



Senator Sam Mézec

States Assembly

Morier House

St Helier

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8th November 2020

Dear Chief Minister,

I write to you with regret, in accordance with Article 22 of the States of Jersey Law 2005, to resign my position as Minister for Children and Housing.

I confirm that I have the support of my Reform Jersey colleagues in doing this, and that it is our intention to support the Vote of No Confidence motion being debated by the Assembly on Tuesday.

As you know, I have felt for some time that our government has fallen short on the commitments we made in the Common Strategic Policy to 'Reduce Income Inequality'. After two years of nominally including this in our work programme, I believe there is no evidence at all that this has been achieved. Where I have pushed for our policies to go further to achieve this aim, I have met constant resistance both politically and administratively.

Reforming our social housing rents policy was a cornerstone of the manifesto I was elected by the public on, but I have felt obstructed by officers who I ought to be able to rely on to implement my policy decisions. I have received more support from bodies outside of government than inside and have constantly had to manoeuvre through the civil service to have my policy positions accepted. When fighting for an Andium Homes rent freeze over the last few months, I discovered officers had pursued a funding arrangement for this which I had explicitly ruled out. This should not be the case in a democracy.

I was extremely disappointed earlier this year when the Environment Minister was let down by yourself and other government colleagues in the States Assembly when, after a year of hard work, he brought forward regulations to introduce a landlord licencing scheme to improve housing standards for renters and to protect their health and safety. Before the debate, your support was sought, and you declined to tell us that you would not support us, leaving us to discover this during the debate itself. Because of this, I can have no confidence that I will not be treated the same way if I attempt to see through my ambitions to establish rent stabilisation measures, which are evidenced throughout Europe to improve affordability of private rental housing, but which will inevitably concern investors. A government should always be on the side of the people, not investors.

On top of this, a refusal to back moves to increase the Minimum Wage and achieve progressive tax reform (amongst other missed opportunities) shows that the government's commitment to 'Reduce Income Inequality' is in tatters.

But now the Assembly is asked to decide whether we have confidence in you as Chief Minister, after recent events surrounding the Chief Executive Officer taking on a non-executive directorship for a UK company.

Last weekend, the government made clear our view that the CEO should not hold a private sector NED for a UK company. We are now a week later, and there are no signs that this view will be respected. Statements which have been published have said nothing of value and have clearly angered the public.

I believe that the fault for this lies with you. You exercised bad judgement in verbally approving the request from the CEO to take on another role (in contrast with the Deputy Chief Minister's position on this) and then in allowing the SEB to provide retrospective permission, before properly consulting with the government. This is a mistake which could cost the public.

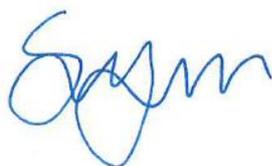
I find myself asking the question "who runs Jersey, the elected government or the civil service?" That question should not even be fathomable in a democratic society.

I am deeply disappointed that I have to relinquish my role as minister in order to make this stand, but my conscience will not allow me to do otherwise. To not do so would be to act as if nothing is wrong.

I am proud of all that I have achieved as Minister for Children and Housing. I believe I have exceeded the expectations of those who believed I was not capable of working outside of political opposition, and I believe both of my portfolios are in a substantially better position than when I inherited them. The team I have worked most closely with (in CYPES, IHE , SPPP and the MSU) have been outstanding public servants who have given their hearts and souls to 'Putting Children First' and I know they will continue to do so. I am also grateful for the support Andium has given me, and I regret how badly they are often let down by undemocratic government processes.

Where some may have lost faith in me, believing I had "gone to the other side" or watered down my principles in order to hold office, I hope that my actions will show that, for me, the public of Jersey always have and always will come first.

Yours sincerely,



Senator Sam Mézec