current government plans to eliminate marginal tax relief for married people will result in tax burden shifting to poorer Islanders as it lowers taxes for wealthier Islanders? Are you in favour of eliminating marginal tax relief for married people? Would you be in favour of allowing married couples to share their marginal tax relief allowances across a family unit?

I support introducing independent taxation, but if this is not handled correctly it could lead to some families being worse off because of their marriage status. So we must ensure that the allowances system can account for this to protect those who would otherwise be worse off. A system to share allowances could be a way of achieving this (it is already the case in the UK tax system), but it would need to be communicated effectively so couples are fully aware what their options are.

8. What improvements do you think need to be made to improve the mental health and well-being of islanders, particularly young people?

The cost of living crisis in Jersey is undoubtedly having an impact on wellbeing, as more and more people struggle to make ends meet and suffer from stress and anxiety because of it. Many young people are losing hope that they will have a future in Jersey because of the cost of housing. Drastic improvements are needed to our mental health services (particular on the recruitment and retention of staff), but the falling economic standard of living for many Islanders is fundamentally linked and must be dealt with too.

9. What would you propose to improve transport links within and to the Island?

Reform Jersey, the party which I am proud to lead, has successfully brought forward improvements to our public transport network in this term of office, including the introduction of a student bus pass and 'through fares' for longer journeys. We are committed to renegotiating the bus contract in this term of office to make it more accessible and affordable.

10. Are you in favour of a raise to the minimum wage or to institute a living wage in Jersey?

Unequivocally – yes.

I am a founding member of the local Living Wage Foundation (in conjunction with Caritas). As a States Member I have brought multiple propositions to raise the Minimum Wage, and supported my Reform Jersey colleagues when they have also brought propositions on this.

If elected in June, Reform Jersey members will lodge a proposition to ask the States to agree to align the Minimum Wage with the Living Wage.

11. What are your views about how to make housing more affordable in Jersey?

Reform Jersey has a ‘Housing Crisis Action Plan’ on our website (www.reformjersey.ie) and this subject features heavily in our manifesto. I would urge you to read it.

Most parties are proposing to resolve the crisis by just building more homes. I believe this approach is flawed and will likely increase the cost of new homes as the construction industry becomes overheated. We need to think more creatively and introduce proper rent regulation and exclusive opportunities for first time buyers.

12. Would you be in favour of creating a special category of licensed employee for not-for-profit organisations that would give charities the ability to hire and offer housing to trained charity workers who are not currently resident in Jersey?

This is the first time I have heard this made as a specific proposal, so would need more time to consider it.

13. Are you in favour of allowing allow Ukrainian nationals without family ties to stay in the island? Would you be in favour of Jersey receiving refugees from other areas of the world where there is a clear humanitarian crisis?

I would be proud to see Jersey play a part in taking its share of refugees. We have a history as an Island of taking in refugees and of our own population being accepted at refugees (during the Second World War) and so we should adopt a compassionate approach to others.

14. Do you support maintaining a minimum overseas aid budget of .7% of GDP?

I would be opposed to reducing Jersey’s Overseas Aid budget.

15. In view of the UK's proposed conversion therapy ban would you be in favour of a similar ban in Jersey? If so, what are the specific practices which would be made illegal?

Yes, but it may require more research to understand exactly how it manifests itself in Jersey, so that any ban would be more than just a token gesture. Liberate and Hannah Read (a student at JCG who conducted some research into this) have stated that they have some evidence that it could be taking place in Jersey, and that it requires consideration from the government.

16. Would you be in favour of expanding abortion provision in Jersey or making abortion more accessible in Jersey?

I am in favour of women having access to safe and legal abortion in Jersey, alongside other forms of healthcare which may assist women who face difficult circumstances through a pregnancy.

17. Are you in favour of legalising Assisted Suicide in principle in Jersey? If so, what safeguards would you propose creating as a part of any draft legislation put forward in the States assembly?

Yes. The original proposition in the States proposed safeguards, including allowing medical professionals to opt out, which I support and want to see enshrined in the law.

18. Are you in favour of legalising recreational cannabis use?

Yes.

19. What is your general view of religion, churches and other faith groups in Jersey? What is your experience with these groups?

As a States Member for the last 8 years, I have been very grateful to have an excellent relationship with many of the churches and faith leaders in my constituency. I have worked with Caritas on the Living Wage campaign and have often turned to local churches for support with casework with vulnerable constituents or to seek a venue to host a community meeting.