



**Statement by the Honourable Dwayne S. Seymour  
Minister of Border Control and Labour**

**A DISCUSSION WHITE PAPER FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION OF THE  
PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE IMMIGRATION (TRANSITION) ACT  
(2022 REVISION)**

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Mister Speaker, like many other developed nations, the Cayman Islands faces a range of migration challenges. People relocate here for various reasons—seeking economic opportunities, pursuing education, reuniting with family, or fleeing conflicts and human rights violations. These global trends emphasize the need for a responsive and adaptive immigration framework.

To this end Mister Speaker, the Ministry of Border Control, Labour & Culture have been diligently working on amending the Immigration (Transition) Act (2022 Revision) since Cabinet gave approval in May 2024 for drafting to begin, and the proposed amendments included in the Immigration (Transition) Discussion White Paper (“**the Discussion White Paper**”) can be grouped by the following themes:

- I. Revenue Generating Measures
- II. Work Permit Reforms

- III. Residency and Employment Rights Certificate (RERC) Amendments
- IV. Right to be Caymanian (Caymanian Status)
- V. Information Sharing Enhancements
- VI. Definition and Policy Updates
- VII. Pending Miscellaneous Amendments

Mister Speaker, Immigration plays a crucial role in the Cayman Islands.

- **Global context of immigration:**

Immigration plays a significant role in shaping the economic, social, and cultural landscapes of many countries worldwide. For the Cayman Islands, with a population of about 85,000 and more than 60% of that population being expatriates, immigration has been central to our socioeconomic fabric.

- **Economic contributions:**

Our expatriate community contributes greatly to key sectors such as finance, tourism, and construction, fueling economic growth and helping to build a thriving economy.

However, Mister Speaker, while the Islands have experienced many benefits from the emigration of persons to our shores, it also continues to cause various challenges and concerns.

- **Social integration concerns:**

While immigration has brought about economic benefits, it also presents certain challenges. One such challenge is social integration. The size of the expatriate community in relation to the local population can lead to misunderstandings or tensions between Caymanians and expatriates.

- **Cultural concerns:**

Some members of our local population are understandably

concerned about preserving our cultural heritage and national identity as we witness a growing presence of foreign workers. It is essential to address these concerns with sensitivity.

- **Capacity vs Existing Infrastructure concerns:**

When determining the rate at which the population should grow due to immigration, governments must carefully consider the capacity and condition of existing infrastructure. Infrastructure—including transportation systems, healthcare facilities, schools, housing, and utilities—plays a critical role in maintaining a high quality of life for both existing residents and newcomers.

Mister Speaker, our Government must ensure that our Islands' infrastructure can handle the increased demand brought on by a growing population. This includes assessing whether current systems can support additional people without overburdening them, and whether new investment is needed to expand or upgrade facilities and services. Failing to account for the pressures on infrastructure can lead to overcrowded schools, traffic congestion, insufficient healthcare services, and housing shortages, all of which can undermine social stability and economic growth.

Therefore, Mister Speaker, the Government's hope is that by extending the time that persons have to wait before qualifying to apply for Caymanian Status, this will allow the Government the additional time to plan and decide what further changes, if any, need to be made to the framework in the Immigration (Transition) Act. In order to deal with the shifting needs of a growing population the Government needs to ensure that the needs of both the existing residence and expatriates are met, while ensuring that our immigration legislation evolves to strike a balance between effective migration management and the protection of Caymanian interests so that that both newcomers and

existing residents have access to the necessary resources and services for a prosperous and healthy life.

As such Mister Speaker, the Government is asking the public to participate in the public consultation being conducted on the Immigration (Transition) Discussion White Paper until March 3, 2025. This Discussion White Paper reflects months of careful review, collaboration and research to address some of the challenges and opportunities within our immigration system. It outlines a range of proposals, that are designed to enhance fairness and alignment with some of our priorities. As Minister responsible for border control matters, I firmly believe that policies shaping the future of our immigration system must reflect the experiences and insights of our community. That is why public consultation is not just a formality, but a crucial part of the process. Immigration impacts every corner of our society, from the strength of our workforce to the vibrancy of our communities. Hence, your perspectives will help ensure that we craft policies that are balanced, inclusive and grounded in realities of those who live and work here. This process is about working together to create an immigration system that meets our current needs while preparing for the future. The Government hopes to obtain useful feedback on the proposed amendments to the current Immigration (Transition) Act.

As we look forward to the future, Mister Speaker, we remain steadfast in our commitment to serving the Cayman Islands and its people. I am honoured and blessed to be the Minister with responsibility for this Ministry, and I am eager to continue to work with the team, to ensure

that the immigration legislation is fit for purpose while safeguarding the interests of Caymanians.

Thank you, Mister Speaker.