SUPPORTING STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT ON THE COMPOSITION OF MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL OF STATE BY HONOURABLE ALEXANDER K. AFENYO-MARKIN, MP FOR EFFUTU - 16 MARCH, 2017

Mr Speaker, I wish to commend my Hon Colleague for his effort. At least, this is about the third time I have heard him make a Statement on the floor and I am happy to comment briefly, except to say that those on this side of the House did not get the opportunity of reading his Statement to enable us make very valuable comments. That notwithstanding, I would touch on a few issues.

Mr Speaker — Mr Speaker, by our laws — no, by conventions — no. Mr Speaker, but by individual conduct, normally when we make Statements —

Mr Speaker, when you were the Hon Leader of Government Business, you encouraged us that, whenever we wanted to make Statements, we must get our Hon Colleagues to make meaningful contributions. Mr Speaker, before I made my comments, I checked with my Hon Colleagues, and they all said that they had not received copies and that is why — Mr Speaker, but notwithstanding, I would proceed.

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member centred his Statement on the role of the Council of State and the need for us to expand membership to include a former Rt Hon Speaker. He goes further to talk about matters that the Constitution is silent on and urges reforms or constitutional amendments to reflect those views.

Mr Speaker, I largely agree with him except to say that, matters of nationality with respect to membership of the Council of State, are looked at with a purposive eye, with respect to how our law would look at the Constitution. Therefore, it is not expected that an express amendment would be made to state, inter alia, that a candidate for the Office of the Council of State — that is an elected position — should be a Ghanaian or a citizen.

It is purposive, and I hold the view that the Constitution’s silence on it does not amount to some form of a contradictory position. This is because the Constitution in other provisions has stated that, the person should be a citizen of Ghana.

Mr Speaker, also on the matter of age limit, I agree that to aspire for that office, a candidate must have some level of experience because he or she is going to advise the President of the Republic, and so, he or she should have something on board.

Mr Speaker, but really speaking, is age an issue? If the person is not too old but very experienced, started life early, and has what it takes to play that role, then I am quite sure that capping it would be a problem.

Mr Speaker, but he has brought up an interesting matter for all of us to look at in future, and I would like to commend him for that effort.

Mr Speaker, I am grateful.