



PARLIAMENT
OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS



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OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

Third Meeting of the 2024/2025 Session
Fourth Sitting

Thursday
6 February, 2025
(Pages 1-71)

Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin
Speaker

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PRESENT WERE:

Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin, KCMG, MBE, KC, JP, MP
Speaker

MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly, JP, MP	<i>Premier</i> , Minister of Finance & Economic Development, Education, District Administration & Lands, Financial Services & Commerce, <i>and</i> Health
Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, MP	<i>Deputy Premier</i> , Minister of Tourism & Ports <i>and</i> Social Development & Innovation
Hon. Johany S. Ebanks, MP	Minister of Planning, Agriculture, Housing, Infrastructure and Transport & Development
Hon. Isaac D. Rankine, JP, MP	Minister of Youth, Sports, & Heritage <i>and</i> Home Affairs
Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour, CCI, JP, MP	Minister of Border Control, Labour, Culture, Sustainability & Climate Resiliency <i>and</i> Wellness

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

Hon. Gloria McField-Nixon, JP	<i>Acting Deputy Governor</i> , ex officio Member responsible for the Portfolio of the Civil Service
Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin, KC, JP	<i>Attorney General</i> , ex officio Member responsible for the Portfolio of Legal Affairs

ELECTED MEMBERS

GOVERNMENT BACKBENCHERS

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, JP, MP	Elected Member for West Bay West, Parliamentary Secretary to Border Control & Culture <i>and</i> Planning, Housing, Infrastructure, Transport & Development
Mr. Bernie A. Bush, MP	Elected Member for West Bay North, Parliamentary Secretary for Youth, Sports and Heritage

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, MP	<i>Leader of the Opposition</i> , Elected Member for George Town North
Ms. Barbara E. Conolly, JP, NP, MP	<i>Deputy Leader of the Opposition</i> , Elected Member for George Town South
Mr. Roy M. McTaggart, JP, MP	Elected Member for George Town East
Mr. Moses I. Kirkconnell, OBE, JP, MP	Elected Member for Cayman Brac West and Little Cayman
Mr. David C. Wight, JP, MP	Elected Member for George Town South
	Elected Member for George Town West

INDEPENDENT OPPOSITION MEMBERS

Hon. Heather D. Bodden, OCI, Cert. Hon., JP, MP	<i>Deputy Speaker</i> , Elected Member for Savannah
Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, MP	Elected Member for West Bay Central
Mr. Christopher S. Saunders, MP	Elected Member for Bodden Town West
Mr. André M. Ebanks, MP	Elected Member for West Bay South
Mrs. Sabrina T. Turner, MP	Elected Member for Prospect

APOLOGIES

Hon. G. Wayne Panton, JP, MP	Elected Member for Newlands
Hon. Franz I. Manderson, MBE, Cert Hon, JP	<i>Deputy Governor</i> , ex officio Member responsible for the Portfolio of the Civil Service

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
THIRD MEETING OF THE 2024/2025 SESSION
THURSDAY
6 FEBRUARY, 2025
11.23 A.M.
Fourth Sitting**

[Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin, Speaker, Presiding]

The Speaker: Good morning. Parliament is resumed.
May I invite the elected Member for George Town West to grace us with prayers?

Mr. David C. Wight, Elected Member for George Town West: Good morning. [Let us pray:]

Almighty God, from whom all wisdom and power are derived: We beseech Thee so to direct and prosper the deliberations of the Parliament now assembled, that all things may be ordered upon the best and surest foundations for the glory of Thy Name and for the safety, honour and welfare of the people of these Islands.

Bless our Sovereign, King Charles III; William, Prince of Wales; and all the Royal Family. Give grace to all who exercise authority in our Commonwealth, that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety may be established among us. Especially we pray for the Governor of our Islands, the Premier, the Speaker of the Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition, Ministers of the Cabinet, ex officio Members, Members of the Parliament, the Chief Justice and Members of the Judiciary that we may be enabled faithfully to perform the responsible duties of our high office. All this we ask for Thy great Name's sake.

Let us say The Lord's Prayer together:

Our Father, who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make His face shine upon us and be gracious unto us. The Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon us and give us peace, now and always. Amen.

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Honourable Members, there seems to be some issue with the broadcast of these proceedings so I'm simply going to pause for a minute to see if it can be resolved.

[Pause]

The Speaker: All right, we're in business. Please proceed, Madam Clerk.

**ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS
OR AFFIRMATIONS**

The Speaker: None.

**READING BY THE HONOURABLE
SPEAKER OF MESSAGES
AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Speaker: None.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

The Speaker: None.

**PRESENTATION OF PAPERS
AND OF REPORTS**

The Speaker: Madam Clerk, one moment.

The Honourable Premier is not yet in Chamber. I don't know whether she wishes to depute the Deputy to lay the Report; it's just a Standing Business Committee Report.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: We'll just pause a moment.

[Pause]

**Report of the Standing Business Committee –
Second Meeting of the 2024-2025 Session of the
Cayman Islands Parliament**

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly, Minister of Finance & Economic Development, Education, District Administration & Lands, Financial Services & Commerce and Health, Elected Member for Cayman Brac East: Thank you, good morning, Mr. Speaker. Apologies, I was in the large Committee Room with a member of staff.

I rise to seek your permission to lay on the Table of this honourable Parliament, the Report of the Standing Business Committee – Second Meeting of the 2024-2025 Session of the Cayman Islands Parliament.

The Speaker: So ordered. Does the Honourable Premier wish to speak thereto?

The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Only to thank the Members of the Committee.

This last time probably made history in trying to have a quorum and a composition that could reach consensus, but I'm glad that common sense was the order of the day. We now have before us a completed, duly considered Report and Minutes approved and signed by all Members, except one. I'm not quite sure what happened there, Mr. Speaker, but in any event, it was a majority of the Members present.

I wish to thank them most sincerely for carrying out the duties they were duly elected to do in this honourable Parliament.

May it please you, sir.

The Speaker: Madam Clerk.

QUESTIONS TO HONOURABLE MINISTERS AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

The Speaker: I have received no answers.

STATEMENTS BY HONOURABLE MINISTERS AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

The Speaker: None.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

The Speaker: None.

OBITUARY AND OTHER CEREMONIAL SPEECHES

The Speaker: None.

RAISING OF MATTERS OF PRIVILEGES

The Speaker: None.

OTHER BUSINESS

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBER'S MOTION NO. 9 OF 2024-2025 MOTION TO LAUNCH A NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The Speaker: I recognise the honourable Member for West Bay West.

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Elected Member for West Bay West: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I rise to move Private Member's Motion No. 9, standing in my name, which reads as follows:

WHEREAS the Cayman Islands Constitution Order 2009 (as amended), (the Cayman Constitution) affirms our commitment to being a God-fearing country based on traditional Christian values, tolerant of other religions and beliefs;

AND WHEREAS the Cayman Constitution affirms our commitment to being a caring community based on mutual respect for all individuals and their basic human rights;

AND WHEREAS the Cayman Constitution affirms our commitment to being a country committed to the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom;

AND WHEREAS the Cayman Constitution affirms our commitment to a community that practises honest and open dialogue to ensure mutual understanding and social harmony;

AND WHEREAS the Cayman Islands is home to a diverse population of more than 130 different nationalities;

AND WHEREAS there is much concern amongst Caymanians with regards to the social harmony that has not kept pace with the rapid growth and development;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Government considers launching a national awareness campaign that highlights the diversity and strengths of the Cayman Islands with a view of building a more inclusive society.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Government considers including district activities that encourage community participation especially amongst seniors as part of this national awareness campaign.

The Speaker: The Motion has been duly moved. Is there a seconder? I recognise the honourable Member for Bodden Town West.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders, Elected Member for Bodden Town West: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to second the Motion.

The Speaker: The Motion has been duly seconded. Does the honourable Mover wish to speak thereto?

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

In moving this Motion, the House would know that I am Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Culture and that my Minister is a man deeply rooted and concerned with and about our culture.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to present this Motion in my name, and wish to record my thanks to the Member for Bodden Town West for agreeing to second the Motion.

Of course, in seconding the Motion he had much to do with its drafting. Truth be told, when I asked him to second the Motion, I was fully prepared for him to say, *Mac, you are getting sentimental in your old age*, and that would be the end of the issue. As you can see, the Member said no such thing; hence, I'm able to be before you today.

Mr. Speaker, as a strong advocate of preserving our culture, I began nearly 41 years ago by moving Motions in this honourable House. A main one, was to **"commission and publish a full and proper documentation of the history of the Cayman Islands"** in 1988. Mr. Speaker, it took a bit of manoeuvring because at that time in 1988 was, as we are today, the last Meeting of the House, and I had several Motions that I had not completed— although I completed ninety Motions from 1984 to 1988.

I think it bears repetition, Mr. Speaker, to read what that Motion was because it encompassed several things. I thought it would get ruled out, but they didn't, and I remember the late Carol Winker said, *but you know, you have gotten better; to be able to get all that in one Motion at the last Meeting*. Mr. Speaker, that Motion said:

"WHEREAS there is a need to further the social, historical, educational, and cultural awareness and advancement in the Cayman Islands;

BE IT RESOLVED that Government:

- (1) agree that persons awarded the Queen's Badge and Certificate of Honour may properly indicate that honour in writing after their name;**
- (2) commission and publish a full and proper documentation of the history of the Cayman Islands;**
- (3) provide a more comprehensive syllabus on the history of the Cayman Islands in all schools; and**
- (4) create a special scholarship to be known as the Cayman Scholarship, to be wholly funded by Government and for all distinguished recipients to be known as 'Cayman Scholars'."**

Well, I was lucky, if you read the *Hansard*—

I should have produced a copy for you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't think there would be anything contentious in what I was going to say, but I'll give it to the Serjeant-at-Arms so he can get a copy for you.

As I said, I thought I was going to run into a problem, but the [then] President allowed the Motion to go forward and the very first thing that the Government did at the time, in the person of the [now] late Honourable Thomas C. Jefferson [was] in regards to his work, to move and agree right there and then, on the part of the Motion that allowed people to indicate the Badge and Certificate of Honour behind their name. Right away, they agreed on that. Some of the other things took some time, Mr. Speaker, and didn't get done until

I was elected to the Executive Council (EXCO) in 1992 and became the Minister of Culture. In fact, we started all of it but didn't get it done, and some has since stopped, I would think, [because] I haven't heard much about it.

As I alluded to, Mr. Speaker, some might think this Motion is not a natural fit for McKeever Bush, as my critics inevitably blame me for giving Caymanian Status to many people back in 2003, our Quincentennial year, even though it was the fair, legal and right thing to do having had over 16,000 people here for up to 30-odd years not knowing whether they were going or staying; but, onwards I march.

My Motion today calls upon the Government to launch a national awareness campaign that highlights the rich diversity and undeniable strength of our Islands, which is home to people from over 130 nationalities.

Mr. Speaker, we may be small in size but I consider us mighty, when you consider the diversity and talent within our Islands. Our Caymanian workforce from tourism to finance—because Caymanians and foreign nationals work together—thrived because of the talents and skills brought by people from around the world, who assisted Caymanians' learning that business. Some of our Caymanians who became great ambassadors and worked in those businesses, Mr. Speaker, made it what it is today; and did not go to college, but learned on the advice of those on a work permit.

Being 70 years old, I know that to be a fact because, coming from a time when we didn't have an opportunity to get even a high school education, Mr. Speaker, and wanting to learn commerce, I left tourism, where I was making sometimes \$1,600 a month back in 1971/72, and took a lesser paying job in the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce to get what? \$623 a month; \$300-and-something dollars every two weeks, because I wanted to learn.

Not an opportunity to go to college there, but I had accountants from Canada who became lifelong friends. Thank God one of them, Mr. Peter Goudie, was married to a Bahamian and understood that there were Caymanians who had the ambition, who had the drive, and he taught us and he taught me. [He] moved me around that bank to learn everything that I could. In came Mr. Kurt Tibbetts. He worked with us on the fixed deposit side, and helped teach me that aspect of it.

I'm saying that, Mr. Speaker, to show that diversity is our greatest asset; it is what makes us unique, what fuels our economy and what enriches our daily lives. Yet, Mr. Speaker, while we celebrate this through Cayman Kind, recent events highlight that the feeling towards Caymanians is not always reciprocal—and that's where the rubber hits the road; that is what is causing friction. Not all of it, and that's what I aim [to] and I believe we can overcome.

If we want to be a first-world-class country, everyone has to work together and understand where

we are at, and I am not saying anything different because an election is before us. That's not me, because any paper that wants to carry what I want to say, can carry it. I have never been elected by the newspapers or social media or television—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: —Or talk shows, I'm reminded. No, I know how to get along, when to say what I need to say, and having grown older—thank God, I'm 70. My grandson said, *Papa, you're 70 now?* Yeah. *How?* I said, well, think of it, if I didn't reach 70, where do you think I would be?

We know the frictions that we are facing. I recognise that we are living in an era where division and misunderstanding are global challenges—look around the world; but I am keen to ensure, if this is my last time... I don't know, I've never said I won till I won. I am going to run, although some say, *oh, you too old, you should retire*. Uh-uh. Some [are] telling me, *we rather see you with a walking stick, than to have some driving their Mercedes Benz; we don't want them*. That's what they tell me.

Hence, I am keen to help ensure that the deep divisions that exist in other countries do not grow and fester in our Islands because of misunderstanding, hard feelings and the actions of some. We know what is happening in the workplace. We can, though, and we must, find the fit to balance these situations. I am not going to get out there because someone *cusses me out*. No, if I'm in a bad mood, I may *cuss* them back and then ask God to forgive me, but I'm not going to do so much as that because the truth is, our own people get up there and say all manner of lies and evil against each other and that is our big problem. Remember, I repeat what Gerrard said, *if a Caymanian can't run the show, can't be the captain, can't be the Premier, they're going down in the engine room and wreck it so the boat can't go nowhere*. Thank God that attitude does not prevail completely in this country, but some of it still exists.

I see things that are not good for us and, on my part, I *ain't gonna* allow it to fester. We must, therefore, proactively try to build a society where every individual, regardless of background, feels seen, valued, included and is heard most of all, our Caymanian people. They tell you, this is *my* island. Yes, it is our island; we didn't build it alone, but we carry a good disposition to help others help us, and that's what I want people who have not been born here to realise.

This initiative, I think, is innovative and cross-cutting and one that will encourage collaboration and social harmony, not only within the community at large, but amongst various Ministries, Departments and teams within our civil service; the people who work along with us to improve the lives of our people. I'll say here as I've said [before], I know we are on the cusp of an election and people can utilise things against you

and twist them, but I say, does anyone believe, Mr. Speaker, that these Cayman Islands we have, that are still prosperous, still loaded with opportunity—and that as legislators, we have to find the balance to help our people—could have gotten this far with 10,000 people? I hear them talking about too many people.

I hear them saying, who are we developing for? I'm going to address that a little later, but Mr. Speaker, could we have created a budget [for] \$1.2 billion? When I came here, it was a little bit thicker than this note pad, and look at where we are today. [It is] Caymanians and foreign nationals making it happen. We could not have done it with a *cook rum*, a three-burner, two-burner or one-burner oil stove, a gasoline fridge or oil fridge. We could not have done it. Why aren't we rejoicing in where we have come from? No, we are complaining that it's too much now. Thank God that's a complaint; victims of our own success. It took many people to do it.

Thus, I say, we can proactively continue along a path that will help us build a unified community. Everyone? No, I'm not that *fool* to believe that, because they have prejudices all around but have always been Mr. Speaker, always been. Some maybe even a little bit more today because I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, back then it still existed, they didn't want to see some of us in this House, oh, no. You think they wanted me here, or the Premier? Some of them didn't want you here, Mr. Speaker, you know that. You think they wanted Bernie Bush here? No, not good enough! I know their feelings, but that should not stop us and that is not the majority.

This initiative, as I said, is innovative and cross-cutting and will encourage collaboration and social harmony not only within the community at large, but amongst various Ministries within our civil service. It enhances, I think, our communities' social fabric, and strengthens our social development framework, which is particularly important to me as Parliamentary Secretary for this and other Portfolios connected to social development. I think that has been one of my strong suits. In fact, Mr. Speaker, one of my opponents once said, *oh, you got to get rid of him. Put him back into the community and make him wuk. He's a good community worker. Don't elect him*. Ah, what a surprise they got, I got elected again.

This campaign, therefore, is necessary, if we are to foster unity in diversity. People, don't get it wrong. I've heard some of them saying, *let's mash it up. If I can't have this, I can't have that, then no one else can have it*. I heard some multimillionaires saying *if I can pay*—and I think I will get the opportunity, if they come West Bay West; I believe if they go [West Bay] North, they're gonna get licked, too. They gonna get it. I have heard them say, *if I can pay to educate my children, then everyone else can do so*. Oh, yeah? Those are the people who want to run this country. Ah-ha. Those are the people who want—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Oh, I will, but not yet. I'm not going there yet, but as I said, if they come, they would meet a barrage they never met before. You can believe that.

Mr. Speaker, many people who made Cayman their home years ago came here to embrace our culture and values. The intermarriages now, while plenty are working against what we believe to be the right thing for happy marriages, there are many that are not token marriages, who have families. I have a daughter-in-law who is Honduran, I have grandchildren; I have a grandson, the oldest one, whose mother is Filipino; I have nieces and nephews whose father is Jamaican. Not all the intermarriages have worked, but plenty, thank God, are working; thank God.

When we look at who is embracing our culture, we recognise that some don't, so let me be clear on this; it cannot be said for some of the new Caymanians today. There are a minority of groups who believe their beliefs and values are superior to those of our people. I see Caymanians, as I said, speaking out as they feel crowded and left out, but that's not everyone. My message to that minority is—and they write about me, so you know this goin' be a little tit for tat here—feel free to leave, as the goodwill of the Caymanian people may be becoming exhausted of them.

For the remainder, we value your shared contributions, whether that is in the church, working on our garbage trucks, being a farmer, in the financial industry, the legal fraternity, the financial services and the tourism industry—yes, we value their shared contributions and their commitment to building a strong Cayman, not just about the environment, because there are many of them. They have their place. They can't tell me, though, I must save lime lizards and kill people. They can't tell me I must save iguanas, and stop the East End and North Side people from getting to work and back home at a decent time. No, I don't share that kind of contribution or that kind of commitment.

We therefore need activities, Mr. Speaker, that highlight the shared contribution of all communities, reinforcing the idea that we are One Cayman and One Love—borrowing the tagline from my friend and colleague, the Member for Bodden Town West. If they wondered whether I'm going to support him, huh, I'm supporting him.

Whether Caymanian by birth, status or choice, everyone who is legal and calls these Islands home has a role to play in shaping our future. A national campaign can reinforce the idea that we all belong, we all contribute and we all have a stake in Cayman's progress. This is especially important when we consider how many of our Caymanian children are the product of a multinational family, as I just pointed out of my own, where one parent is Caymanian and the other parent is non-Caymanian. Again, I want to be clear that I am not referring to those sham marriages where Caymanians give away their birth right; I'm talking about marriages or

relationships between two people who love each other and who are raising a family together the right way.

Mr. Speaker, the future of this country is our children, and while I strongly believe that they must learn and appreciate their Caymanian heritage and culture, they should also never be afraid to celebrate the heritage and culture which comes from their non-Caymanian parents. Therefore, I believe that a national awareness campaign should go a long way to encourage unity in this country, and what I envision is that the national awareness campaign will include several things—media initiatives showcasing diverse voices from different backgrounds, professions, and communities.

Mr. Speaker, in speech—we know that in Bodden Town and East End, they have a unique dialect, different from other areas in Cayman. Also, as we listen, you would hear an English accent different from Jamaican accent, so it would be good for younger people to understand that this difference in dialect is nothing to be ashamed of, but they are trying to kill it, and some look down on it—some of our own Caymanians. I don't look down on it. I value it, because it is coming from a generation and a people who have come up here in the ranks.

There are differences in how we cook our food. Like whelks. East End has a different way of doing so from what my mother did in West Bay, and even beef—speaking of which, Mr. Speaker, I see they say this is Cayman-style beef. Cayman-style beef? *uh uh*. It was never pulled into pieces or strips, that's not Cayman style. At least not what I grew up with. Not what my mama cooked.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: *Hmm-hmm*. There are differences, but there's nothing to be ashamed of in what we did, so let's not try to change that. Let's not try to change it.

The use of media not only will publicise information, but also allows for intergenerational connections amongst all communities. A vast amount of information can be shared digitally via a dedicated website that is monitored and maintained, so there are many initiatives Mr. Speaker, that, have been started, and many continue to this day. Our people, though, have to be involved, need to get involved. I remember the National Children's Choir that I initiated. It is important for people to know that these things work, that these things happened.

Look at the (CNCF) Choir. I helped push Lorna Bush to start that and the Cayman National Cultural Foundation, and it is one of the best things that you want to sit and listen to; that is culture. People need to know about these initiatives for them to be at the forefront of what all people are engaging in; better promotion of these activities, but also allow for feedback to be easily shared and obtained to determine whether the

initiatives are working or not working and the reasons why. Then we can continuously improve the ways that people coming into the Islands integrate; but, Mr. Speaker, we need to put in place staff at the community level, to ensure that our programmes are doing what we are spending money to do.

Mr. Speaker, we hear the complaints of not preserving our culture and I must strongly encourage our people to be more involved, more interested in events, cultural events. As I said, in some way, I started the National Children's Choir between 1992 and 1996 or there about. It's either dead or just nothing much is happening with it, but it should be a community programme melded into a national programme where hundreds of children could be a part of it. These are the kinds of positive cultural programming that our communities should have. Think of it, if we had fifteen or sixteen in the entire choir, we had plenty, but was there the population? What it is now, 84,000 or 85,000, maybe more? We should have 1,000 young people—who claim they have nothing to do—be a part. Voice is important, it's encouraging, it's good, it's clean—that is, if they don't use some of the songs I hear today.

Mr. Speaker, why? We need the programming done so it reaches into the community, and we need to staff it. You cannot work it by itself. Those old days when your mother and others would get out there in the church and be there all day, helping and teaching... much of that spirit is gone. People are busier. Government, then, coupled with the assistance you can get out of the businesses and communities in the country, must put a programme like this. [We] just can't accept *Gimistory* once a year and that'll be it. That just doesn't cut it by itself. While it's entertaining, it can't cut it. You have to be in the community and be involved and ensure that cultural things Caymanian are taught and enhanced.

Put in place educational programmes in schools and within the districts, that teach cultural appreciation and the shared history of Cayman's people. Programmes and initiatives should encourage participation of older persons, seniors within the community, inviting them to share their personal stories, their history and traditions, which they are still practicing, and some of this is done in little bits here and there. This could be done in collaboration with entities like the Council of Older Persons who advocates for older persons. Ms. Seymour, former Member of the House, who's very much involved with the Council of Older Persons is always talking about things that we can do to involve our older people who have the background, who lived it.

Why do these people believe that what we lived, and appreciated, can't continue? *You are too old*. Too old? I can dance better than some of them.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Yes, I can sing and dance better than some of them. Older people have a place,

and I don't like to place myself too much in that bracket, but age is age; and experience, too. That's why one of the slogans for my campaign, Mr. Speaker, is going to be, "his is no time for trainee government". Stay home, go do something else.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Elected Member for West Bay West: Yes. Come and work first, show what you can do for the community. Don't sit back and believe that all you have to do is run around with social media. Good thing to have—look at the work you can do today on the phone and you don't have to get to the office or you get it done before you get to the office so, it's meaningful, it's good, but for people to believe that we should shake up our culture... You can't do anything because you're too old and we don't want this and we don't want that. I say, that's not a way to build a country; that's not a way to build a country.

You know what Singapore does? In one area, Singapore pays a family to keep their parents, grandfather, grandmother with them in the home so that they can teach the children Singaporean culture and Singaporean heritage, and they have that knowledge because they are that age. I'm not saying there is not a place for younger people, of course there is. We want that, we want them to learn and be involved, certainly.

Mr. Speaker, public events and celebrations that bring communities together to showcase traditions, music and cuisine... One such celebration that can be considered is what the Honourable Premier referred to in her 2025 Heroes' Day address, the possibility of designating a day to be "Caymanian Day". Additionally, that initiative can be bolstered through partnership with entities that have existing public awareness campaigns and activities—for example, being incorporated into the Department of Children and Family Services' established Child's Month and Older Persons' Month activities. They have done that.

Mr. Speaker, industry partnerships to highlight how diversity strengthens our tourism, financial and public service sectors could include the Department of Children and Family Services that has experience working in our communities; but I say, that we do have good staff in the Ministries. I know we have them in the Heritage Ministry, the Ministry that I work with, Culture and Border Control, et cetera. Staff who work and are concerned, but they can't do it all; they can't do it all. That's why we need a strong cadre of workers, cultural workers or whatever you want to call them in the community. There, they will know the families; there, they will know the places; you've got some people here, I've never seen more names in my life that have no meaning to Cayman.

I've done well in West Bay, changing names, et cetera. Oh, yes, I named them after sea captains and other outstanding people we had before. Where I live now, Mr. Speaker, was called Boltins when I grew up,

and when the good people came and built up the place and made good homes, they called it Town Hall Crescent. I didn't object to it as such, but I always knew it was Boltins, and when I had the chance, *Bam!* I changed it back to Boltins.

From what I understood, Colonel Boltins was an English colonel who made that place back in the 17th century. That's what I was told by the old people. From Watercourse Road, a little below from where my family the Albert Ebanks' were, up to the Town Hall Road and all the way to Hell Road, cross Inferno and the cliffs there, was one big plantation as I understand it; but you know what they were doing, Mr. Speaker—growing hemp and shipping it to Haiti. That's what he was doing. I don't believe any such thing today down round me, *round deh*, but that's what it was.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Yes, someone just asked me, "*What is hemp?*" *Ganja*, that's what it was back then. A huge industry, of that huge acreage, the bigger part of my constituency now is that area.

We want people in the community who understand people that they can go and look for aunty—in West Bay we call them *con-aunty*. Now, I always wondered what that meant. Someone asked me, a couple of days ago, what did "*con*" mean. I think it was just a part of the speech twisted, *con-aunty*; but uncle this and uncle that and everybody was a cousin. Well, nearly so in West Bay, too.

Mr. Speaker, this cannot be done just by people in the Ministry. They work hard, they have the knowledge, some of them went to university, got good training and when you talk to them, you know you're talking to a sensible person. What I'm talking about is hands-on down into the communities. We need to put the money there. We are giving out money here, there, and everywhere, and helping this one and the next one—which we ought to do as a government; but we need to put staff in place in the community—I cannot say that enough—so they know what to do. They know what an area was called and they can teach and pass that on. That's what I want to see.

Mr. Speaker, before I finish up on this aspect... Take Cayman Turtle Farm. It came, Mr. Speaker, because of the industry it was. That industry built many homes, some of which are still standing throughout Cayman, plenty in West Bay. Of course, we could ship some of it off to the Florida Keys for canning products. The [M.V.] Adams being one of the main ones, if not the only one, I'm not sure; but that ship, which was my wife's grandfather's, the late Captain Allie O. Ebanks, and my grandmother's first cousin, he and his brothers, one being my great, great grandfather, Captain Robert Albert Ebanks (Albert), and my father himself and uncles were navigators, sea captains, and good ones. Before them, of course, there were others and there are many others, but I talk about who I know; Captain Joe,

Captain Osbert, many in West Bay. I speak about West Bay because I know it best.

Turtle Farm became when there was a push through the British at us, and we stopped because of their efforts to put out turtle meat, [to] stop it. They couldn't stop it, but they could stop the products which we were exporting. Cayman Turtle Farm still maintained a presence, hiring and feeding our communities. Today, we have a problem with the meat. You see the little whitish bit in some of it, it's youngish. As far as I'm concerned, [we] need to look at how we operate on that now, only sell to our local restaurants: Super C's, Luigi, Miss Pansy's, Liberty's and other restaurants. I'm talking about restaurants in West Bay but, of course, you've got the one in Breakers and many others.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: South Coast, yes. They have good food. I think we need to look at it, talk to the Minister. Not the hotels, you don't need to sell to the hotel. You don't need to put up 100 pounds to the hotels and then, Mr. Speaker, you can't get any to cook. Sell to the local restaurants and then the tourists will go to them, but if you sell to the hotels, it means less and less for locals; and even to that I'm hearing a kickback on. They can go to the local restaurants.

Talk to the Minister about the Turtle Farm, and you all know its survival is important to the entirety [of] Cayman, not just the people who work there—which not all West Bayers work there. The Minister will expand Turtle Farm to have more turtle meat; however he is going to do that, he will expound on, I think, on the platform and not here, though he'll probably do so here as well, knowing him.

Mr. Speaker, these are the things that we have to preserve. Some people say, why do you have to preserve turtle meat? Why you can't... No, it is part of our culture. You can't say, no; it is. We must do all we can to preserve that entity.

Mr. Speaker, talking about events. The event we have created after Heroes Day in the evening, hundreds of people enjoying Caymanian food and artefacts, enjoying each other's company—sometimes you don't see each other unless you go to a funeral and you might see some—enjoying music, not all Caymanian music, but I sat there this last one and listened to much good old-time Caymanian music, Caymanian songs done by our local bands. The overall purpose of the national awareness campaign is to bring about unity; unity through education, media, community events and industry.

Mr. Speaker, the Cayman Islands are a global model of peaceful coexistence, economic success and cultural integration, but we must actively nurture this reality. They can *cuss me* if they want, and I know, I know, you *gonna* hear a barrage about McKeever Bush again. My day is coming to fire back some things too though, you know, is coming.

Mr. Speaker, by launching a national awareness campaign, we affirm that diversity is not just our present, it is our future. Let us, therefore, take this step forward together, in unity and strength. I know Members have been listening intently, and I hope all will rise to support this Motion.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?
[Pause] The honourable Member for West Bay North.

Mr. Bernie A. Bush, Elected Member for West Bay North: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Once again, I stand early and quick. I'm not going to wait around to hear all the other stuff. The Member for West Bay West brushed over something. Very few can say they have come to this Island and we have not respected their ways. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it is known that Caymanians don't like confrontation, at least most of us, but it has not been reciprocated, especially in the last 25 years. I remember speaking here before, and some of you saying to me, *be careful, you don't want to create an 'us and them'*—it's been them and us a long time, but we've had our head buried in the sand. People don't want to admit it, don't want to address it.

Mr. Speaker, early in my time as the Minister, one of the best civil servants I've ever worked with—a lady by the name of Ms. Tunisia Barnes—and I, went to Jamaica and met with “Babsy” Grange and her staff who deals with heritage and culture and so forth. We were trying to find out what can we do to start to make our next generation, have something to hold on to and be proud of. As we got out of the meeting, she said, *“You know our emancipation was different from everyone else.”* I said, that's it.

Mr. Speaker, we came back and started and then *bam*, we found out that you had Alfonso (Fonzo) Wright and Marzeta already working on some of it to deal with Long Celia and Emancipation Day. It hurts me to say, though, that the leader of the Cayman [Islands] National Party—I'm not going to skirt around things like him, you know, because from the time I have been here I've been straight. I had to call him because he was upset and blaming it on the Minister of Tourism, and the Minister of Tourism told me, and I picked up the phone and called him—this is not hearsay, this is mouth to mouth. Some explanation was given that the University College of the Cayman Islands (UCCI) and the financial industry in Cayman is not getting its proper respect... That has nothing to do with Emancipation Day. I've understood now, I have not heard this from his mouth but I know he didn't like it, that he intends to stop it; yet, I had Caymanian teachers, Caymanian scholars, everyone, contact me and say, *“We know this was your baby. Congratulations.”*

This Motion that the Member for West Bay West has brought is one way, but our country has to change its mentality, Mr. Speaker. A perfect example, we find a real map, a legal map, that shows Grand Cayman, Cuba and Jamaica in 1500 but we are still making people tell us that Christopher Columbus found us in 1503. That's what we believe, (1503), because who told us? Right there is our problem.

For years I've heard people talk about the Member for Bodden Town West and his “Jamaican accent”—which I hear a proper speaking accent, not really a Jamaican accent—but Mr. Speaker, I can name one person in the glass house and one person in one of my Ministries who, I believe, may have been born here, but their father and their mother had been here for a long time and they're talking, *Good Morning, Bernie. [British accent]* they say they are Caymanian and no one says that they're not Caymanian—but they will say the little man with pigmentation skin, who went to the wrong school is not a Caymanian. That's the problem. It's the mentality we have. That's why things like these he's talking about, are necessary.

Mr. Speaker, just three or four weeks ago, people saw one little piece in the newspaper, and I know—I didn't even want to call it a newspaper. That piece of thing up there that I told you I was proud of you when you said they were a compass something [and] don't put the word Cayman into it, because they are so anti-Caymanian it's a shame. I forgot the word you used to describe them. You know, I was disappointed when we went back and gave them business, but that is life.

Mr. Speaker, I had Ronald Forbes, our Olympic hurdler and one of the most diehard Caymanians you'll ever find, real, true, blue, Caymanian and a good man. There's a young man going after his records and he and I are sitting there and he's saying, *come on, young man, you can do it*. How many people you know want their record to be broken? That's Ronald Forbes. Then I had Jordan Crooks [who] gave me time out of his schedule; and I had Hakeem Bush. Three successful young men and I invited eight young Caymanians, some were indigenous, some were new, some were black, and some were white. What Mr. Bush's Motion is talking about.

Mr. Speaker when you and I were in high school, Paul Magnus, Helen Pooley, Belinda Ball, Todd Reid, all these people, white, brown; they weren't from here, but we were together and got to know each other and we respected and adapted to each other's way. True or false, Mr. Speaker? Very much so. I brought those young people together. There's a young man—I did not get permission, so I'm not going to call his name. He's a swimmer, and won the deep-water swim for us. There's also a young lady. When she placed in the deep-water swim the year before, Coach Jacky said to her, *I never knew you Irish could swim*; and she said, *my mom and dad may be Irish, not me, I'm a Caymanian*. This is a little 14, 15 or 16-year-old girl.

You see, people don't understand that the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA) swimming and track and field very seldom take place together in the same country, and if it takes place in the same country, swimming and track and field are separate. Track and Field is predominantly black; swimming, predominantly white— but not anymore. There's much brown skin and dark skin in there now.

Mr. Speaker, I have said it on this Floor before. I used to despise the rugby club. I used to despise swimming, and had all the facts on it. I've still got a file on the dirt that went on there before, holding Caymanians on the outside that some of our children couldn't even get to swim. I set them up and caught them when I was Acting Director of Sports. Now, they are what this country needs, especially those two programmes. Go to rugby, look at who you see up there. It's poor Caymanians, indigenous Caymanians, black Caymanians, white Caymanians, new Caymanians, old or whichever phrase you want to pick—and the latest thing I'm hearing which really doesn't sound good, the mixed breed.

Sports. Sports— and I will forever be grateful to the Government that I started with for helping me get that pool. It should have been here twenty years ago.

[Desk thumping]

Mr. Bernie A. Bush: Government after government kept kicking it down the road, and when Michael Lockwood, Jr. was stepping out as President and I was stepping in as Minister, he said, *B., if you don't do anything else for me, get us that pool*; and I went and looked at the programme and the times. I did my work, and I could see what was coming, and I sold it to this Government and they backed me. When they brought it here, I didn't hear one thing on the next side of the Floor, so no one will be able to take credit for this— it was all of us. It is one of the greatest things this country has done, and six, seven, years down the road we are going to see the benefits. We're going to see it big time, because they have their stuff together.

It's like Taekwondo. You know what they did? They brought in two grandmasters and had them go to all the primary schools. They started the programmes in the primary schools [then] picked the team from the primary schools. That's what you call building from the bottom up, and now they are rated so much so that the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) is looking at Cayman. That's how you do programmes the proper way. Oh, how I wish I could have gotten some help instead of getting a fight from people who know nothing about sports. I could have done so much more.

Getting back... Now, here we are, Mr. Speaker, trying to build and bring people together [like] when I had those young people meet down there—and I want to thank Treats. They gave us their space when they closed, and the food and everything for those young people to get together to talk with Ronald, Hakeem and Jordan. Why I picked those people—I didn't

pick Hakeem because he was my son. I picked him because, like what Ronald told him, he was the captain of the cricket national team, the junior national team; he was the vice-captain for the national football team under-19s. They didn't know that my son was a good sportsman, but he is also a great pilot. When they found out that he was flying the A380 they were shocked. All of a sudden you could see, well, Jordan is there, Ronald is there. This country doesn't know, [but] the cruise line has taken over one island and is building something in the Bahamas. Does this country know who is the project manager? Ronald Forbes, a man who tried to get back to work in the Sports Department here and wasn't good enough, but yet he's managing for Royal Caribbean or whatever the cruise line is.

Mr. Speaker, I think I'm one of the most misunderstood people in this country, but I live with it because I don't play the games nor kiss around anyone; and I say many things that everyone else thinks, but such is life. I can hold my head high; and to think that the Leader of the Cayman Islands National Party wants to stop Emancipation Day— that's what I'm hearing he said, but I know he didn't like it, because he and I had a conversation.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Bernie A. Bush: Mr. Rankine, from East End, said he told him the same thing. All I know is this, those are the types of things that we have to do [so] that we can start to make our people proud. Jamaica has their reggae music, they've got their athletes—we have the athletes too, but we've never put the right things in place. As a government, we have allowed members of certain associations to remain on their associations, even when they were found guilty of molesting children and do nothing about it.

You can't do certain things, because you can't interfere, but you don't have to give them your facilities. You don't have to give them the money, until they get rid of the people who hid what was going on and they're still there now, but unless you get *combative*... and boy, you have certain people who would run to Mr. Kurt Tibbetts and they would run to him, playing all two, *Jackie-both-side*, they are what they call "riding the fence", but I guess those tights in Vaseline you don't get chafed.

Mr. Speaker, when Tunisia Barnes and I came back, the former Premier—I give him credit— and the Cabinet Secretary Philip [sic] Rose backed us to the hilt and we all worked together to get this thing—

The Speaker: Samuel Rose.

Mr. Bernie A. Bush: Samuel Rose, Cabinet Secretary. I appreciate your help there, Mr. Speaker.

When we started to put things together, I got messages on my phone from school principals, Caymanian school teachers— young people in college were sending messages saying, yes. You know why?

Because we could brag. This has nothing to do with anything except the fact that the rest of the Caribbean had to wait four years to be free. The woman who adopted and raised me, who I loved, and died in my arms, used to tell me *Cayman never had slaves* because that's what was passed down to her. We had slaves here; and were the first island to be free. As small as that may be to some, it's a big thing to others who like to have something to hold on to in history.

Ask the Member for George Town [West], the former national team opening bowler, Mr. Wight. Ask him how good it feels when he can brag and say one of his grandparents had something to do with the West Indies team. It is a good feeling to be able to brag and say that. Now Caymanians can brag that we were the first island to be free and our slaves may have had a different mentality—now I hear talk that they don't want to recognise Long Celia. I wonder why. I guess why.

Mr. Speaker, once again, people don't like these type of things, but when you have the wrong complexion, it is not good.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Bernie A. Bush: No, I never heard it from them so I will not say that because I don't know for myself; but we have to change our mentality in this country, Mr. Speaker.

When I sat those young people down—bet you the *Compass* never talked about that part. I told those eight young people that *they* are responsible for helping [with] the beginning of bringing this country back together as one—the new Caymanians and indigenous Caymanians; young Caymanians, and old. That's what the meeting in the building was [about]. Yes, it was also about pre-college, college and post-college, but the main thing was get to know each other, and when they get together on trips, make sure they all mix.

Mr. Speaker, a pilot programme run by Ms. Shakeina Bush called *Catch the Culture* was presented to Caucus. The Coast Guard posted it on their website before it had gotten to Caucus because they loved it so much; the schools loved it. When it came to Caucus, everyone loved it, Mr. Speaker. I remember when she went through the prices and what it would cost everyone said yes, and I remember the Premier said... *but where is your price in this?* Ms. Shakeina Bush said, I wasn't necessarily thinking about making money off of this, just enough to cover those children that they'll know all about fishing; they'll know about tying knots, about this and [that]. *Catch The Culture*. It's her non-profit organisation (NPO); she's finishing her next master's before she kicks it off, but all that will come in time.

Mr. Speaker, no matter how much we war, I want to thank the Member for West Bay West. I know how often I've been across the Floor, on that side and this side, [but] there's one thing the *Hansards* would always show: Whenever something has come before this [House], I don't care who brings it, as long as it's the

right thing, I'm going to support it. It is needed. I remember, Mr. Speaker, the [former] Member for North Side, Mr. Ezzard Miller, standing up and saying what he was hearing on the street, how some people are not happy, and there might be bloodshed. The *Compass* and everyone took this man apart. I was glad he spoke first that day, you know why? I heard the same thing and had intended to say the same thing, but in my usual way, if someone else says it, I don't repeat it. I don't have to, all I have to say is I agree; because I hear people say the same thing, just so they can hear their own voice. I'm not one of them, Mr. Speaker.

When Dr. Roy Murray, who was an understudy of Dr. Philip Pedley, came here to help us with the emancipation project, he found so many other things that we can show our young people we can be proud of. The museum down [by] what used to be the car museum, is one of the best places in this island to take our school children and, once again, I will always thank the Member for Bodden Town West, who found me the money and went with me to help me beat down Mr. Ugland's price. The young man, Mr. Ugland's son, worked with us and said, yes, and dropped the price drastically to help this country so that we could have something for our people to go see and be proud of, so when Mr. Bush is bringing this Motion, we need it—but we need to live it. We have to get our people living it, Mr. Speaker.

I do pray and hope that when this comes, that it will not be put on the back burner like the National Youth Policy and the National Sports Policy. Since I left the Ministry, nothing has been done about them. This is a very serious thing and we need to catch it because we cannot afford division amongst our young people. We need them uniting and coming together, since we can't seem to do it—look at the Member for George Town and I. We made up and look how good we are now that we are even going to have dinner together.

[Laughter]

Mr. Bernie A. Bush: Mr. Speaker, if we can do it, anyone can do it; but please, Members of this House, this is something serious that has to be looked at, but we all in this country have to live it regardless, whether you like it or not.

I remember Anthony Eden, Winston Connolly, Arden McLean, Ezzard Miller and me voting against the Term Limit Exemption Permits [TLEPS] in 2013; and some of the people who caused this, are people who were in these TLEPS, who [inaudible] this division in this country. I say that without any reservation because I still have the list, some things I keep because I like to say I was right.

Mr. Speaker with that, I will say to the other Members of this House, please take this Motion very seriously. We need it. Going forward, we cannot afford our country to be divided anymore, especially our young people coming through.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?
[Pause] Does any other Member wish to speak?
[Pause] Does any other Member wish to speak?

I recognise the honourable Member for Bodden Town West.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders, Elected Member for Bodden Town West: Thank you.

The Speaker: Honourable Member for Bodden Town West, if you would just resume your seat for a moment, please.

Honourable Member for West Bay West, I would invite you, sir, to lead the Happy Birthday chorus for the Member for Bodden Town West. I've only just learnt of it. I should have announced it earlier.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: What about my birthday? His too.

The Speaker: You were at home, unfortunately.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: That's where I was.

The Speaker: I know that I can rely on your voice. I don't know about the rest in here, some of them are suspect.

[Laughter]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: So you're breaking the rule in asking us to do that song, right? Good.

Hon. Members: [In chorus] Happy Birthday to you. Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday. Happy Birthday. Happy Birthday to you.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Thank you.
Honourable Member.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Mr. Speaker, you know this is the season to *throw licks* on people, man. You can't put me in a good mood like this, man. It changed my overall demeanour, you know.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: That's why he did it.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Okay, that's a good one. Thank you all, colleagues. I greatly appreciate the gesture. I guess, this being my birthday and all, it's normally a time I use to reflect, and most importantly, give God thanks for allowing me to see another year. I know at times, Mr. Speaker, I don't live the life that my mother would like for me to live, but I can tell anyone, without a shadow of a doubt, that there is a God, an awesome God that we serve and, more importantly, he loves the Cayman Islands and its people.

One [piece of] advice I would always give young people or anyone, Mr. Speaker, comes from Matthew 6:33, "**Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and [all] these things shall be added unto you.**" I would say to all Members to do the same thing. Even though I may not lead with the best example, I try my best at all times to do that.

Mr. Speaker, there are three poems that are near and dear to me. One is *Invictus*, the other is *Our Deepest Fear* by Marianne Williamson, and the third one is actually *Desiderata*. This morning during my devotion, there was a song that deals with *Desiderata* and it has just been playing in my mind, even while I was getting dressed, and I want to share that poem with Members today.

"Go placidly amid the noise and the haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant; they too have their story. Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexatious to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time. Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism. Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment, it is as perennial as the grass. Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness. Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be. And whatever your labours and aspirations, in the noisy confusion

**of life, keep peace in your soul. With all
its sham, drudgery and broken dreams,
it is still a beautiful world.**

Be cheerful.

Strive to be happy."

I came across that poem from a very early age and it was actually introduced to me by my late father, so I guess that's why it has always been one of those near and dear to me.

Earlier, Mr. Speaker, the Member for West Bay West, in his contribution, referred to my usual use of the term "one love"; and for those of you who are fortunate or unfortunate—depends on how you look at it—to get the many messages that I send out, I always end it with *One Love, One Cayman*. I guess the "one love" is more respect for Bob Marley, who shares my birthday; but the real emphasis on that message, Mr. Speaker, is on the "love" part. The reason why I emphasise the "love" is that for those of us in this House who do study political science and listen to the teachings of people like Machiavelli, they will tell you that people are driven by two basic emotions—love and fear. They will also tell you that you appeal to people's fear because people decide who they love, not who they fear, and it is always best to appeal to the emotion that people have no control over. It is one of the reasons why the message of fear or negative campaigning has always worked.

On top of that Mr. Speaker, when you consider that we are born with six basic emotions, 4.5 of those six are actually negative. There is fear, anger, sadness, disgust. There is surprise, either good or bad, and then happiness or joy. As human beings, we are actually designed to process negative information or realities, much more easily when 4.5 of our basic emotions are negative, except for happiness and the one thing that can override those 4.5 negative emotions, is love.

This morning, Mr. Speaker, as we were going through the morning prayer that was being made by the Member for George Town West, as much as we say that prayer every morning we come here there's one part of it that really caught my attention this morning, and it's when he said, **"forgive our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us"**.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that every one of us in this House, takes the personal attacks that come with being a Member of the political fraternity. As Obama said, in politics, **"you should expect to get roughed up"**—and we signed up for this, so it is no surprise for us. However, as I said yesterday, many times it is the people closest to us, who did not sign up for it, who suffer the most, yet they have to go through the motions and we have to be the ones telling them, *listen, don't worry about it. It's no big deal, it's part and parcel of politics, it comes with the territory*. As Churchill said, *if you have enemies, good. It means you're doing something*. If you don't have any, then something is bad.

Mr. Speaker, when the Member for West Bay West asked me to second this Motion and we were

having the discussion, it was about the same time the riff-raff conversation was going on and I said to him, *Mac, you're really getting sentimental; you're getting soft in your old age [with] this kind of Motion to speak about these things*. I said to him, no problem. We had a good and decent conversation on it and I saw exactly where his heart was. The thing about it is, Mr. Speaker, sometimes I really do feel it for the Member for West Bay West. When you have been in this business this long—I mean, I've been here 7.5 years, and at times it is a very dark business. For a person to have been in it that long and not be that cynical and that negative... because we have to find an extra gear to be positive. We have to find an extra gear to just forgive, forget, move on, and just chalk it up to something else.

In preparing for the Motion, and talking about highlighting our diversity, I couldn't help but go back to the 2021 Census, Mr. Speaker. This is still a good book and I tell people, please, use it. It's a very good exercise. Census is important, and if you want to go back to the biblical days, remember when Joseph and Mary were traveling back to their home, it was because of a census so that's to show you how far back censuses have been going on; it's even in the Bible. Mr. Speaker, one thing revealed by the Census is that we had a population of 71,432 persons of which 327 were institutionalised, so the non-institutional population was 71,105. Of the surveys done, there were actually 68,811 respondents which was roughly a 97 per cent feedback.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the census on religion, of the 68,811 respondents 36,808 were Caymanians and amongst our Caymanian population:

Religion	Total
Anglican	920
Methodist	113
Hindu	106
Muslim	48
Judaism	47
Rastafarian	122
Non-denominational	3,080
None	5,693
Other	1,204
Baptist	3,370
Church of God	8,458
Jehovah Witness	355
Pentecostal	2,079
Presbyterian/[United]	3,304
Roman Catholic	3,060
Seventh Day Adventist	3,541
Wesleyan Holiness	904
Unsure [DK/NS]	406

Barring the Hindu population which was 106, Mr. Speaker—and I think in Hindu they may have multi-Gods—every other religion recognises the one God, and it says something about us. When we talk about

He hath founded it upon the Seas, we can understand where the Cayman Islands is coming from. More importantly Mr. Speaker, the point I want to highlight, [is that], despite the majority of us recognising the one God, there's still diversity in terms of denominations.

Mr. Speaker, when you look on page 126 of the census it speaks about the Caymanian population and the country of birth— of 36,808 [persons], 22,786 were actually born in the Cayman Islands, which is roughly 62 per cent, which means that 38 per cent of the Caymanian population was not born in the Cayman Islands. The countries highlighted as country of birth as per the 2021 census, were:

Cayman Islands	22,786
Jamaica	5,296
United States of America	1,908
United Kingdom	1,168
Honduras	1,539
Canada	768
Nicaragua	258
Barbados	100
Cuba	682
Trinidad and Tobago	206
Guyana	128
Costa Rica	66
Ireland	98
Colombia	188
Philippines	247
India	114
Australia	56
South Africa	73
Other	1,035

I think that speaks to about 130 different nationalities that are actually Caymanians to some extent. Mr. Speaker, when you look at it, 38 per cent of Caymanians per the 2021 census were not born in this country— and again, it speaks to the diversity of our population.

When you look at that by the district, Mr. Speaker, for the district of George Town, of the 33,898 persons, 14,344 were Caymanians, of which 8,077 were born in the Cayman Islands, and that 8,077 represents 56 per cent of the population. It means, that of the Caymanian population in George Town, 44 per cent were not born in the Cayman Islands as per the census.

Moving to the district of West Bay, Mr. Speaker, there were 8,430 Caymanians in the district of West Bay per the census; 5,462 or 65 per cent were born in the Cayman Islands. It means that the remaining 2,968 persons, or 35 per cent, were not born in the Cayman Islands but are still Caymanian.

Moving to my home district of Bodden Town, Mr. Speaker, 10,311 persons were Caymanian; 6,467 were born in the Cayman Islands— and contrary to popular belief, I was one of those 6,467 too.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Yeah, me. It means that 3,844 or 37 per cent of Caymanians in Bodden Town were not born in the Cayman Islands.

Looking at the district of North Side, Mr. Speaker, there are 1,277 Caymanians in North Side, again per the census— 75 per cent or 955 were born in the Cayman Islands and 25 per cent were not born in the Cayman Islands.

Looking at the district of East End, Mr. Speaker, there 1,080 Caymanian; 865 were born in the Cayman Islands, which is 80 per cent, and 215 or 20 per cent were not born in the Cayman Islands.

Going to Cayman Brac, Mr. Speaker, there were 1,317 Caymanians of which 943 were born in Cayman Brac, which represented 72 per cent, and 374 or 28 per cent were not born in the Cayman Islands and, lastly, Mr. Speaker— and this one was a bit of a surprise to me—Little Cayman. They had 48 Caymanians in Little Cayman of which only 16 were born in the Cayman Islands and the other 32 persons or 67 per cent were actually born outside the Cayman Islands.

When you go through the census, Mr. Speaker, you see the diversity; you see the richness; you see what makes the Cayman Islands unique, and I don't think there's anywhere else in the world you can find 130 different nationalities sharing 102 square miles, anywhere out of a major North American or European city. A small island, yet I dare say that nowhere else in the Caribbean, you're going to find over 130 different nationalities sharing over 100 square miles.

Mr. Speaker, I've had the pleasure and the privilege of having jobs that allowed me to travel, and I can say without a shadow of a doubt, without any fear of contradiction, that despite our struggles, despite our challenges— despite all the issues we have going on in Cayman, this is still one of the best places to live and work on this planet.

Do not kid yourself; we can still leave our doors unlocked despite, you know, we have some issues with crime. It is still generally a safe place to live. It's still a good place to raise our families, and many people around the world who come from countries where there is much strife and many different challenges know, when they come to the Cayman Islands, why they don't want to leave. To some extent, I think the only people who don't properly appreciate what we have here, are our own people.

I mean, people save up for years just to come to our beaches and we drive past them every day like it's nothing; but yet, throughout COVID, when we went through the lockdown, everyone started to appreciate the little things that we took for granted. I didn't know how much people wanted to go walking, wanted to go to the beach, because all of a sudden, when it wasn't available to them, was when they wanted it.

Mr. Speaker, I look at other Caribbean islands that are struggling with the issue of immigration— and

immigration is a very emotive issue. We have seen it in North America, we have seen it in Europe, we have seen it everywhere, where immigration has become a dominant issue. It's very easy for us to go out and play on people's fears to say, *well, you know, your life is miserable and you got foreigners to blame* because people always need somebody to blame. Something that has always boggled my mind, Mr. Speaker, is how rich people can convince poor people that the reason they're poor is because other poor people come and do the jobs they didn't want to do in the first place, when they actually make off like bandits. That in itself is a gift, you know, and we have it here in Cayman.

We have recognised that, you know, we speak about the merchant class, but now there's a new class emerging—the oligarchs, as much as we don't want to look at it. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, it takes much audacity and temerity, that you can work for an organisation for the longest while, make a ton-load of money until “the wheels fall off” and then, after you have made all your millions, you're bored, you have nothing else to do, *“Let me go run a country. Let me go find a bunch of people who have never been elected, never been anything, and say, ‘come follow me; I got \$50,000 for you if you come run with me.’”*

Bear in mind, Mr. Speaker, the Election Law has a limit of \$40,000, so when you start making \$50,000 promises to come run with me, off the bat you are breaching the law, you know. This has always been the issue with incumbents, where we, as elected MPs are subject to the standards in public life, et cetera, we have certain restrictions on things we can't do; but people out there, until they formally make it, they can spend money left, right, and centre, you name it.

Until we sit down, Mr. Speaker, and start having even a serious conversation about finances and politics, et cetera, we're going to have many challenges in this country. I'm not going to get too much into that because it's not the nature of this Motion, but the point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is that you can't be going around in corporate boardrooms, raising a ton-load of money from new Caymanian PR holders and non-Caymanians, and then run into indigenous Caymanians and say, *“boy, you know, we need to find a way to run this country because it's being overrun by foreigners.”* Then you go into rooms with the new Caymanians and say, *“boy, you know, we need to find a way to ensure that you find your place in society”*; then you go to the people with PR and say, *“well, we need to make sure we find a way to fast-track you, so people like you can become Caymanian.”* It's just this double speak; and all the time, Mr. Speaker, going around creating division in this country.

Let me tell you something: Anybody ever take a look at Bermuda? I see this Bermuda video floating around. Bermuda has a serious black/white racial issue, but I am also sympathetic to Bermuda people because, you know what? There were cases in Bermuda where you had white-only. There were places in

Bermuda where black people couldn't go; if you owned land in different districts you could vote multiple times; but if you didn't own land, you couldn't vote, so I understand the Bermuda struggle.

Mr. Speaker, I will say this much, when I went to school in New York, I used to get into many arguments with black Americans, and part of it was that we in the Caribbean were never seen as embracing their civil rights struggles too much because in the Caribbean, we were fighting colonialism and imperialism. When you look at fighting colonialism in the Caribbean, at some point, men of the Caribbean islands were able to say to their colonial masters, “leave”. In the United States, those other Americans were not going anywhere. They had to find a way to coexist, while many of us were able to go to the United States [and] benefit from the Civil Right Movement, [without] really understanding or appreciating the Civil Right struggle because we were looking at a different struggle.

I say all that to say, Mr. Speaker, that I went to a Jewish University and some of the best, kindest people to me were my Jewish professors. My interest in political science actually came from my Jewish professors who would sit down—yesterday, when I spoke about being elected Student Government President in a Jewish University, it was because we had two days of voting at PACE and I had Jewish professors stop during their class to say, *“Guys, did you all go and vote for Chris yet? Go and go and vote for Chris.”* That's what Jewish professors did, and all because the administration didn't like me.

That was the first time I found out about a tri-party system in University, between the students, the faculty and administrators, and we all met the Senate. For the longest while, the administration controlled two-thirds of the Senate because they controlled the student government's vote and all of a sudden, the administration didn't like me—no surprises there. I decided to run against them, and all the professors decided, *“You know what, we're going to support Chris because the administration doesn't like him.”* It was the first time in the PACE Senate that we were actually able to take the gavel out of the hand of the administrators and put it in the hand of a professor because then, the momentum shifted. That was my first foray into politics at that level, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Honourable Member, I know today is your birthday and you just seem to be finding your stride now, but I'm getting complaints about the need for people to fortify themselves.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: It is now fifteen minutes after one. Unless you are going to wind up in the next ten minutes or so, we'll take the luncheon suspension now.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Oh no, Mr. Speaker, I am not winding up anytime soon.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: All right. We'll suspend until 2:00 o'clock

Proceedings suspended at 1:14 pm

Proceedings resumed at 2:12pm

The Speaker: Parliament is resumed.

When we took the luncheon break, the honourable Member for Bodden Town West was in free and full flow.

[Laughter]

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I started back my intermittent fasting and this was my first meal for the day, and I didn't realise how much different you feel when you actually have some food in your system.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Sorry to stop you again, but we seem to have the same issue. I'm not sure if it's the broadcast or just the monitors in here.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Honourable Member.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned before the break, looking at the diversity of the Caymanian people, both in terms of religious belief and countries where they were born, the census went as far as to cover the main language spoken in the different households, and I won't get into that. The point I want to make and why I'm grateful to the Member for West Bay West for bringing this Motion and why I'm happy that he asked me to second it, is that we need to make sure and be careful that we do not bring the same level of divisions that many people have in different countries around the world. We have seen it, thus the reason I say that despite our challenges and our struggles, the Cayman Islands is still one of the best places to live and work on this planet.

Mr. Speaker, my dad went to sea like many Caymanian men at the time when opportunities were limited. When I recall my own father's journey: he was born in Jamaica, he came to Cayman in the early sixties and how my father arrived in Cayman was a bit funny, to some extent. We found out much of this when we were actually putting together his obituary, et cetera. When my father left high school in Jamaica (he

attended the same high school I did, Calabar High School), he was actually working for the Jamaica *Gleaner Company* and the lady who raised him, Miss Daisy—everyone remembers her, she had a shop in town next to Macdonald's—was actually living in Cuba.

The funny part is, there was a man who used to travel back and forth between Jamaica and Cuba on business, and he took a great interest in my grandmother but for whatever reason, nothing happened; she said he didn't get lucky. When the issues started in Cuba, she decided she wasn't going back to Jamaica because the man who was looking at her at the time turned out to be the Prime Minister of Jamaica, Bustamante, when he used to travel back then on ships. She basically said, if he was running Jamaica, it could not be anything good, so she would come to Cayman.

[Laughter]

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: I'm glad the Member for West Bay West isn't here to hear that part. When she came to Cayman, she sent for my dad to join her in Cayman, and that is how he ended up in Cayman. He had a job at the time with the Jamaica *Gleaner* as a printer, so if you look in his passport you will always see "Occupation: Printer."

When he came to Cayman, the opportunities were limited and that's how he ended up going to sea, and for the longest while he used to say to her, "*You know, you took me from a good job to come to this now, to go to sea and hustle*" which he didn't mind, because he had great memories from going to sea. Of course, on one visit back from sea he met my mother, Rose McLean; and we always say "*Roy just never went back to sea.*" That is how it started. I say that to say, Mr. Speaker, that I look at my dad who, pretty much from around 20 years of age to when he passed at 71 years of age, spent more than half a century of his life in Cayman. Despite that, to this day, some people would get up and—not being born here—would argue he's not Caymanian.

Yesterday, the Honourable Premier paid tribute to our Honourable Attorney General. I can say this much, politics being what it is, there are times we find ourselves in agreement with the Honourable AG, and there are times we find ourselves in disagreement with the Honourable AG; but something no one has ever said (at least I've never heard) is that he does not have Cayman's interest at heart. His wife is Caymanian, his children are Caymanian and, even being a parent, you fight to make sure your children have a brighter future.

Mr. Speaker, my wife is from Montego Bay. The irony about it, I look at one person who is running to take the seat of the Honourable Premier in Cayman Brac East—if memory serves me right, his own grandparents are from Montego Bay, too. I mean, at some point every single one of us came from some place, some only arrived earlier than others, but when you think about it, most people have many things in

common, you know? It is the diversity we have that has made Cayman unique.

I've said this over and over, Mr. Speaker: Cayman's success was never immigration, but integration. People coming to Cayman and becoming part of the social fabric. Yes, some may not have arrived 200-300 years ago, some could have only arrived 20-30 years ago, but it is the strength of everyone. I remember you yourself recalling the different dishes. At one point oxtail, for example, was primarily something eaten by Jamaicans, and now you can't tell Caymanians that oxtail doesn't belong to them. It's the same thing with curry goat. We have enriched ourselves, our culture, by drawing from others, and others drawing from us.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, I was born here and I have nowhere else to go; and I will fight for this island for as long as I live because this is where I intend to die. It is where my children intend to die, and I'm going to do my best to ensure that my children have the best future.

When someone tries to divide us based on how we speak, the colour of our skin, and where we were born originally, what do they expect to achieve? How does that help us to improve Cayman? How does it fix the traffic issue? Mr. Speaker, by human nature, as I said earlier, 4.5 of the six basest emotions are negative, and we find ourselves living in a society where negativity breeds.

Something we also need to be careful of, is that we have imported people from countries that have certain habits that are un-Caymanian, whereby they refuse to integrate within our community. As the Member for West Bay North spoke about earlier, going into the school system and seeing the different people who grew up there, where everyone met in school. Look at kids in a playground. Regardless of where they are born, regardless of who their parents are, they all play together; but all of a sudden, the minute they get older, they don't want to talk to each other. It goes to show that division, hate and all of that kind of stuff is actually taught. We are the ones who sit out there and highlight all the differences people have.

Mr. Speaker, one of the best speeches I've heard [was] Bill Clinton's, "Embracing Our Common Humanity". Back in 2011 I was in Kingston for work, and we had some time, so we got tickets. That speech moved me so much, that it actually prompted me to go to the organiser after the lecture and say "*Listen, I need to bring Bill Clinton to Cayman. I need this speech repeated in Cayman.*" Yes, he was very expensive but we had a good turnout. It is something that never left me, in the sense of *how do we embrace our common humanity?* Most of us have 95 per cent in common, but we focus on the 5 per cent difference.

You know, one of my favourite songs, Mr. Speaker, is a song that actually got a Grammy from Black Uhuru called "*Solidarity*". Part of the song says:

"Ev'rybody wants the same thing, don't they?"

Ev'rybody wants a happy end

*They wanna see the game on Saturday
They wanna be somebody's friend
Ev'rybody wanna work for a living
They wanna keep their children warm
Ev'rybody wants to be protected [sic]
They want a shelter from the storm"*

This is who we are. Mr. Speaker, when you consider the odds of you being born is 1/400 trillion—and scientists have studied this—as the poem says, "*You have a right to be here*". There is something I saved on my phone as a note to myself, just to not overwork my brain. I came across it once and have never forgotten it.

When you think about people as a whole, everyone has two parents—regardless of all the talk about different sexes, everybody has two parents. Everybody has four grandparents. Everybody has eight great-grandparents. They have 16 2nd generation grandparents; 32 3rd generation grandparents; 64 4th generation grandparents; 128 5th generation grandparents; 256 6th generation grandparents, 512 7th generation grandparents, 1,024 8th generation grandparents; 2,048 9th generation grandparents; and 4,096 10th generation grandparents. Simply put Mr. Speaker, in 10 generations it took 4,096 people to bring us into existence—4096!

When people get up and talk about life being hard, do you know how life was ten generations ago for our own grandparents? What it would have been like? What the world would have been like? Many things came together. Many people came together over the space of ten generations—4096 people, 200 years—came together, so we could be here. What would have happened, Mr. Speaker, if on the day your father met your mother, your father or mother had a different appointment? Would they have met? Would you have been born? Now you need that twice! What would have happened if your grandparents... That's just one occasion, one window.

I was speaking to a friend. One day her father was working on paving the road in front of the school, and her mother was leaving the school at the time the road was being paved and, in just that moment he glanced at her, stopped, and said "*I'm going to follow this woman. I need to get her name, I need to find out where she lives, I need to be able to write to her*"—because back then, writing was the thing, there were no phone calls.

I remember saying to her, what would have happened if when she came out, the pavement was being done at a different side of the road, further up or down? He would have missed the opportunity and she and her siblings would not have been born because the chance of them meeting would not have happened. Imagine, you have to double that for your grandparents and quadruple it for your great grandparents. All of those things falling together—so every single person, Mr. Speaker has a right to be here.

A comedian who was quite popular in New York was Jerry Seinfeld. I used to watch *Seinfeld* when I was going to school in New York in the 90's—a show about nothing, as they would say. I remember an interview when someone asked Jerry Seinfeld, when did he realise he was funny and he said, he remembered his first original joke, how this man suspected his wife of infidelity or whatever, and decided to come home early. While he was walking around the house to see where this visitor could have been, he found a guy hiding in the closet and he asked him, “*What are you doing here?*” and the man replied, “*Well, everybody has to be somewhere*”, and that's the point. Every single person has to be somewhere.

It is by different chances that we find people and the magic happens. That, Mr. Speaker, is what makes Cayman unique, where so many people have come here and integrated. Immigration was never an issue in Cayman. Where it started to become an issue was the lack of integration, when people started to come in and they started saying, “*We don't need to mix with the Caymanians; We don't need to mingle with certain people, don't need to do this, don't need to do that.*”

Typically, as with anything, people start using that as a tool for fear. Ironically, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the US right now on the whole abortion issue, it has become a political issue, but if you go back into the 1970s, it was never something that politicians decided to get involved with, until someone came in, looked at one city and realised “*Wait a minute, there are many Roman Catholic votes here. Let us make this an issue in this city so we can get the Roman Catholics out to vote.*” All of a sudden, it started going national. That is how easy it is to create division.

If you look at the electoral map back in the 1970s, the Republican literally won almost every state, except for maybe two. You look in 1984, it's the same thing, from New York right down, all the states that are considered blue now, used to be red. It is about recognising that it is politics and politicians that divide people. Now we have created a culture of bad mind in this country, where nobody can be happy for anybody anymore—and Mr. Speaker, if we don't nip it in the bud, it will get worse.

Many of us have travelled to countries and lived in countries where we have seen it. It is not what I want for my children—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: It needs to stop; so as we enter the season, we want to ask people to make decisions. I am begging those people, I'm imploring them—to take a look at the 2021 census. When you see the percentage of our population, 47 per cent of the Caymanian population—I'm not talking about the overall population—47 per cent of the overall Caymanian population was not born in this country. Are we now going to create a Cayman where we're saying to people

who are now Caymanians, who call here home, that we're going to have the 53 per cent fight the 47 per cent? To achieve what, when we have common challenges that, once we come together, we can solve these problems together?

Mr. Speaker, many people talk about capitalism. Capitalism is a market system. It is an economic system. Democracy is a political system. The backbone of capitalism is competition, but do we honestly believe that on a social level that we can make a country better by competing against ourselves? Or do we make the country better by cooperating amongst ourselves? Which is it?

I say to people, when people come and they start this language, reject it. When someone is trying to say, based on where somebody was born or how someone sounds, that they are not Caymanian, and they're not this, they're not that—let me tell you something, Mr. Speaker, I have met people who are not born here that love Cayman more. I represent a multicultural constituency and some of the most hard-line immigration constituents I have, are the new Caymanians! The ones who weren't born here, are the ones who keep telling me, “*Chris, close the door!*” Not the indigenous Caymanians, the new Caymanians. “*Close the door! Too many people now, the infrastructure can't take it.*”

The population has increased by more than 25 per cent since the last census. The infrastructure has not kept pace. It is those social issues, or the lack of infrastructure, that is now causing a problem because when people are sitting in traffic, when people see the price of food, et cetera, they start getting frustrated; and human nature is that they need someone to blame—but this is not how we build a country, Mr. Speaker. Politics has always been about ideas, ideals and ideology, and what we need to focus on is ideas that will make our people's lives better.

You know, Mr. Speaker, before I left here yesterday, I had made up my mind to rain some fire and brimstone down on some individuals who are out there perpetrating this fraud on the Caymanian people, perpetuating this division amongst the Caymanian people. I've heard some disparaging things being said about me, my family, my background, my heritage. I've heard it. The people they said them to, came back and told me because they were disgusted by it and let me tell you something, Mr. Speaker, Rose Saunders is still alive, thank God for that—I've still got one parent.

Sometimes I shudder to think how I will behave, what will ever happen to me, when the person who anchors me to make sure that I don't carry on in a manner that will embarrass her, closes her eyes. I shudder to think, because we had two rules in our family growing up: call home every Sunday and don't embarrass your mother; because my father would always tell us, “*You can't embarrass me*”—but for us, it meant “*Don't embarrass your mother*”. Those were the two rules we had in the Saunders' household.

When David read the prayer this morning, I don't know if it was his voice or his accent when he said, *"forgive our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us"*, but I will leave the fire and brimstone part of my speech for another time. I hope I never have to use it, because Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, I applied for a job to uplift Caymanians—all Caymanians—and if I have to tear down one Caymanian to get a job or keep my job, then I would have failed before I started.

I have had policy disagreements with you, Mr. Speaker, and over the passage of time I have come to recognise and appreciate what you brought into the political process. I know this is not farewell time, but while I'm "in the moment", on behalf of the people of Bodden Town West who I have the privilege to represent, I want to say thank you for your service in this country. I think one of your shortcomings is that while we were always quick to highlight the negatives, or the things that you didn't do, or the things you didn't get right, we never really talked about the things you did get right—like the Constitution we have in this country, which you got an award for.

I don't think people really appreciate what came out of that 2009 Constitution; the work that went into it. For the listening public, I'm going to break it down for you as simple as possible: This legislative body and the Cabinet were merely an advisory body. All the power was vested in the Governor. That is as colonialist as it can get, and after the 2009 Constitution, other than those items in section 55, everything has been devolved to the people of the Cayman Islands. Thank you for that, Mr. Speaker.

I think the work you have done recently to change the parliamentary Standing Orders, and I see the Government Motion coming up, is going to be one of your final legacies—unless, of course, you decide to come back to be Speaker—that would have contributed greatly to increasing representation in this country.

[Desk thumping]

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Mr. Speaker, one of the best speeches that I've ever heard you give in this Parliament—mark, you know, the first speech you gave, you beat up on us like crazy, I'll never forget that; but one of the best speeches I've ever heard you give in this Parliament was the morning when we had to vote on the domestic partnership issue and you used a poem, I think *If* was the name of the poem you quoted. That was one of the most impassioned speeches I've ever heard sitting in this Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, we have much talent in this country, and while some people would even sit here and speak ill of our own politicians and our own representatives, I can tell you, having travelled to other countries and met other politicians, we have politicians who have been elected in Cayman who are world-class. We have representation in this country that is world-class.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I recall your own interview with Steven Shakur, where if you go back and you look at other—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Huh? Stephen Sackur, yeah. When you go back and look at how other world leaders have fared against him and even your own performance in it, you can directly see the level of talent that we have—although he has now become famous because of the Guyanese President parking improperly on the old climate issue change.

The point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is that the talent you have, the talent that many of us have and the talent that many people outside this Chamber have, came from embracing a diversity of talents, from many people from different countries. Most of those country's people will tell you, and they will say it because they've said it to me, *"Even though Cayman is now my home, I accept and I respect the right that Caymanians should come first, because this is still the land of their birth."* They have said so to me. There are just a few people who come with this imperialistic mentality as if the Caymanian people are backward, but the vast majority of people that we have welcomed here will say to us that *"Listen, this is still the land of your birth. You should have the first priority."*

Mr. Speaker, I raise that to touch on my final point. People complain about Caymanians feeling entitled. I ask the question, *"And why shouldn't they feel entitled?"*

An Honourable Member: Amen.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Where else should a Caymanian feel entitled to anything other than in the Cayman Islands? Should they not feel entitled to participate in the prosperity of the country? Should they not feel entitled to participate in the opportunities of this country? Shouldn't they feel entitled to have a job? Shouldn't they feel entitled to have a home? They should feel entitled and I wish to God more Caymanians do, because part of our problem is that we're too nice—and I can tell you that what we have today was not built by nice people.

Mr. Speaker, quite recently we saw the United States and Argentina pull out of the World Health Organisation. Something that I always remember, is this guy telling another the story that, *"My grandfather walked ten miles to work. My father walked five miles. I'm driving a Cadillac, my son is driving a Mercedes, my grandson is driving a Ferrari, but my great grandson will be walking again."* The man asked him, *"Why is that?"* and he said, *"Because tough times create tough people, tough people create easy times, easy times create weak people, and weak people create tough times."* Four generations, eighty years.

The reason I mentioned that, Mr. Speaker, the last global reset that we had on this planet was in 1945, at the end of the Second World War; eighty years from 1945, four generations from 1945 is 2025. We are now going to go through that global reset. All of the institutions that were created after the end of the Second World War to ensure peace, prosperity and unity on this planet are now being dismantled and challenged. There is nothing that we here in the Cayman Islands can do to stop that reset, because that has been the way the world works. Our job, Mr. Speaker, as political leaders, and hoping to be political leaders again, is to prepare the Cayman Islands and insulate the Cayman Islands against those things that are coming.

There is going to be some pain, and the last thing that we need is people running around trying to divide this already small community. We are just under 100,000 total population, barely a blip in a world of over 8 billion people. However, the knowledge that we have, the knowledge we can draw on from over 130 different nationalities from countries that have been through, and are going through what humanity have been in, is what we need to find to embrace our common humanity—to embrace our diversity.

Trying to pit 53 per cent of Caymanians against 47 per cent of Caymanians is not the solution. We need to focus on the real solutions that will help our people so, Mr. Speaker, I will close by saying what I started out with:

*“Go placidly amid the noise and haste,
and remember what peace
there may be in silence.
And as far as possible without surrender
be on good terms with all persons.”*

David, thank you for that prayer this morning. Maybe it was the tone of your voice, that changed the mood I had from yesterday; or maybe it was the birthday song. I don't know, but it was something. I softened before I came up—

Mr. David C. Wight: There was no fake twang in it.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Nah, there was no fake twang.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, what we have in Cayman is nothing short of God's blessing and a miracle, and we need to ensure we do our best to preserve it, because I know that from your own personal travels and your own personal experience, you know what will happen if we get this wrong and it is not going to be pretty for our children and our grandchildren.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you honourable Member for those very kind words. Marc Anthony, in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* said “**The evil men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones**”, so thank

you, for letting me hear something before my bones are interred.

Does any other Member wish to speak?
[Pause] Does any other Member wish to speak?
[Pause] The honourable Member for Prospect.

Mrs. Sabrina T. Turner, Elected Member for Prospect: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I stand before you to lend my support to Private Member's Motion No. 9 of 2024-2025 – Motion to Launch a National Awareness Campaign. Today, Mr. Speaker, we must all be united in our support for this Motion to launch an initiative that celebrates our identity as Caymanians, while promoting unity and inclusion across our three Cayman Islands. The Cayman Islands are a tapestry of cultures, history and traditions that shape our unique identity. We take pride in our beautiful landscapes that are also at risk. Vibrant communities in every district boasting a unique charm.

You can start from our largest district in Grand Cayman, West Bay; beautiful white sandy yards— you know they are there, thatching, and if it's one thing they will definitely *big-up* in competition it's who cooks the best turtle meat on Heritage Days. You can even start with George Town, what's unique about George Town being our capital now. Looking at the unique diversity of Bodden Town, our first capital, you've got the caves, Gun Square, and all that they have right there. All of their culture is so rich. I remember those days when they would close the road, again, going back to Heritage Day, when we all came out on a united front, being proud of who we are.

Then we head up to North Side, and you think about Cayman Kai back in the days where there were just mounds of sand, and how they have managed to still hold on to our culture in the way some of their houses are constructed. They have maintained that island life; that island feel of who we are. Where culture is concerned, East End definitely still holds strong to who we truly are. Cayman Brac, again, it's a unique blend; and Little Cayman, almost the land that time forgot.

The spirit of resilience that defines exactly who we are as Caymanians, Mr. Speaker, cannot be forgotten. Let us embrace this pride and identify it as a uniting force for every person living on our shores. A Motion of this nature is so needed because we say “*Caymankind*” and “*that's Cayman*”, but if we look around closely, we are slipping away from exactly who we say we are.

I am so happy though that this Motion is here today, because it gives us an opportunity to speak on this Floor of Parliament that will be in our *Hansards* as a part of history, proving our awareness of the issue that is obviously at hand; however, Mr. Speaker, this Motion must not and cannot just be a motion for consideration, but a motion that will become a reality. The necessary resources must be put in place, the relevant ministry or ministries must be given sufficient funding and physical resources; public and private partnership

participation, and a clear mandate to follow for this Motion to actually come to fruition once it, I hope, is passed here today. A Motion of this nature holds the potential to transform our society. The key word, Mr. Speaker, is “transform” and if we don’t do it, someone will do it for us.

Our national awareness, being aware of who we are, is the backbone of our very existence. “*Who yuh fa’?*” “*Who ya mama is?*” “*Wha’ happenin’?*” “*Come ya nuh, man!*” are sometimes frowned-upon nowadays. There’s a time and a place for everything, I know, but in all honesty, we as Caymanians—and this is by no means criticising—have not done enough in our schools, from pre-K straight to our colleges, in teaching and educating our Caymanian heritage, our way of life, how we have gotten to where we are and, most importantly, Mr. Speaker, on the backbones of who. There are so many.

Even on the radio stations and our media houses, “*Did you know?*” segments about Cayman should be boosted all over the place! I have a dear friend who always says, “*Boost it up, like Supligen*”. We should be proud to “boost it up”. Our national pride in who we really are is our foundation, and it should never be under threat of collapse. No, Mr. Speaker, but it is sad that we have gotten here. Based on some of the contributions made it is evident that, as a nation, we have fallen asleep but we are not dead, and we will revive that spirit and will embrace and respect whence we’ve come.

Campaigns like this is one that everyone should be proud to stand tall. This campaign must be a programme; a commitment to addressing the pressing issues that face our communities and fostering a collective sense of responsibility to every person that is living amongst us, however, leading the charge must be by those of the soil. This is only possible if we are willing to take each other seriously, if we truly reflect and display that we are true ambassadors of the Cayman Islands at all times, and not as a convenience. Only then, will those who have made that decision to join us follow suit, and respect Cayman, our way of life, and who we are.

Our charity in all honesty, begins with us. Charity begins with every Caymanian in order to make this work. At the heart of this campaign, its purpose must be made clear: to raise awareness about and be proud to say, we started to make a living from farming, fishing, turtling, schooner-building, and thatch rope-making, while many of our males served as merchant seamen. We should know that means our earnings were very meagre; yet, from whence we’ve come, look at where we are today.

In this awareness campaign, we need to stand proud to say we eat turtle meat, whelks, some good ol’ coconut rundown, fish and beef, maybe even a combo. Be proud to say that our forefathers walked for miles in the past, in shoes made of tires. How many children know that they were really called “wompers”? Yes,

pirates were a part of our history, but the goal here in this Motion must be to educate, engage and empower every single person to take informed actions that will lead to positive change that should have never been lost but, thank God, we are still awake and we are here.

This awareness is a step towards meaningful action. We should not have gotten here; we’re becoming a society of ‘them versus us’—hate, anger, and division. This, Mr. Speaker, is not who we are and who, I pray, we will never become. Caymanians are loving, warm, inviting, giving, hospitable people, but what I am seeing is serious cause for concern and only together will we be able to rebuild, to revive and show our Caymanian way of life, history and culture. It is not too late to regain control and get back on track, but we must stand together.

Let me make it abundantly clear, Mr. Speaker. I am not separating anyone in this contribution. I’m inclusive of all who have made it their choice to remain and live amongst us. I’m inclusive of all who have embraced our Islands, but we Caymanians need to genuinely be proud, be proud of who we are and also be proud ambassadors of being Caymanian every minute we get; not crying down, instead we should be lifting up each other, lifting up our culture that some say we don’t even have. It’s being lost; but again, turn that negative into a positive. We are only as strong as our weakest link, and in this Motion only we can only be our weakest link; losing our culture cannot and will not happen. Let’s do an inclusive reset.

We are not alone in this effort. We are proud and we should be proud to partner with local organisations, businesses and influencers who share our visions for a better tomorrow, not black-balling each other. These collaborations, Mr. Speaker, will only amplify or reach and strengthen the impact of this very campaign because together, we can build a united front in this important cause.

This campaign, I trust, will specifically include target audiences such as our youths, families and professionals. These demographics are vital because they hold the power to influence change and drive the conversations that will definitely take us forward in shaping our future because, together, we can create a ripple effect that extends far beyond this campaign. Let’s embark on this journey together, embracing differences and working towards a brighter tomorrow for the Cayman Islands.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I want to reaffirm a commitment to addressing the issues that can and will be highlighted by this campaign. This initiative is a call for action, a plea for each of us to join in this moment, towards sustainable change. Together, Mr. Speaker, let us take this step towards a brighter future.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? [Pause] The Honourable Minister for Heritage.

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine, Minister of Youth, Sports & Heritage, and Home Affairs, Elected Member for East End: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my support to the importance of us as Caymanians taking pride in our culture and heritage and who we are as a people and a country, and doing so through a national awareness campaign or any other way possible.

As the Minister for Heritage, the Ministry has hosted numerous community events to bring our people together and highlight what is unique to us. Also, through my Ministry, Mr. Speaker, we were able to introduce new national symbols consisting of our dish, our drink, our dessert, our dance and our dress. In support of this and other things important and unique to Cayman, the Ministry has an ongoing social media campaign called “Where ya from”.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry responsible for heritage has advocated and continues to promote the pride and togetherness of our people, proudly promoting #CaymanianProud. I am also pleased to share, that during my term as the Minister for Youth, Sports and Heritage, we have developed the adult folk singers further and we’re in the process of starting a youth folk singing group; in fact, I would go as far as supporting a name change for this group to the “National Cayman Islands Folk Singers”. Let me take this opportunity to highlight that the folk singers will be performing in Cayman Brac this Saturday. I would invite all to come out and enjoy the concert.

There have been valuable ongoing works, events and promotions coming out of the Ministry, Mr. Speaker, including school-age books on our National Heroes and another to be published on emancipation, and we also reprinted the West Bay Dictionary. In addition to the books, we also have a number of videos of our seniors telling their stories and sharing information about Cayman.

The Ministry is also working on a more comprehensive heritage campaign to continue to support our heritage and ensure that it is passed from generation to generation with much pride and love. Mr. Speaker, we’ve lost a lot of that along the way, but not because the fault of our younger people; quite honestly, sir, it’s the fault of us because we never took the time to pass it on.

The Ministry is committed to keeping our culture and heritage alive and strong and this makes me now note that one of the Ministry priorities is preserving our past and strengthen our future. We must not forget where we have come from, the foundation that our ancestors paved for us, and the Christian values that have been instilled in us. We are indeed Caymanian Proud, Mr. Speaker, and the Ministry will continue to support and promote this through campaign events or any other way possible.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for West Bay North spoke passionately in his delivery and I must agree with much of what he said. Mr. Speaker, as you recall, the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Heritage were able to

reintroduce Emancipation Day celebrations in 2024 in both Grand Cayman and Cayman Brac, and there was a public holiday to mark the occasion. The Member for West Bay North also spoke about the journey that he and other Ministry staff took to ensure that Emancipation Day was brought back. This was a very important part of our history that they tried to wipe from the record books. When Emancipation Day was brought back, the events brought our people together and I make no apologies for being part of a movement to ensure our people know from whence they came!

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine: We saw people of all ages and nationality wearing the Caymanian Proud t-shirts and attending our activities in harmony, yet, Mr. Speaker, there were those who have said that they will stop it—and guess what, Mr. Speaker? Another thing, when the Ministry puts on events like Emancipation Day, there are no fights or major issues when we have Caymanians coming together to celebrate our culture and our heritage, sir.

It is our responsibility to ensure that we are the ones who ensure that our story is told by us, Mr. Speaker, not by those who have a different agenda or will take our story and dilute it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the mover of this Motion who spoke comprehensively on the rationale for the Motion. Again, I wholeheartedly agree with him. For far too long, we have allowed our own culture and heritage to diminish due to our passiveness. While we are advocating and promoting our Caymanian heritage, we are also inclusive of all and we must take a holistic approach with all ages and nationalities. However, they must understand that they too need to take a holistic approach with our Caymanian culture as well.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for West Bay [North], acknowledges Ms. Tunisia Barnes, who’s a hardworking, dedicated civil servant. Right now she is the Interim Head of Heritage and I know that she is driven as is anyone I’ve seen in the building. I know that she’s going to ensure that our heritage stays in the forefront.

Mr. Speaker, I again want to thank the Mover and the seconder of the Motion and I will end by paraphrasing the past Parliamentarian from the wonderful district of East End, the honourable Arden McLean, who said many times “*You may see our glory, but you don’t know our story,*” and Mr. Speaker, it is time for them to know our story.

With that Mr. Speaker, I’ll be voting to support this Motion. Thank you.

The Speaker: There’s an old African proverb, “*Until the lion learns to write, every story will glorify the hunter.*”

Does any other Member wish to speak?
[Pause] The honourable Member for Savannah.

Hon. Heather D. Bodden, Elected Member for Savannah: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just my usual short contribution, but it is to support the Member for West Bay West in regards to his Private Member's Motion.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to support Private Member's Motion No. 9 of 2024-2025 – Motion to Launch a National Awareness Campaign. The last paragraph of the Private Member's Motion, **“AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Government considers including district activities that encourage community participation, especially amongst seniors as part of this national awareness campaign.”**

I know of one such programme that is built around our heritage and culture and that is the Jubilate. Jubilate is making great strides with our youth, a programme of great diversity. I'm always eager to attend any event they perform at. Their instruments are just as impressive as they are. Mr. Speaker, as I look at those young people perform, I see our future and they are entitled.

Mr. Speaker, the lady widely known for Jubilate is Mrs. Carole Kirkconnell who, along with so many others, is dedicated to these youngsters. I can say firsthand that I see great leaders emerging, and it is my intention to continue my support of this much-needed programme. I know they're constantly in need of help picking up and dropping off of the children, as well as space to host these children for various events and programmes, so my plea is that this programme be given much consideration for assistance. As the Member for West Bay West indicated and suggested, workers are needed in every community and I agree 100 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think I need to go on into any long drawn out speech about our seniors. Everyone knows they are near and dear to my heart and with the help and support of volunteers, our seniors are being given much love and care. Much is to be done to ensure they are supported and made comfortable, but I know many programmes are in place that will give them time to enjoy their heritage and culture. Continue to keep the programme supported. Let's all be united and inclusive. Let us educate and empower.

Mr. Speaker, I give this Motion to Launch a National Awareness Programme, my full support.

The Speaker: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition, Elected Member for George Town North: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to give have brief remarks on Private Member's Motion No. 9 of 2024-2025 – A Motion to Launch a National Awareness Campaign. It is said that if you take much time to say what you have in mind, then you need to give it more thought.

Mr. Speaker, I wasn't planning to speak on the Motion and, as the mover of the Motion, the Member for West Bay West, intimated in the early part of his

contribution, many may think that it was just political; truthfully, sir, at this stage, I did too. However, when I listened to the Member and the research that he put into it and the emotion the Member spoke with, I realised that it was not just political, but something that weighed heavily on him and he had to be able to express here, in the highest order in the country.

I listened to all the other Members speak, Mr. Speaker, and the passion they spoke with and I thought that it would be important for me to get up, as Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the PPM, [the People's Progressive Movement], the most established grassroots party, myself being its fourth leader. We understand heritage and legacy, and we also understand that if we don't embrace change, and if we don't include others, we're setting ourselves up for the end—you cannot grow in this community without doing so. If your doors are closed to everyone, if you are just shutting it down to your little group, then you will not grow. You will eventually all come to an age where you move on and there will be no more.

Mr. Speaker, one beauty about Cayman is our heritage and our culture, and how young of a country we are. I remember hosting the UCLA Dean of Theatre during what was going to be an annual event until COVID came along: the film festival. She's a renowned dean; everyone knows her UCLA being one of the top theatrical schools in the US. She was so down to earth. She got her car, she went out, she drove herself around the island—she visited. In speaking with her, she said, *“This place... I want to be involved in this place.”* She said, *“Everyone on this island has a story; your people are amazing storytellers”*—and it is true. It is part of who we are, we all have a story.

Mr. Speaker, I listened to the Member for Bodden Town West talk about persons creating divisions. Like the Member for Bodden Town West, my father was from Jamaica. My mother was from Cayman Brac—

An Hon. Member: He's still alive.

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition: ...is from Jamaica.

[Laughter]

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition: My grandfather left China, travelled to Central America, then to the Dominican Republic, then to Jamaica where my father was born. Then my father ended up here. That's a long way for me to get here, sir.

My mother is from Cayman Brac, as far back as we could go to her great grandmother, whom from a picture, we thought was an American Indian; but this wonderful thing called DNA testing that you do now leads us to believe that she was, in fact, American/Asian, not American Indian because the picture was black and white with long, straight hair.

My mother, may God bless her soul, grew up in Cayman Brac; a hard life. She's in the Archives as a lady catboat captain. She went to sea on schooners, and she spent time on the cays off Nicaragua collecting booby bird and turtle eggs so I know, and I appreciate, my heritage. I know what it was to eat turtle eggs when they were readily available, and I know what it was to sleep on the cold floor because we had no A/C and you couldn't really open the windows without screens.

I had the fortune of bucking my toe both on Shedden Road and North West Point Road yet, when I played football after school at West Bay Town Hall, if everything was going right, I was Caymanian; if things weren't going right, I was Jamaican. That's just the way Cayman is, sir.

[Laughter]

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition: It's just the way it is.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition: — And not much has changed.

Mr. Speaker, we were all there the other day, when I told the story about being called Jamaican and my Deputy, Barbara Conolly, the Member for George Town South, who everyone knows and loves and reveres as an amazing Caymanian woman, turned and looked at me and said, "*Well, they would say I'm from Nicaragua then.*" Right? I had completely forgotten, you know?

These are all our stories, we all have little stories when it suits us; when we go to Jamaica, every one of us finds some connection with Jamaica. Every one of us goes way back to a great, great-grandfather and all sorts of stuff.

An Hon. Member: Oh yeah.

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, you have first generation Caymanians, but when you talk, you think they are what we call indigenous Caymanians; the worst Caymanian accent.

An Hon. Member: Yup.

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition: And we say "worse" in a good way, sir. Then you have Caymanians that as far back as you can go, they're Caymanian and when you hear them you think they're straight out of Kingston—

[Laughter]

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition: Or worse, they have what we call an "accident"—they come from "Hengland".

[Laughter]

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition: These are all of our stories, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when I went to university and people said to me, "*What's your favourite music?*" and I said country music, they looked at me like, "*Huh? Didn't you say your island's in the Caribbean?*" "Yeah", "*How do you explain that?*" "Well, I grew up listening to Conway Twitty, Crystal Gayle and Kenny Rogers. I saw some of them in concert." "You saw them in concert?!" "Yeah; biggest concert on Island was Lions Club Extravaganza." "How did that happen?" "Well, you see, all our forefathers went to sea, [went to] Mobile, Alabama; Tampa; Houston, Texas; and they came back with country music. That's the music they brought back."

Mr. Speaker, this is what I call Caymanian. This is who we are. We all have our stories. We are fantastic storytellers. Every Caymanian who travels and sits around a table of people from that country, draws the attention of everyone at that table—

An Hon. Member: Yup!

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition: — because we all have amazing stories to tell; amazing stories to tell—and we should tell those stories and be proud of them and compile those stories.

I spoke about my father who got interviewed by the National Archives; a walking historian! [He] came to Cayman some 65 years ago. Is he not Caymanian? Is he not Caymanian? He is what I call *Caymankind*. He has a Caymanian way of life. That is the difference. Those that do not understand the Caymanian way of life... It is my favourite term, *Caymankind*, and to me, it is what identifies Caymanians. Whether you were born first generation or whether you can't find anything further than your backyard from where you came from. It is your attitude. It is: Are you a part of our story? Tell your story. Are you *Caymankind*?

Mr. Speaker, with those few words as I promised, I want to thank the Member for bringing the Motion, and we here in the Official Opposition will support it.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? [Pause] The honourable Member for West Bay Central.

[Pause]

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, Elected Member for West Bay Central: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I stand to support the Motion Tabled by the Elected Member for West Bay West, Motion No. 9 of 2024-2025.

Mr. Speaker, launching a National Awareness Campaign will certainly foster a more inclusive society. As the Cayman Islands continues to become increasingly diverse, the need for greater understanding,

respect and acceptance among different nationalities and the Caymanian people has never been more urgent.

Most recently, Mr. Speaker, in West Bay and across the island, we saw outraged Caymanians who felt highly disrespected by individuals who have migrated here and made this country their home. What might have been seen as a simple act to prevent fish guts and squid from being left on their dock became an act that was highly offensive to the Caymanian people. Regardless of who the term “riff raff” was addressed to, this recent incident speaks loudly about the need for a National Awareness Campaign.

Mr. Speaker, I know many of us hear our constituents saying “*When you are in Rome, you do as the Romans do,*” and a national conversation can serve as a powerful catalyst for change. I'd just like to outline a few key reasons why I believe that this initiative is not only beneficial, but essential.

Mr. Speaker, national awareness campaigns educate the public and we all know that knowledge is the foundation of understanding. Through targeted messaging, workshops and community engagement, we can dispel myths and break down stereotypes that often lead to discrimination and exclusion; by providing accurate information about our culture, our identity, and our experiences, we will empower individuals to challenge their own biases and cultivate empathy towards others. Today we heard some of the experiences and ways in which we identify ourselves as Caymanian people which, as my colleague from Prospect said earlier, will now be placed in our *Hansards*.

Mr. Speaker, what I'm hoping is that this campaign will encourage a better understanding to those who have migrated to the Cayman Islands. Such campaigns promote dialogue and connection; they create safe spaces for conversation about differences, encouraging individuals to share their stories and perspectives—we see it right here today in Parliament, and I think we could all go on and on. I laughed when the official Leader of the Opposition talked about bucking his toes. I can quite remember bucking a few of mine as a child in West Bay.

By fostering open communication, we build bridges between communities, fostering a sense of belonging. What is also needed in our country, with our people, is solidarity. This dialogue is crucial in combating the isolation that often accompanies marginalisation.

A National Awareness Campaign sends a strong message about our values as a country. It's an opportunity for us to express who we are as a people and, importantly, what it means to us to be Caymanian. Mr. Speaker, it demonstrates that inclusivity is not just a goal, it is a fundamental principle that we hold dear. This commitment to inclusivity can inspire organisations, businesses and communities to adopt similar initiatives which will amplify the impact of our efforts and create a ripple effect of positive change.

Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the Member for West Bay West for filing this Motion. Whilst we only have a few weeks left before Parliament is dissolved, I trust that this awareness campaign is not just one that we talk about here today, but one that can drive policy change. As we raise awareness about issues affecting marginalised Caymanians, we will create a groundswell of support for legislation that will protect the rights and promote equality of all Caymanians; by mobilising public opinion, we can advocate for policies that ensure everyone has access to the same opportunities and resources, regardless of their background.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, launching a national awareness campaign reinforces the idea that diversity is our strength. It celebrates the rich tapestry of human experience and highlights the contributions of all individuals in our society—by recognising and valuing diversity, we then create an environment where everyone can thrive, leading to innovation, creativity and progress.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to state that launching a national awareness campaign is a positive move towards a more inclusive society. It educates, fosters dialogue, sets societal values, drives policy change, celebrates diversity and has the potential to unite Caymanians. I hope that, together, we will all embrace this opportunity to create a country where every individual feels valued, respected and included.

Mr. Speaker, with that being said, I will gladly be supporting Private Member's Motion No. 9 of 2024-2025.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? *[Pause]* The Honourable Minister for Border Control, Labour and Culture.

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour, Minister of Border Control, Labour & Culture, Sustainability & Climate Resiliency and Wellness, Elected Member for Bodden Town East: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

With all that has been said, and much has been said, many confessions made, there's not much more for me to say but as Minister of Culture, I want to get up and give a short contribution. As said by Mahatma Gandhi, “**A nation's culture resides in the hearts and the souls of its people.**” The way the school system was designed, when we went to school, Mr. Speaker, Caymanian kids and kids from different countries went to the same schools together, hence some of the start of the problem; the ‘us against them’ mentality.

I remember growing up in one of the oldest districts in Cayman, the first capital. When people came to Cayman to work, they dressed a certain way. They wanted to impress us, they wanted to show respect, they wanted to be a part of us, they wanted to eat what we eat, and they were interested in our music, our culture and heritage. Things have definitely changed. I don't exactly know where it slipped. I also remember

when my mother's father would send the barrel from Jamaica and people would point to you then as being Jamaican. I do remember.

Mr. Speaker, I believe, as the Motion reads, that this Motion to launch a national awareness campaign, "... **affirms our commitment to being a caring community...**". I also believe in the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom, and that we do need honest and open dialogue to ensure natural understanding and social harmony—Mr. Speaker, when you have a situation like we have here in the Cayman Islands, which some are now using as case studies overseas in terms of [us being] the majority of the minority...

Mr. Speaker, as I said, people know my desire in terms of culture and I thank the Member for West Bay West for alluding to it also. I try everything I can to try to bring people together, to bring Caymanians together. Other people join us and we show them our way of life so they enjoy being around us, appreciate our way of life and appreciate being here more.

I remember, Mr. Speaker, as a young man, at 16 years old, once getting out of school I decided that I'd learned enough about cooking fish teas and started a Saturday event where hundreds of people came and we cooked fish tea. It was me cooking the fish tea—I even won an award for cooking fish tea; but the point was that people from all around the country gathered together, right on the Gun Square beach. People from different countries came, they enjoyed, they sat with us, and they played Dominoes.

Have we gotten too busy? Has the economy gotten to such a point where we can't even do the things that we used to do anymore because we are so focused on trying to work two jobs or working overtime and we don't do anything as a community anymore? Mr. Speaker, we only meet at funerals and weddings. I hear the stories once the funeral is finished. Everybody says, *"Oh my gosh, I haven't seen you in such a long time. We only meet at this. We got to do better than this. We need to find a way."*

I think we as legislators need to find ways to create programmes and we ought not to be afraid to spend the money on Caymanians to create these programmes to keep our heritage and culture going. We need to bring our children along. I still have a cooking club with about ten guys where we cook turtle and fish rundown and conch and fish tea and steam grouper head once a month. Mr. Speaker, when we tell people what we do, they say, *"We didn't know you all still did that."*

Mr. Speaker, when I see that West Bay South has now overtaken Bodden Town East for the most [registered] voters, it begs me and I'm wondering what caused this—what caused this? The danger that we're creating; Bodden Town East, the oldest district, first capital... I don't want to go any further into that, but I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that we need to do as much as we can to bring George Town alive. We need to do

things weekly, not just wait for Pirates' Week or Batabano, you know? Then you wait another eight months for something to happen again. Our people are thirsty, they are hungry for social interaction. Some people live in West Bay and haven't been in East End in twenty years; likewise, East End to West Bay.

Mr. Speaker, as Kofi Annan said, **"We may have different religions, different languages, different coloured skin, but we all belong to one human race."** I think we need to remember that, and those who come here need to be reminded of that.

I remember the Member for Bodden Town West told me he was a Minister of Culture, how he had boosted up the TP to ensure that he could do as much for programmes; I remember. Others would see that as, "Oh, you're using too much of government money. You're using too much of the country's money,"—on us! Bringing our people together.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, I'm standing here trying to find things to say because there's been so much and I don't want to—I'm not searching my heart—but, I do think that we need open dialogue. We have such a diverse population with over 130 nationalities and our people are not happy with the cost of living, obviously, but they feel marginalised in their own country. They feel like everyone else is getting ahead. They feel like everyone else can go to West Bay Road and live a "highfalutin life", as they would say. They feel like everyone else can get a house, besides them. They feel everyone else can get a nice car beside them. I'm just telling you how our people feel.

Of course, everything starts with education; we need to ensure that we pour as much funds as we can into all of our systems. That begs me to say something, my pet peeve, [which] I've been saying for a long time ago—no child should come out of school without some form of skill. They say by the time a child is seven years old, you kind of know what they're leaning to already. There's something for everyone, whether that is computers, whether that's some other soft skill, mechanics, whether that's electronics, electrical, plumbing, no child should come out of school without some skill. That in itself will help us with some of our problems with persons coming to us saying *"I want a job, I'll do anything."* What's your focus? What's your background? *"Well, I don't really [know], I'll just do anything in customer service or otherwise,"* and then when the pay comes and it is not what they expected we complain about that the job is not paying enough, so we leave it, then we're unemployed and then we go to DFA [Department of Financial Assistance]. We need to ensure that we help our people right from the start, when they are babies.

Mr. Speaker, obviously, we're all passionate about this. It appears that the whole House supports this Motion and it's something timely. Probably should have been brought twenty years ago, but no time later than now. The Government will definitely support this Motion; we accept this Motion. Obviously, my support for heritage and culture goes beyond. I don't think there

is enough money that we could put into ensuring that our people have harmony and hope. *Hope*, our people are losing hope.

These last four years, Mr. Speaker, have been hard for people. They don't understand what's going on in politics. I definitely didn't vote for 'one man, one vote'. I didn't vote for it, and it's confusing to our people. That in itself is stressing them. They're wondering about the next election. They're trying to figure out what's going on; we've got three groups, apparently, that are parties out there. One group is environmentalists; the next group is inexperienced; and the next group is the Progressives, which is the only group who has actually stayed and kept their structure even though they weren't in power.

If truth be told, politics in Cayman, Mr. Speaker, normally groups or parties come together when they're in power and when they're out of power, they actually don't stay together. I'm only in my fifties, but I think I remember well, and there's probably no party in Cayman that has been together for more than three terms, and it was probably because they were in power. No party has stayed together for three terms [while] not being in power. The only party that has stayed together for probably over twenty years, whether they were in power or not is the Progressives, and we ought to laud them. I think that persons—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour: Yes, that's a very good idea; a very good suggestion. I would like you to say that publicly.

[Laughter]

[Inaudible interjection]

An Hon. Member: *What time ya comin'?*

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour: Soon, soon.

I was making light of that, but I want to say that when we're talking about our heritage and culture and the stress that our people are going through right now, our people need us to help them right now to try to make the right choice for the future of this country in the next election.

Yes, we have persons, and we applaud all Caymanians, all Caymanians who are successful, all Caymanians who are not successful; but I'm saying to you that what the country reads right now... I've seen the situation where inexperience leads us. This is no place for inexperienced. There is a place for the experienced mixed with inexperienced, but there's no space for the inexperienced by themselves.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour: We don't want a trainee government because we have seen where it has taken us. I don't even want to talk, this is not the platform for me to talk about my experience in the last four years. This is not the place, and I won't go there, but I'm telling you that the people are not happy with what they've seen. They don't like to see so many factions operating like independents in one government. It's not healthy for them. They're wondering, when they wake up the next morning, if the government is going to be together, or who's leaving next and who's left.

I say that to say if there are any persons out there thinking about joining a party or trying to learn about politics, there's only one party to learn from; everybody else is trying to find their way. They feel that they are the right answer for Cayman—or the right answer for themselves.

I hate to be so political in the place of politics, but if you want a road to Bodden Town, East-West Arterial, there are certain ways you can't vote. If you want a port, you know you're not *gonna* get it if you vote for certain people. We need to pay attention. What do you want in this country? You need to vote in a way, asking yourself, what do I want? Do I want to have more family time by having the East-West [Arterial] and getting to George Town quicker, where most of the jobs are? Do I want a port, so I can increase my tourism traffic and increase the amount of entrepreneurs that we have in Cayman, and get an opportunity in the tourism industry? What do we want?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour: We, as politicians, need to do a better job this coming election in explaining what the whole lay of the land is and what's at stake.

Yes, every one of us is in a constituency by ourselves and you have to vote for one person, but I'm telling you, running as an Independent is not something that I intend to do again. It doesn't help you, the public, and it doesn't even help the group that you're with. I've seen the dangers. I'm warning you. Please don't tell anyone to run by themselves. You can't even bring a Motion by yourself. You cannot do anything by yourself in politics. You can't even get anything done in Caucus by yourself, the whole Caucus has to vote. You need to align yourself with someone, all right?

I would not dare tell anyone that the Leader of the official Opposition has been my friend for forty-six years—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour: —but I'll leave that there.

I want to thank God for this wonderful country. I want to thank all the people who are still doing the best that they can to help us keep a civil society even with 130 nationalities here, we're still one of the best countries in the world. Let us look at the positives that we

have here in Cayman, there are many positives; and let us work on the negatives together. Let us make the right choice for our peace of mind.

God bless us all.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

[Pause] Does any other Member wish to speak?

[Pause] Does any other Member wish to speak?

[Pause] The Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I promise I'll try to be as short as I can, though sometimes it is quite difficult to do.

The Speaker: You're not the shortest man, I know.

[Laughter]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: Firstly, I want to say thank you to the honourable Member for West Bay West for bringing this Motion; and like has been repeated already, it's a very timely one, but I must say I have some fears. Before I get into those fears, I want to address a matter he highlighted, because this Motion goes into our cultural norms, our heritage, et cetera, and one of the things he touched on, which I promised I would address, is access to our national dish through the Turtle Centre (for our older folks, the Turtle Farm).

I think it's time for us to expand the turtle farm's production availability due to the strain being caused by our population growth on that source of meat, which is obviously very sensitive to those who are of Cayman descent as opposed to a visitor who is coming on vacation, or a person who's just here working for a temporary period. That strain is becoming more and more real. I intend to, and hope to be here again in the next Administration, by the good blessings of the people of George Town Central, and I also hope to be a part of the Government where we can find the resources and the approach to increase the supply, because increasing the expense on Caymanians is not something I will support as Minister—I will not support increasing the prices.

I know all Members hear the stories of Caymanians who go to the turtle farm and can't get it. The knock-on effect will be people going into the wild, and that's definitely not something we want to do. Hopefully—unlike the phone caller who called into *Radio Cayman* last time and said our turtle meat might as well be KFC—for other people who don't think that way, maybe we will get some support. Even from those in the marine support community, to see the necessity for the financial investment that would be necessary to expand the Turtle Centre's farmery, so we don't have knock-on effects that we don't want.

Mr. Speaker, before I go on, I also want to say a special happy birthday to my brother. I didn't know; I was in the lunch room having a cup of coffee and all I

heard was the honourable former Premier and former Speaker singing in the hallway. I said, "*Wha' happenin'?*" He said, "*Today's Chris' birthday!*" I said, "*Man! Chris nuh said anything to me.*" I should have known, but I had a long day yesterday as most Members know.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: I want to say to my brother, happy birthday. May the Lord bless you with as many more years that you feel that you want to be here on God's green earth. May he bless you with good health and good wealth and happiness.

Mr. Speaker, I was blown away by the Member stating for the record that this Motion was filed by him almost to the exact wording decades ago, in his early years as a Member of the Legislative Assembly back then. It doesn't seem like much was done to try to resolve what the question in this Motion is trying to resolve; at least not enough but I am so, so worried because some of the Members highlighted some of the points. The good Member for West Bay Central highlighted the *riff raff* situation; I just highlighted the circumstances where I was on the radio and this gentleman called in and undermined our culture for cooking turtle meat. There are more and more examples of that happening every single day, and I don't suspect it's going to stop—sadly.

Mr. Speaker, you see, the world—let me go outside of Cayman for a second, just the way the world is happening. When I think about these things, I try to think about my Creator and where we are and what the Good Book says when he's ready to come, because the world is in a crazy place.

Globalisation is real, technology and its advancement and social media, information, AI and all that stuff, it's making it so difficult to protect knowledge and information from confusion. Even the media has gone mad, no protections. Media was supposed to be a trusted source, but you don't even know what media is any more. People who are licensed, outright, headlines blatantly lying. The world is changing. You don't know what to trust, what to believe. People are sticking to themselves. Our society is changing. We don't embrace each other anymore.

I hear the stories, particularly from my mom who was heavily involved in politics; Ms. Donna Bryan, for those who know her. A major campaigner for the Progressives, by the way, and helped the Speaker of the House get elected a couple of times. I remember her talking about Jim Bodden and a comment that he made in some of his deliberations about, if you want the successes of things, you're also gonna have to accept the problems that come along with the advancements. I never heard him say it, I wish I was old enough—I think I was old enough when he would have said it, but I definitely wasn't paying attention to politics, I was probably a little kid. That's to sum it up, those were the

not exact words. Hopefully, one day, somebody who was around when he said it, can text me exactly what he said.

He warned us about these troubling times that will attack our norms, our traditions, our culture, and even our religion, and here we are. Mr. Speaker, I am happy that we got good examples from Members highlighting the reality of the transitions of who we are becoming; like the Honourable Leader of Opposition, his father being born in Jamaica, but I definitely think he is more Caymanian. He has been here longer than me, so how can I tell him that I'm more Caymanian than him? Imagine that? Born in Jamaica, but he's actually been on Cayman Islands rock longer than me, but yet we have some people—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: Yes, interestingly, longer than his son, the Honourable Leader of Opposition, and then you think about the transition of immigration and migration across the world, and similarly with the honourable Member for Bodden Town West, and that's what I think Mr. Bodden was speaking about. Success came with growth, growth came with immigration, immigration came with different cultures and changes.

Now, you see Mr. Speaker, the truth is, every single country changes; and change isn't necessarily the problem. It's the rate of change that is the problem. When things change too quickly, it becomes confusing. Society and humanity can only handle so much at any given time because I can promise you, any country that you find wouldn't be the same in a span of two hundred years. However, the foundation of many of the problems that we're seeing today, and why the Member has even decided to write a Motion calling for such a campaign, is the fact that Cayman has changed so rapidly in a very short period of time.

I remember in some of my speeches I talked about the fact that I still know people who used outhouse-type toilets. Sometimes a little 4 ft by 4 ft, wooden shed with a little piece of zinc on the top and you opened the door with no lock. Used to have a little nail in it and a piece of a piece of wood that would serve as the lock—

An Honourable Member: It is called a cleat.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: A cleat? A cleat; and when you opened it, oh, the smell hit you, so you open the door, you leave it open for a little bit and you walk in and try to hold your breath as long as you can. You sit on it, do what you gotta do, get back up and you close it back—and dare not smoke a cigarette anywhere close to it, because you might have an explosion. There are Caymanians who lived that life, who are living today, who now probably have Instagram, Facebook AI technology, Bentley Coupe car—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: Self-cleaning toilets. Now, that transition, so quickly, is a symbol of two things: Success, but like our former Member of Parliament and national hero said, with those successes come problems because yes, we may have the fanciest things in the world... I can almost see Pastor James Arch at church right now talking about the guilt of life and the want for more, always wanting more—and the want for more and more comes with the loss of so much of who we are.

What I'm trying to highlight, Mr. Speaker, is that Cayman and Cayman-kindness and our laid-back approach and our openness, have allowed—and I love the term Cayman-kind; I think you heard the Leader of the Opposition say it, but that passiveness, because we're so nice to people, has allowed us to not demand respect for the way we are as a people.

Give you an example. One of my colleagues, I will not call any names, was just talking to me about going to a very scenic place in Egypt—always wanted to go to Egypt to see the pyramids—and she said while she was making the reservations she got a notification letting her know, before she even got there: *“Miss so and so, want to remind you that you have to wear shirts that go a certain length down your arms, your vest area cannot show and you have to do certain things and certain things and certain things”*—before they even go. Now, this vacation is not until about four months from now, but she's already been prepped and anybody who comes to that location in Egypt knows what to expect before they get there.

Now, I want to contrast that to the Cayman Islands. Something which, as simple as you see it, we don't think about it because we expect people to just accept it—our stores don't open on Sunday. We don't because, as a jurisdiction that was founded upon the seas and based on Christian heritage, even the Good Book says sometimes you have to force yourself to stop, and rest, and give the Lord the reverence that he deserves. As a young man, even I, myself, used to say, *Man, I want a party past 12 o'clock, man! These old people, about don't want to change the law.* Now I understand why, and I appreciate the fact that I can rest on a Sunday, but we don't say to people, before they come here, *if you're going to do something, don't expect to have lots of excitement, and if you're gonna do your shopping, do it on Monday to Saturday because most stores are closed [on Sunday].*

What we did over the years is keep pushing and pushing the law. Now, though we're not necessarily open majorly, in business, you can practically get anything on a Sunday right now, and Sundays are getting busier and busier from a working perspective. You can't even put it into law much more to say, I don't want to work on a Sunday, because the truth is that the employer says, *listen to me, I need you to work when I tell you to work.*

I'm saying that these problems we're seeing, that we are now trying to resolve, have crept up on us and, unfortunately, I'm not sure if we can pull many of them back. However, it's worth trying to find ways to fight it—and I have to concur with the good Member for Bodden Town East, who talked about the finances when we are trying to promote our culture, our heritage so that persons who may not fully understand it when they first come here, have an opportunity to attend cultural events like Pirates' Week, et cetera.

I agree with him. He wants to put on an event so people can showcase and see what it says. First thing they're gonna say is, *Minister Seymour spent all this money on this, that and the other thing*. Well, displaying it and educating people as to what it is, is a constant thing: over and over and over and over again, over and over and over again, and it's a cost that... God knows, if we were to calculate the amount of money that we spend on cultural things over the year, we can say, yeah, oh we can save that money, and then the next generation just die with it because all they're doing these days, including my own children, is the phone. Thus, when Members or governments, even the next one, come and say we want to put x amount of money into these types of programmes and events and marketing and information, don't cry about the cost, because those things help us to keep our culture, but also to inform those who may become a part of our community [so they] understand.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the Motion itself and some of the things therein that people highlighted.

First thing that came to my mind which I underlined is our traditional Christian values. Then I underlined mutual understanding. Then I underlined social harmony, diverse population, one hundred and thirty different nationalities, rapid growth, development, national awareness campaign, building more inclusive societies—and it's all right, because I know the Member for West Bay West has been a very progressive developer for our nation. He will go down in the history books quite similar to Jim Bodden. They may not give him credit today, but history will say that he was one of the key makers, quite like yourself, Mr. Speaker, who helped get us to this successful position today, even though it comes with some negatives.

He will definitely present naturally an understanding that sharing our community with others in harmony, is the best way forward; but I said to myself, if I'm going to speak about this, I have to be honest because Mr. Speaker, I represent every Caymanian: black, white, rich, poor, new, old, generational, status holder. They're all my constitutional responsibility to represent and I'm honoured to do so, but Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I can understand why we have a protest when people say a riff raff; I can understand.

To be honest with you, Mr. Speaker, being the Minister for Tourism, trying to be a responsible leader, Deputy Premier and all, I saw that social media went

crazy about it and said, *let me go have a word with these people*. Maybe it's just like the Member for West Bay Central said, maybe it's just someone who went to their dock and used their dock and left some bait and they were kind of annoyed and social media is a platform through which you express yourself now.

Maybe it was just, *"Oh, this old riff-raff; come off my dock. I got work to do. I got my boats, gotta go out, gotta keep the place clean,"* and it was just an expression. Maybe it would be just all over if they just say, *"You know what, I'm sorry. I didn't mean it like that. I was having a long day,"* so I went down there and I said, *Hi, how you doing? I understand you own the place. I said, hey, you know why, you got the country pretty upset* and the poor wife, she started crying and I have a good sense of people's behaviour and she seemed like she was in genuine fear. Genuine fear. Husband not so much. I think he was more just in the air—*"Well, I'm tired of it"* kind of thing.

After that, I went on social media, I have many followers on Instagram, Facebook, et cetera, and I said, *"Folks in the community, I just spoke to the people. I think we may have a bit of a mix-up here, maybe it was just a genuine bad day and they are tired of people misusing their property and I'm gonna get them to come and speak to you publicly soon."* Why did I do that? Huh! Some of my people said, *"Kenneth, we're tired of it."* They almost ate me alive. *"We don't wanna hear that no more; we're tired. We're tired of people saying that we can't turtle. We're tired of people saying that we don't want to work, we're tired of—"* and I noticed a trend, Mr. Speaker, and the trend was they just kind of had enough and there's people who need to understand the sensitivities of our community, so I backed off.

I said, you know what, that one riff-raff comment in isolation may not be the worst thing in the world, an expression; but it's the combination of these things happening at one time, all the time—cost of living, pressure, Caymanians not got a home; people coming and they're being so successful, they have everything but I have nothing! I saw that the riffraff movement was the straw that broke the camel's back and I said, my people deserve to be frustrated, because I think that there is a level of responsibility on people who we welcome with open arms, the Cayman-kind that we are, because Caymanians love to see people, and be kind.

It gives us pleasure to be like, *"You want one of my mangos?"* or *"How you doing? I made some cassava cake, you want some?"* That's what I remember. It was the thing. My grandparents, it was like kindness was their thing. Even when they are vexed at you, *"Man, get out of my yard but, see some Cassava here"*, right, because it's just in our nature. That's how our forefathers survived on a little island full of mosquitos and turtles and thatch. To live and survive in what must have been very difficult circumstances, they learned to love and take care of each other, so it was in their

nature. When we welcome and we do welcome because let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, I know there are people who have become Caymanian who, just by what they have done in the community, how much they care about protecting our culture and heritage, sometimes I feel they are more Caymanian than the ones who were born here and that's the honest truth, and we know it.

Yes, we get some people who become Caymanian and we say jeezum peace, how in the world did that person get status, so we are at a very interesting place in our history, Mr. Speaker, and I really don't want to go down the immigration route because I will get to that in the campaign, but as we discuss this topic of a national awareness campaign, we have to acknowledge our people's frustration. You see, they wouldn't be so frustrated if we were doing a better job at the things we do, because when things are going good in your life, things don't bother you as much, you know?

When your bills are paid, your family is happy and you got food in the fridge and somebody flicks you off in traffic, *"Man, I nah worry about you."* Things are good, I'm right, I'm happy; but when things are going so bad every day for you and somebody flicks you off in traffic, it's a thing that gets you boiling inside— and I know. I can see it, I can feel it. I can hear it in the tone of my people's voices, that they're frustrated and they've had enough. What am I saying, when I say all of that? I'm saying that it's time for compassion; for those who have embraced our land to understand that it's a very difficult psychological issue to know that you are of your land and things are so difficult for you, while somebody who may not be of the land is doing so well. It's a struggle.

Now, I do think that this is a two-sided issue from an inclusivity perspective because, just as much as we want those who become part of our family to understand and embrace our norms, because why [else] would you want to be a part of the Cayman Islands? I mean, there was something that *drove you here*; it's the little things which made Cayman, Cayman, that drew you here in the first place; but then you don't want to respect the little details. The 1-1 coco which made Cayman—as the saying goes, *"1-1 coco full basket"*. Those little things made us who we are, and then the one thing that you don't like, you try to disapprove of it.

Mr. Speaker, having a gated community in Cayman forty years ago, people would have looked at you like, *"Oh, stuck up"*; now it's the new thing. People found it undermining, and not being a part of your community, to have a gated community. It's not inclusive. We talk about inclusivity? When I think about inclusivity, I say to myself, "how many persons who come to my country know Martin Drive? How many of them have eaten at Champion House, or Corner Restaurant? How many of them have gone down in Palmdale or Ryan Road; or eaten at Ross Corner, or Country and Western— and I'm not saying that all of them are like

that, but I'm saying to you that this is the perception that people are starting to get. It's a reality that the Member highlighted that West Bay South is now the biggest constituency of registered voters. That's real. If that doesn't scare every one of us in this room, we're not thinking right. The biggest constituency in this country is the West Bay Road. Let that sink in for a bit... and Mr. Speaker, I am worried. I am worried, and I'm gonna tell you why.

People talk about Cayman— and I heard the good Member for West Bay West speak about "the Singapore of the Caribbean" and yes, they are doing very, very well. There are many benefits, but I would love to go to Singapore just to speak to some of the older heads and say, was it worth it? What did you lose? What did you give up, because I can't say whether this success is for the betterment nor the disadvantage of Cayman—because I am not that old to know. However, when I hear my forefathers, when I look at Pastor James Arch and listen to him talk about how much happier Cayman was, how much kinder we were to each other, how there were not many hungry people before much of this, but now more and more Caymanians are becoming hungry every day, and I tie all that back to the Motion asking for inclusivity...

We do have to do something about making sure everybody is a part of this together, and knowing that we are only as strong as our weakest link, but I don't think it should be a campaign, Mr. Speaker, because a campaign is a start and an end to something. This needs to be a continuous, evergreen approach to how we handle things. We need to expand it like Celebrate Cayman. Maybe invite policymakers with a bit of social development background training to examine all parts of legislation, just like social development. For social development, whenever any piece of legislation is done, how it affects the seniors and children has to be considered before it gets approval so it doesn't have any adverse effects.

There should be a body, a department, whose job is to examine every proposed change and says, *how does this affect our culture, our heritage, our people, our trajectory of the future?* And it shouldn't be a campaign, but a forever approach. To the Member: not undermining his Motion, but I encourage him, when this Motion is passed, that we see it as an evergreen policy rather than a campaign, because it has to be something that we consider constantly because Mr. Speaker... You know Mr. Spellman? Mr. Spellman McField.

I remember in 2016 before I got elected, I was in Public Beach. I don't know why I was there. A young lady came up to me and said, *we're trying to limit this kind of fishing in some particular area*. I can't remember how it went, and she was like, *we got to protect this kind of fish*. I said, *Okay, fair enough but, those Caymanians who survive off the water... what are they going to do? Where are they gonna fish? Oh, but we gotta save it for the next generation*. I could see the person was lost. They didn't even know that there are still Caymanians

today who literally survive and eat off of the water! Mr. Spellman will get in his boat, and he'll go out and catch enough fish that he can either sell or cook for himself and his family to eat.

I said, *sweetheart* (I can't even say "sweetheart" anymore, now that this Bill passed) *young lady, there are other parts of our society which are not being considered in your approach, as much as I know your intent is to protect.* I could understand it if we were doing something to ensure that my George Towner, Spellman McField, has the ability to survive and doesn't have to go catch fish—not that he wants anything from government. Those strong-back George Town Caymanians who came from that era don't want to have to depend on social services but, the changes that we're making are taking everything they identify with.

Mr. Speaker, I know the intent is to harmonise, to bring us together and we must, because the biggest fear I had at that protest—one of the protest organisers got mad at me. *"Kenneth, why you want to give these people an opportunity to say sorry for? We had enough!"* and I said, *"I understand. I understand, but there needs to be calm amongst it all"* because all it takes is in one moment of heated passion, one person gets angry and pelts a big rock and knocks the man out and he gets a concussion and three days later, he dies. Why? Because we gotta keep social harmony. Mr. Speaker, many times you have had to calm me from that passion, and you were right to do so because the growth struggles and the challenges of the success, at the rate it's going, has much confusion going on.

I don't believe my people want to be exclusive or exclude others, it's not in our nature; but they feel a particular way. Naturally, I don't think persons who have come here have intentionally tried to change what they have come to [either], because there has got to be something that brought them here, but we have to have an awareness, as the Motion has said, about what Cayman is and what makes it what it is, and in my conversation with my colleague about going away, I thought to myself, *"Hold on a minute. Do we do enough to identify what makes us who we are, so that there's a clear understanding and acceptance; so, there are no Caymanians feeling like they have been taken advantage of, or you're pushing against it?"*

I thought about it and said, *"Hold on. When people go to Egypt, there's no problem because people know, that when you go to Egypt you dress a particular way and you don't do particular things."* They set the expectations. I think our leniency, in our Caymankind and reserved personality, have not set the stage for those who become a part of the family to say, *"Here are our expectations, if you want to be a part of it"*, so you hear about it when you do the immigration residency or knowledge tests. We need people to understand who we are.

As the Deputy Premier of the country—not that the position matters. An elected official of the country should never have a person call into our national radio

and feel as comfortable as possible to say, *"Oh, you need to shut down the turtle farm because turtle meat is like KFC anyway, and save that money and go protect the environment because nobody cares about turtle meat anyway."* The fact that we have left the country in a state whereby they feel comfortable to do so, is our fault.

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier, may I invite you to move the Suspension of Standing Order 10 (2) in order that the business of the House may continue beyond the hour of interruption?

Suspension of Standing Order 10 (2)

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I move the Suspension of Standing Order 10 (2) so that the business of the House can continue after the hour of 4:30.

The Speaker: The question is that Standing Order 10 (2) be suspended in order that the business of the House may continue beyond the hour of interruption. Those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Standing Order 10 (2) suspended.

The Speaker: Honourable Members. I will now take the afternoon suspension. Can we come back at a quarter to 5? Fifteen minutes.

Proceedings suspended at 4:32 pm

Proceedings resumed at 4:53 pm

The Speaker: Parliament is resumed, please be seated. The Honourable Deputy Premier, continuing.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Before we took the break, I was adding my contribution to the Motion to launch a national awareness campaign, and I think the spirit of where I left off was that we have to do a proper assessment of the lay of the land on where we are as a country, in order to accomplish many of the things set out in this Motion like harmony, mutual understanding, mutual respect for each other. Those old and new, rich and poor, those generational and those who were granted status.

Mr. Speaker, as I alluded to [before] the break, I think some of the ways that we need to do so is that we need to be more conscious of policy decisions, the regulations and legislation, and the growth, so I think a development plan has to be created. That's why we need immigration reform and Mr. Speaker, before I lead

the public to believe that I'm anti-expat, I'm definitely not. My wife is from the UK and I am Caymankind, and we love to welcome people but sometimes things change too fast, and we need to slow down to understand where we are before we make too much more of a mess of things.

I think the rate of change, the rate of change for Cayman, is what's causing much of the disharmony, much of the lack of respect, much of the split in society, and I think some of the ways we can do that, Mr. Speaker, are simple things like education in the school system, and I don't mean the public schools. I'm talking about the private schools. I think we need to do a stronger job of mandating them, even though they are private entities, in order for them to have a licence in this country.

Maybe it's time for us to use the importance of the law and the culture to *insist*, because I am personally aware that private schools do not do enough. They do the bare minimum to check the box, and if we want the continuity of harmony, the continuity of respect and appreciation for our culture and heritage, we have to do it from the level of the children; and Mr. Speaker, when I speak about children, I am mindful of how sensitive this discussion is because I know the children are also listening to us and the spirit of this Motion is the right one. Talking about inclusivity and working together regardless if you're old or new, status holder or generational, rich or poor, black or white, because children don't see those biases—those *ISMs* as they say.

We also have to remember that many of our children who are Caymanian have parents who are not generational Caymanians. What do we say to a child who was born here to a Caymanian mother and a Jamaican father, when sometimes our comments are a bit aggressive and assertive? How do you think that Caymanian child feels, when the person they see as their hero is spoken about in a particular way? I'm glad for my years of growth politically, and as a man, and as a human being, because I am now more minded that we have to be so conscious with the words we use. Sometimes I get worried about comments you hear on social media, on Facebook, on radio shows and so forth. but

However, don't get me wrong, Mr. Speaker, I understand. I understand why the people are frustrated. It is hard to know that you are from here, your parents gave their blood, sweat, and tears to bring it to where it is successful today—with help from other people, don't get me wrong. To then feel like you can't get the spoils of your forefathers' work... When Caymanians feel they can't get their own home because it's out of their reach, they're going to look for, I think it was the good Member for Bodden Town West who said so, they're gonna look for something to blame; and Mr. Speaker, it's not like we don't have people around who can help us with advice.

Look at Doctor Frank McField. A sociologist in his own right, and he has spoken about this. You don't

have to like him, but you can't change the facts in the words he says. He spoke about this division, this disharmony, this lack of togetherness, and about social inclusion, and he still does up to today but we don't use him in his professional capacity maybe because people don't like his political views. Once you come in this House, they got a good way of blacklisting you, boy. Trust me.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: A man with such great knowledge and information and connection from the old to the new; a man who wrote stories and poems about it, but there is nothing I can do to get him in the civil service, and we won't go down that road because you know what Section 55 of the Constitution says: We have no control over hiring in the civil service. However, I think it's a disservice that a man of such calibre is not hired by the service to assist with complex matters such as this Motion is speaking about.

Mr. Speaker, I am fearful of going too far because it is a very sensitive topic. When I think about the children, I want to make sure that I make the most mature decisions and discussions when it comes to this matter. I'm gonna wrap up my debate by saying compassion from all sides is going to be necessary for the continued success of this miracle called the Cayman Islands. Out of nothing, we made so much, and we continue to do so.

What we must remember is, if we do it together, do it like the bees. Mr. Speaker, many people ask, what the bee is about. I take this opportunity to tell the country today. You see, Mr. Speaker, when I started my first campaign as an independent, my slogan was *"Together, we can make Cayman better"*, and coming from a media background, I knew that you have to symbolise what you stand for—like the Nike logo. Whenever you see the logo you think, *just do it*; so, I searched and searched and searched for a long time, and I realised that something I love, is the story about the bee because you see, Mr. Speaker, the bee is the one insect the whole world cannot survive without.

The bee is an insect that doesn't trouble anybody, quite like our Caymankind. A bee will do its job—pollinate. It will land on your hand or your hat, if they smell something, *"oh, that's not pollen or the honey I need to get"* and they'll move on their way. Reminds me so much of how we are as Caymanians, but if you disturb them, after a while they will retaliate and when they retaliate, they will stand up and protect their queen and the queen is their country.

Another reason I use the bee symbol, Mr. Speaker, is the bees' work ethic and what it takes to make a hive full of harmony and success through its honey. Everybody working together, everybody has a job to do and everybody will have a share of the pie, whether you're a doctor, a lawyer, a water boy, the CEO, whether you're the coach or you're the captain or

the towel boy. Whether you are rich, poor, black or white, they all work together to protect their hive and they all succeed together.

That's why the symbol of the bee; because I believe that together, we can make Cayman better and I believe that's what the spirit of this Motion is trying to do; to bring this country together, and it's going to take all sides. It's going to take the gated communities. It's going to take our traditional East-Enders who are thatching, to work together. It is gonna take the black, the white, the Spanish, our Honduran community, our Filipino community, our Jamaican community, our American community, our British, but more importantly, Mr. Speaker, our Caymanians, because we're all in the same boat.

I'm happy and proud of the well-experienced Member for West Bay West for bringing a Motion for bringing us together at such a crucial time, because we do have some challenges ahead. The world does, and these days, I say, I hope we all are reading our Bibles because I think those who believe in Christ, and believe in the Good Book can see the signs already—the chaos, the AI, the threats of war and all the nonsense that goes along with it. It's time for us to get close to the faith.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: One thing faith tells you, is to love one another and be your brother's keeper. To all the 130 different nationalities that are here: I welcome you, and I want to say thank you for choosing Cayman, but let's not try to change what you came here for mainly, and as Caymanians, let's all work together, because only together can we continue to make the place we call home, successful.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, on behalf of the administration, we will be supporting the good Member for bringing this Motion forward and I hope to be a part of the next administration to put more teeth to this Motion, rather than it just being shelved. To actually do, not a campaign but an evergreen policy that continues to look at things to make sure that we're working in harmony; to make sure that we are going to be inclusive because we can all succeed. That's why you hear that we fight for things like the road, so that Caymanians can have access to more land so they can get homes for themselves and bring down the cost of housing.

With that being said, Mr. Speaker, I'm quite sure there will be ample time for campaigning but, again, I give my full support to this Motion, and thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this honourable discussion.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?
[Pause] Does any other Member wish to speak?
[Pause] Does any other Member wish to speak?
[Pause] If not, honourable Member for West Bay West, you have them all singing Kumbaya.

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: West Bay is good.

Mr. Speaker, I firstly want to thank all Members who spoke and showed their awareness of the issues enumerated in my Motion, particularly the Deputy Premier and the Member who seconded my Motion. All members, in fact; my Minister, who is the Minister of Culture and accepts because his heart is there. Just saying to him that we put a policy in place now, before elections. It can be done if we move on it and appoint people in the Culture Ministry that can take it on and do it. That's what I would like to see.

Mr. Speaker, I don't need to go over the points as we are all on the same page. Everyone, Mr. Speaker. There are Members on the other side who spoke passionately about what they feel, what they see, what they hear, what they experience, and those who did not speak said so privately, in so many words. There are a few points, Mr. Speaker, that warrant my response. Time is of importance, the House will soon dissolve, but the work of government goes on for another couple of months yet and when we are back, God willing, I will be pushing this matter to the front burner of the government's agenda because as I said, I just talked to my Minister and we're going to move quickly to get policies done.

Mr. Speaker, there was talk about protecting Caymanians and how the environment is cultural too. Protecting Caymanians, as I said earlier Mr. Speaker, there are things that we can do. We know what we face when it comes to jobs. They do feel that jobs must be theirs. We all feel that way—but it has to be jobs in areas that they can do; and yes, it gives rise to them saying I can do this, and prove it, and then government must make sure and that's what I call a better balance. You bring the people you need, but ensure the people we have, who can do the job, have that first opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to answer that part by talking about Cayman and what people are looking for, how do we protect them, in what areas, and things that we need to do; and you might say this is a soap box for me but it's a fact, because when we talk about, *you got too many work permits...* Mr. Speaker, they need to have people with knowledge of the community on those boards. People who know and understand business, and how it works and not feeling, *if I can't get it, nobody else can*. That *nah goin'* build a country. The truth be told, you might have a war, because business owners in this country who put down tons of money to start a business are not going to just sit back and let government, or any board member say no, you're not doing that. That's what the Courts are for. You'll have plenty judicial reviews which we might not win.

When you talk about those things, there are many Caymanian things that those work-permit holders impact—and I'm not saying everyone, Mr. Speaker; but we need to look at our situation in several ways. How to protect our people, which means first of all, their job opportunities, and their business; and then, those who already retired and jumped on the environment and

say, you know, you can't do this, you can't do that. It is your land, you bought and paid for it but now I want to control it and, you know, I'm retired now and I got time to run around and tell stories about it. We need to find a balance on that.

Then, how do we balance that with the fact that the only industries we have is a service economy? That's what we are. We do not have huge industries here, where we got them? The construction industry was born of the tourism industry, and the financial services too. Tourism and financial services are our only stable economies. They bring the need for people, the need for excellent, top-class, better than world-class hotel rooms and property; better than the services our competition offers. It means it involves the development aspect of our economy inclusive of the apartments needed, and so here we have the question of who we are developing for, and thus one of the complaints: too much development. There is where I say, we need to fix it. Create things that will bring balance to give locals an advantage.

However, Mr. Speaker, many— and this is the point that many people do not recognise— many, many Caymanians, young and old, in recent years, have built an apartment or two on their premises, on their homes, and who is doing that to get extra needed income, who is renting those apartments? Who? Needs Assessment Unit (NAU)? For everybody? No. It is those same work-permit holders, teachers, industry workers we are complaining about, but the day you stop them, you are hurting Caymanians who have borrowed, or took their little savings... Even out of their pension. Some of them were smart enough to somehow do that and fix an apartment, or two, in their yard to get that extra income for their family, so we have to be more than careful.

It is not something you just jump up and say because Tom Jones out there is going to vote and he doesn't like this one or the next one, we gonna kick them out of the country—that does not work. They may think it works, but like I tell you, with the judiciary that we have, if they go to court, judicial review will not be on our side. It will not be on our side. We have to be more than careful when we attempt to create the balance. Balance is needed, but we have to be careful. People—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Sorry? No, plenty of them you *nah gah* get rid of once they come. I am being asked by my colleague over here, if we can get rid of them. Well, there are mechanisms and there is a review of immigration that is coming now, which I think much screaming is gonna go about, but we have to get a balance. There has to be a balance. All kinds of things we need to balance.

Look at it, Mr. Speaker. As far as I'm concerned, people who come here on a work permit and are driving 100 miles an hour killing who? How many

have been killed recently? Who they are? You know, something my Council is saying in West Bay West, take away their permit. That would be one thing. You catch them driving too fast, speeding, you killed someone, take it away. Well, if they kill somebody—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: They are breaking the law, but speeding is what we were discussing and deaths caused by speeding. Take away their permit, that is a balance. That's a balance. You hear all sorts, Mr. Speaker, I know you hear it because you listen, I know.

While we put in place measures to give locals better opportunities, and bring about the balance I talk about, let's not forget that there are people here who make a contribution in such ways as renting the kind of apartments built by older and younger Caymanians. Let's be aware of unintended consequences. Those are real, and will hurt Caymanians. You can talk all you want and row all you want, there is a factor that we have to contend with that cannot be thrown out of the door just like that.

Mr. Speaker, there's a matter on sports and the swimming programme that my West Bay North colleague spoke about. I want to remind him that I was Minister when he was the Acting Director. We changed the Spring Swimming Programme, for the better, because some of what he said had been happening but it stopped between 92 and 96, when we had the Ministry of Sports.

The late Mr. Mackie Powell and his wife, and Mrs. Laurice Frazier and her husband, were the people who made swimming a successful part of my sports programme and ensured that local children took part and had a chance to learn and the Frazier boys did what? Came out champions. We forget? No, we can't forget. You can remember the present ones, but let's remember those who started and were successful too. Then, there were other governments, Mr. Speaker, that made strides to build sports.

As I said, earlier, one spoke of Caymanians' reasonable entitlement to have a job. Of course. Yes! Certainly, and as representatives we must do all we can, when we hear and find out things, to check them out properly and try—because as representatives, everybody thinks we are dictators, you know? Oh, you shouldn't be, but they all think that we are. “*You must do this; you have to do this.*” Oh, there are systems in place, this is not a Banana Republic. There are systems in place that prohibit us, and within the civil service, the Constitution says you cannot do it— and the truth is too, that many, many people say, “*Oh, we don't want you handling employment*”, but they are the same ones who run behind the scenes and come talk to you about their problems. Same ones, and I've been saying so for years, look in the *Hansard*.

There's reasonable entitlement to have a job, to be trained to do a job, to move about freely. Yes,

those are the entitlements within the law, and not to trample other people's rights is also within the law, so these newcomers out there running around with the new groups now and telling people they are going to do this, and they are going to do that... As one chorus says, "*You can tell the world about this. You can tell the nation about that*"; the man above controls, and we have laws that govern us so let us be careful what you are promising, because you will come back here (if you get a chance to come back) and can't get anything done; and the new ones coming in will know less what to do. They goin' be so befuddled...

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: If they come here. Some of them, not saying all of them. Talking about how we reengage, how we shift things in our communities, there is a point I want to make.

I noticed, and I noticed it many Heroes Days. This is the time, in this shift that we are talking about, to correct the narratives in various areas that touch on our culture. For instance, it was said at the last Heroes Day that the Honourable Jim Bodden started Cayman Airways. That is not true. It is the wrong narrative. He did not start Cayman Airways; he took the foundation of Cayman Airways and built it to what it was. Others came along and ensured it got to where we got it. We have to pay for it, but that's what we want. We want the service, we have to pay for it.

The other one, Mr. Speaker, is the awards. The local Cayman awards were not done in 2021, as you would know. They were done by myself in the 2009 to 2012 term and they were amended, and that's what should have been said; but it left the impression that this was done in 2021. No, it was not! And if they want to say I'm the devil, then give the devil his due. I started that, and I think it must have been close to a hundred people that got the very first awards, so some changes need to be made in the narrative.

It is written, and was said, leaving the impression, that Willie Farrington is the longest-serving Member of the Assembly. No, he was not. He was a Justice of the Peace in the Vestry, for nineteen or twenty years, I think, and then he was elected for thirty-something years, starting in 1959. He left in 1976, so he was not the longest elected Member. I have forty-one years elected— and hoping to get another four. Four more years, yes.

Mr. Speaker, for far too long, we have let important matters such as these slide. While we made gains over the years to recognise our people, we gave them awards and set up gifted individuals such as the national folk singers... Well, to tap myself on the shoulder a little bit—I'll get licked for it but I'll do so now. Heroes Day, the National Folk Singers, I'm their patron. The Cayman Awards, I started it. Mr. Arden used to say, "Who did it?!", then he would say, "I did".

The Children's Choir, if it's not ongoing it needs to be resuscitated, but come from the districts; come from the districts. It is something that children can do well and people enjoy. I know it warms my heart when I hear children singing. We should have the National Orchestra. We started it, you know? Started with the high school band. It was supposed to develop into the national orchestra, and I don't know how far it went, because the truth is that we set our minds on the economy and things like that which affect our people, because our people are there pushing us every day as representative, as members of the Cabinet, as elected members. People are there pushing—you need to get this, need to get that, and we forget things like culture and they go by the wayside and the narratives then leave the wrong information for history

Hence, Mr. Speaker, what do I want? I want to see unity amongst us all; that we can live together—our families who have connections outside, the people who come here, live amongst us and understand the sensitivities and the frustrations the Deputy Premier spoke about—the West Bay incident there, with words talking about Riff Raff. I didn't pay it any mind. Yes, I got insulted, but look at what they said about me. Ha! Oh, yeah? I ain't going to kill the world.

We have to put the mechanisms in place. We have to. Long time ago I said to Benson Ebanks, let's make sure that the people who come here are well checked because we don't want somebody who is coming from overseas to go into a workplace with a bad attitude and then our own people go to work with something on their shoulder. They are all vexed about something, what you think goin' happen?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeever Bush: Yeah, not goin' be any peace in the workplace, so we should have mechanisms to check these people properly. People are experiencing far more, particularly when people are struggling the way some of our people are today. One reason is, they have no patience to deal with some of this. I am seventy, I keep repeating, so I've learned to have the patience. I know, too, that I don't have to be on the radio; I don't have to be on social media. I know how to go and get things done, and that's what we do. We don't have to be on somebody's show or on social media, blackguarding somebody all the time. No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on in this matter but we have other business. I think we have ventilated the issue enough. I, again, want to thank all those who participated and those who spoke their mind quietly. All I say, Mr. Speaker, is that we have much work to do; government made a significant effort for the event on the evening of Heroes Day. It shows that our government, our representatives, understands the value of our culture; and how much our people appreciate their involvement of Caymanian culture. It shows that the government has taken yet another step in preserving our

culture, as the event showcased artefacts made in Cayman, Caymanian food, and lots of good, old Caymanian dancing songs, other good lyrics and vibes. I'm singing it, wait till my ship comes in.

Mr. Speaker, I say much work is to be done. On my part, I'm neither tired nor feeble and, as someone said, we rather you on a walking stick than them in their Mercedes Benz. Mr. Speaker, **the woods, I say, are lovely, dark and deep; but I have promises to keep and miles to go before I sleep, miles to go before I sleep.**

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The questions are, BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Government considers launching a national awareness campaign that highlights the diversity and strengths of the Cayman Islands with a view of building a more inclusive society; AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Government considers including district activities that encourage community participation, especially amongst seniors as part of this national awareness campaign.

Those in favour, please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES

The Speaker: I believe the Ayes have it.

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: Mr. Speaker, if you believe then, can we get a division?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. W. McKeeva Bush: Yes.

The Speaker: Madam Clerk, please call a division.

Division No. 29 of 2024-2025

AYES: 13

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor- Connolly
Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan
Hon. Isaac D. Rankine
Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour
Mr. Bernie A. Bush
Hon. W. McKeeva Bush
Ms. Barbara E. Conolly
Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks
Mrs. Sabrina T. Turner
Hon. Heather D. Bodden
Mr. Moses I. Kirkconnell
Mr. Roy M. McTaggart
Mr. Christopher S. Saunders

NOES: 0

ABSENTEES: 5

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks
Hon. Joseph X. Hew
Mr. André M. Ebanks

Hon. G. Wayne Panton
Mr. David C. Wight

[Pause]

The Speaker: The results of the division: 13 Ayes, [zero] Noes, 5 absentees.

Agreed: Private Member's Motion No. 9 of 2024-2025 passed.

PRIVATE MEMBER'S MOTION NO. 10 OF 2024-2025 MOTION TO REDUCE DUTY FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

The Speaker: Honourable Members, before I call on the Mover to move this Motion, may I just make an observation?

There are three Private Members' Motions remaining. If any of them attract the length of debate of the first one, we will not get past the current one before the House adjourns. Tomorrow, Government business takes priority, and then, unless the House decides, collectively, to continue with the Private Members' Motions on Monday, they will fall away.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: If the House resolves, yes; that's the only way they'll be heard on Monday.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Well, I'm in the hands of the House. If the majority of the House decides they want to stay, then I have to stay.

I am not inviting anything, I am just making the observation—so you don't get me wrong: I was trying to be diplomatic, but I'm encouraging you all to be brief so we can get them all done today. Otherwise, they won't get dealt with unless the House continues on Monday.

The Honourable Member for West Bay West.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Oh, sorry. Switch the order?

Oh. I recognise the Honourable Member for Bodden Town West.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I raise to move Private Member's Motion No. 10 of 2024-2025, standing in my name. The Motion reads as follows:

WHEREAS the Cayman Islands Constitution Order 2009 (as amended), (the Cayman

Constitution) affirms our commitment to being a country with open, responsible and accountable government, that includes a working partnership with the private sector;

AND WHEREAS the Cayman Constitution affirms our commitment to being a country with a vibrant diversified economy, which provides full employment;

AND WHEREAS the Cayman Constitution affirms our commitment to being a country that makes optimal use of modern technology;

AND WHEREAS the Cayman Constitution affirms our commitment to being a country that manages growth and maintains prosperity;

AND WHEREAS a trade war between the United States, China, and other industrialised countries may result in higher costs for goods being imported into the Cayman Islands;

AND WHEREAS Amazon is now shipping directly to the Cayman Islands and thus competing with many small and medium businesses in the Cayman Islands;

AND WHEREAS more than 50% of the labour force is employed in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs);

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Government considers amending the relevant legislation and regulations to provide that the maximum duty payable by SMEs located in Grand Cayman is 15% on imported goods.

AND BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Government considers amending the relevant legislation and regulations to provide that the maximum duty payable by SMEs located in Cayman Brac and Little Cayman is 12% on imported goods.

The Speaker: The Motion has been duly moved. Is there a seconder?

Mr. Bernie A. Bush: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the Motion.

The Speaker: The Motion has been duly seconded. Does the honourable Mover wish to speak thereto?

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Yes, Mr. Speaker—and after your advice, very briefly. I won't even take the lectern, I will make it that quick.

Mr. Speaker, in a nutshell, I'm sure many Members in this House uttered a sigh of relief, albeit for a short period of time, when the impending trade war between the US and Canada, and the US and Mexico, was paused for at least thirty days; nonetheless, all of us are aware of the trade war that will be happening within the US. We recognise, and I think United States' President Donald Trump already advised the American people, that there will be some pain during this transition period with the tariff war and so forth.

Recognising that, as usual, we in the Cayman Islands import much of our inflation and depend on the US and other countries to provide what we actually import, this will be a challenging time, especially for the many small businesses that employ more than half of our workforce. To some extent, we welcome Amazon now shipping directly to the Cayman Islands because some goods take a while to get here so, in the interest of time... Just the times that we're living in; but we must also recognise that Amazon, like other major merchants in the US, actually affect many small businesses.

From that standpoint, Mr. Speaker, I think now is the time for us to take a look at protecting many of our small businesses, especially during this "painful period" that the US President told the American people will come. I think we need to start looking at ways in which we can probably help small businesses that employ many people so that, hopefully, some of those savings can ultimately pass on to the consumers during this time when everyone is feeling it.

Mr. Speaker, I recognise there are additional shipping costs for transporting goods directly from Grand Cayman to Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, therefore, we ask for reduced duty on those, to compensate for the additional costs.

In a nutshell, we are asking for a proactive approach to mitigate any pain that may come; fingers crossed, it may not, but as we have often said in this House, hope is not a policy. We need to take proactive steps to protect our business people, our employers and employees and, ultimately, see what we can do to help our consumers in this environment. I think the Motion itself is straightforward and I don't need to belabour it further.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? The Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: Thank you Mr. Speaker.

I rise on behalf of the Government, to give contributions to the Member's Motion. We are going to accept and support the Motion but, recognising that it will have financial implications for the budget, it's important that we outline for the listening audience—and the Cayman Islands—things being done within the Government and its agencies already, to help small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Financial Services and Commerce provides support to micro and small businesses primarily via the Small Business Incentive Programme, better known as the SBIP. The Small Business Incentive Programme was started in August, 2014. The then Cabinet granted approval for the implementation of the Programme, which provides fee reductions and was originally set to expire in August, 2015, however, the programme has continued by way

of biannual approval by successive Cabinets since inception. The most recent extension of the SBIP was approved by Cabinet in December 2023, for a period of two years, by regulation, and will expire on the 31st of December, 2025. These regulations are the Trade and Business Licensing (Amendment to the Schedule) (Temporary Reduction of Fees) Regulations, 2023.

The Ministry is currently finalising replacement regulations that will formalise the SBIP, thereby removing the need for it to be extended every two years. These regulations should be presented to Caucus and Cabinet shortly, and will repeal the earlier referenced ones. Specifically, the SBIP provides fee reductions to small and micro businesses as defined in the Trade and Business Licensing Act (2021 Revision). At present, the law only defines micro and small businesses, not medium enterprises better known as SMES. The definitions in the Act are as follows:

- a. “micro business” means a business that employs less than five persons, not including the owner and has an annual gross revenue of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars or less;
- b. “small business” means a business that employs up to a maximum of twelve persons, not including the owner, and which has an annual gross revenue of up to seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to meeting the definition of micro business or a small business, the regulations stipulate that the incentives only apply to micro businesses and small businesses that:

- a. are independently owned or operated;
- b. are for profit; and
- c. have close control over the operations with decisions taken by the owner.

The replacement regulations specifically require that these businesses are Caymanian-owned and controlled. The SBIP has supported the ongoing viability of existing micro and small businesses, and DCI has seen an increase in new businesses of these types, reporting at the end of October 2024, that approximately 10,025 micro and small businesses have taken advantage of this programme to date, which is a huge success, Mr. Speaker.

The Trade and Business Licensing Act's Schedule 1 also provides that small business owners are entitled to a trade and business licence and fee reduction based on the location of their business or businesses. Owners in Georgetown and West Bay receive a 50 per cent reduction in licensing fees, as do those in Little Cayman and Cayman Brac. East End, North Side and Bodden Town businesses receive a 75 per cent reduction fee. This is in addition to the reductions provided by the SBIP already. Since the implementation of

the SBIP in August of 2014, the approximate impact on revenue collected by DCI to date, is approximately \$9,863,649.75—might as well say \$10 million, Mr. Speaker.

As for the trend analysis, any analysis of the trends during the last five-year period, 2020 - 2024 appears to indicate an uptick in the period following the lockdown for COVID and the COVID pandemic. However, numbers are trending down according to the figures as of the end of October, 2024 and growth has occurred at an average rate of approximately 10 per cent per annum since 2020, and it is reasonable to expect this to continue.

Mr. Speaker, revenues foregone during the five-year period, which shows that the government is doing reductions, are as follows:

2020	\$1,115,778
2021	\$1,577,433
2022	\$1,700,000
2023	\$1,901,414
2024	\$1,720,702

Mr. Speaker, though we will be supporting the Members Motion, we thought it important to outline that under this administration, the Government has, and will continue to support small and medium sized businesses. We understand the spirit of the Motion, and will continue to find ways to improve business efficiency and operations by way of cost reductions, as they allow, within the current budget projections.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?
[Pause] Does any other Member wish to speak?
[Pause] Does any other Member wish to speak?
[Pause] If not, I invite the honourable Member for Bodden Town West to exercise his right of reply.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Honourable Minister of Tourism and Deputy Premier for accepting the Motion on the Government's behalf. As I said, while I welcome the efforts that started more than ten years ago to assist small businesses, what triggered this Motion in my mind was seeing many people excited about Amazon now shipping directly to the Cayman Islands. Across the United States, we have seen many small businesses seriously impacted when Amazon and Walmart, both major merchants, moved into their neighbourhoods—it pretty much destroyed many such small businesses.

We want to ensure that we at least start looking proactively at ways to protect our own small businesses which employ more than fifty per cent of our people, recognising:

- That much has changed in the last ten years;

- The tariff war happening globally; and
- The global reset I spoke about in a previous Motion.

With Amazon expanding into Cayman, I think we need to ensure that we start looking, and even meeting with small businesses from now, to see whether they are starting to perceive any impact or downturn in terms of their operations, to at least give us an idea. If not, we're going to find ourselves with an employment and lower productivity challenge way down the line.

The Motion is trying to get ahead of it, but since it is accepted, I only want to thank the Government, as well as all the Members present, for their tacit approval.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Private Member's Motion No. 10 of 2024-2025, Motion to Reduce Duty for Small and Medium Enterprises.

The questions are: BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Government considers amending the relevant legislation and regulations to provide that the maximum duty payable by small and medium-sized enterprises located in Grand Cayman is 15 per cent on imported goods; and BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Government considers amending the relevant legislation and regulations to provide that the maximum duty payable by small and medium-sized enterprises located in Cayman Brac and Little Cayman is 12 per cent on imported goods.

Those in favour please say Aye, those against, no.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Private Member's Motion No. 10 of 2024-2025 passed.

**PRIVATE MEMBER'S
MOTION NO. 11 OF 2024- 2025
MOTION TO ESTABLISH SECONDARY
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES**

The Speaker: I recognise the honourable Member for Bodden Town West.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to move Private Member's Motion No. 11 of 2024-2025, standing in my name. The Motion reads as follows:

WHEREAS the Cayman Islands Constitution Order 2009 (as amended), (the Cayman Constitution) affirms our commitment to being a country with an education system that identifies and develops on a continuing basis the abilities of each

person, allowing them to reach their full potential and productivity;

AND WHEREAS the Cayman Constitution affirms our commitment to being a country with a vibrant diversified economy, which provides full employment;

AND WHEREAS the Cayman Constitution affirms our commitment to being a country that makes optimal use of modern technology;

AND WHEREAS there are many Caymanians and residents that have not completed high school or attained secondary educational qualifications;

AND WHEREAS it is generally accepted that education is one of the best tools to ensure that the citizens of a country effectively participate in the opportunities that are available in a country;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Government considers establishing a programme at John Gray High School and/or Clifton Hunter High School and/or Layman E. Scott Sr. High School and/or University College of the Cayman Islands and/or the International College of the Cayman Islands to provide adult Caymanians and Residents with the opportunity to obtain a G.E.D. equivalent of a High School diploma

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Government considers establishing a programme with St. Ignatius Catholic School and/or Cayman Prep and High School and/or University College of the Cayman Islands to provide adult Caymanians and Residents with the opportunity to obtain GCE A-Level qualifications

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Government considers expanding the curriculum and the offerings of the Cayman Islands Further Education Centre (CIFEC) with a view of establishing a Cayman Islands Further Education College.

Thank you.

The Speaker: The Motion has been duly moved. Is there a seconder? I recognise the honourable Member for West Bay North.

Mr. Bernie A. Bush: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I stand to second the Motion.

The Speaker: The Motion has been duly seconded. Does the honourable Mover wish to speak thereto?

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Yes, Mr. Speaker, and I'll try to be brief again, so we can get through much quicker.

Mr. Speaker, during my Christmas rounds, I ran into one of my constituents whom I've known for quite a while; a very bright Caymanian young lady. She said that she was looking at different job opportunities, but could not avail herself of them. I was surprised and curious as to why, then she said, "*Mr. Saunders, I did*

not finish high school.” I was shocked, because when you speak to this young lady, you would never know there was anything lacking. I mean, she's very bright, very industrious, very hard-working, but then you realise that opportunities were limited.

When I got home that night, out of morbid curiosity, I decided to go back and take a look at the census, which is a very detailed report, to see how many other Caymanians are in a similar position, and Mr. Speaker, I was actually quite surprised. As per the 2021 census, which is right here and which I mark-up often—and again, I thank the ESO (Economics and Statistics Office) for the thorough job they did in preparing it—there were 4,074 adults above the age of 15 who did not complete secondary education.

Since the Labour Force [Survey] looks at people above the age of 15, I then looked at Caymanians aged 15 and above, who would have been included in the labour force but would technically still be in school, and ended up with a number of 2,114. When I subtracted that 2,114 from the 4,074, I got 1,960 Caymanian persons who did not complete high school. To ensure the numbers were consistent, Mr. Speaker, we looked at the 2024 Spring Labour Survey, which was three years later and, of course, the number was much higher at above 2,000, so I know the census was on the right path in that there were at least 2,000 Caymanians who did not finish high school.

Now, granted, realistically, some of these could also have been seniors no longer active within the workforce, because I don't have the statistics for those who were 65 and above who were affected by this; but at a minimum, Mr. Speaker, I would guesstimate that at least 1,000 Caymanians are currently in the workforce who did not complete high school or a secondary education.

Mr. Speaker, I know this is something that the Honourable Premier and Minister of Education is very passionate about. Despite what the critics and others want to say, I can tell you from working directly with her, that education is a passion for her. I can also say—and I hope I am not speaking out of turn—that I reached out to persons in the Education Department to get their feedback in terms of what was being done, thus the reason the Motion reads the way it does. It was based on feedback from people within the education system who said, “Well, Chris, this is what we need to look at, this is what we're working on, and this is the best way to proceed.” I want to thank them for at least taking the time to help me and kind of guide me in preparing this Motion, because much work is also being done in terms of adult education.

Speaking to that young lady, and to someone else afterwards, we wanted to see what we could do to get them back in the classroom. Online is one thing, Mr. Speaker, and I know we're pushing many things in terms of technology, but there is something that comes with the meeting of minds when people are sitting in a classroom. Over the last ten years, we have spent more

than a billion dollars in education, both in operational and capital expenses; I think we have some of the best facilities in the Caribbean.

Even if we start with evening classes of the basic subjects like Math and English, get people back inside the classroom where they can see that it is not just them in this boat, trying to better themselves—giving them the opportunity. We can also offer them in conjunction with online, as I'm conscious of people's reluctance to speak about the issue, Mr. Speaker, because to some extent, we have turned education into part of the tools we use in the class warfare in this country, whereby people feel less than they are because they don't think they have attained a certain education standard.

Mr. Speaker, something I want to make clear to Caymanians, and I've said it before, one of the best definitions of education that I've ever come across says, “**Education is an act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment and generally preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life**”. Simply put, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't say you need to have a degree to be educated. It's about the actual process of acquiring general knowledge. Developing reasoning and judgment—that is what it is.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that some of the best and brightest people I've ever worked with have never set foot past a university door. It does not mean something is lacking from them, but for some people... and I've seen it in my own family, where both my mother and my aunt went back and got their university degrees after they retired from work. They wanted to have a college degree—even though it was of no use for them because they were already retired, they just wanted that piece of paper. I saw what it meant to them. I think if we were to really help our people realise their full potential; but also create an environment where they can recognise that our full potential is something we need to achieve, something that we're working towards, that's a step in a positive direction.

Another thing, Mr. Speaker, and I've said it before, looking at the poem that I read earlier, *Desiderata*, it ended with the term “**strive to be happy**”. Mr. Speaker, when you look at all the philosophers throughout history, whether it be Aristotle, Plato, Descartes, Nietzsche, all of them, you find that there are four things that they speak about as part of the building blocks needed for someone to be happy in life. In no particular order, I always refer to these as the four pillars of happiness:

1. Everybody needs a purpose in life. They need a reason to get out of bed. Whether it be their children or their family members, they need something to get them out of bed.
2. The ability to grow. Nobody wants to be in the same position forever and a day. If you're an athlete, you want to run faster, live stronger; if you're employee, you want get a

promotion; if you're a politician, you want more votes but everybody wants the ability to grow, whatever they're doing, they want to be better at it. They want to grow.

3. The freedom to make mistakes. Most people's biggest fear is public speaking, but in fact, public speaking is not really the problem because people can speak; the primary problem is that most people don't like to be laughed at. They don't like to be ridiculed, to be the butt of the jokes, that's why they prefer to stay quiet and not get exposed and not take whatever may come with it from that standpoint. The freedom to make mistakes.
4. A connection. Everyone wants to feel loved and to feel a part of something. As they say in *Cheers*, everybody wants to go where everybody knows their name; where they feel like they are somebody.

Mr. Speaker, and I know you would be aware of this, on the issue of loneliness itself we saw in the United States how the US Surgeon General has actually declared a loneliness epidemic. As we see the growth in social media, people are amongst people, they're amongst friends, amongst family, but they are still feeling alone. They're not feeling as if they are achieving their full potential, they feel as if something is missing. Our job as political leaders and representatives of the people is to work to create an environment where people can at least feel they have something to contribute; that they are somebody, and are not being left behind.

As technology increases more and more, Mr. Speaker, we're going to need to get more people up-skilled, et cetera. I was really shocked and surprised that there were at least 1,000 Caymanians in the workforce—not to mention other residents who are also living here, who are unskilled and have come from elsewhere, who would have liked the same opportunity but, for whatever reason, couldn't.

I think it is something we really need to focus on to ensure that our people continue to maintain their dignity so that we can uphold the part of the Constitution that says the Cayman Islands is **“a country with an education system that identifies and develops on a continuing basis the abilities of each person, allowing them to reach their full potential and productivity.”** This is what we have in our Constitution, the highest law in the land.

I think however we can help people, in terms of realising their full potential and productivity, we all should strive for it— and it may be a baby step, but who's to know? Maybe once they get their high school education those people may want to go on to something else. We know that some people desire to go off to do something else and would like to do A levels, thus the reason we mentioned the St. Ignatius Catholic School, which offers the A level programme. Again,

maybe this is something we can look at for an after-school, night-class type programme, not during the day; something geared, more specifically, towards adult literacy.

Mr. Speaker, I know CIFEC is on this path in terms of what it is doing and, speaking to people within the education system, they feel that CIFEC has much potential and they would love to eventually see CIFEC become a college. I share that belief as well, and I understand that it may be an area that the Ministry is driving, to get CIFEC expanded further. At a minimum, this Motion will give the Government an opportunity to show the Caymanian people the ongoing efforts, because many people criticise our education system which I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, it's an unfair criticism.

They blame our education system and use it as an excuse to not hire Caymanians, yet, even when Caymanians come back from North American and European universities with their degree, they're having the same problem, so it has nothing to do with the Cayman education system but rather shortcomings at a different level. I think, at a minimum, we should continue to build on what we have done in education.

I know you, personally, Mr. Speaker, paid a great political price for your own investment and vision for education and now it is bearing fruit. All we're saying is, let's see if we can add some more fruit to the tree to get more people involved.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?
[Pause] Does any other Member wish to speak?
[Pause] The Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Having been here the number of years that I have, and taking cognisance of time of essence and the concept of diminishing returns, it leaves me only to thank them and say, on behalf of the Government, that we are happy and delighted to accept the Motion, the resolves, and the intention of the Members bringing it. My contribution will not be one that keeps you beyond your anticipated hour.

I thank you.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: If I may make an objective observation: that was a model speech. Does anybody else wish to speak? [Pause]

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?
[Pause] Does any other Member wish to speak?
[Pause] Does any other Member wish to speak?
[Pause] If not, I'll invite the Mover to exercise his right of reply.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I just want to say that I don't want anyone in the listening public to believe, because of the lack of speeches, that this view is not shared by the Members in this House, because I can tell you that I've spoken to several of them on an individual basis and they were very supportive of the Motion. They recognise that it's dealing with adult literacy and, again, something we are striving for as said in our Constitution.

With that said, I really want to thank the Honourable Premier and Minister of Education, not just for her work today, but for her passion and commitment; and also your good self, Mr. Speaker, for what you have done for education in this country. We know it is one of the most criticised political areas along with healthcare in this country—as it is with every other country around the world; but for many Caymanians who did not have a chance to finish secondary education, I'm glad to see this going out there. At least we are able to highlight to them, let them know, that they are not the only ones in this boat, that there are more than one thousand Caymanians in the same boat. They're not alone, and hopefully we can get some night classes going soon.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Private Member's Motion No. 11 of 2024-2025 session – Motion to establish Secondary Educational Programmes.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Government considers establishing a programme at John Gray High School and/or Clifton Hunter High School and/or Layman E. Scott Sr. High School and/or University College of the Cayman Islands and/or the International College of the Cayman Islands to provide adult Caymanians and Residents with the opportunity to obtain a G.E.D. equivalent of a High School diploma.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Government considers establishing a programme with St. Ignatius Catholic School and/or Cayman Prep and High School and/or University College of the Cayman Islands to provide adult Caymanians and Residents with the opportunity to obtain GCE A-Level qualifications.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Government considers expanding the curriculum and the offerings of the Cayman Islands Further Education Centre (CIFEC) with a view of establishing a Cayman Islands Further Education College.

All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Private Member's Motion No.11 of the 2024-2025 session – Motion to establish Secondary Educational Programmes passed.

**PRIVATE MEMBER'S
MOTION NO. 12 OF 2024-2025
MOTION TO REGULATE REAL ESTATE AGENTS**

The Speaker: I recognise the honourable Member for West Bay North.

Mr. Bernie A. Bush: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand to move the Motion to Regulate Real Estate Agents.

WHEREAS the Cayman Islands Constitution Order 2009 (as amended), (the Cayman Constitution) affirms our commitment to being a country that respects, protects and defends its environment and natural resources as the basis of its existence;

AND WHEREAS the Cayman Constitution affirms our commitment to being a country that manages growth and maintains prosperity, while protecting its social and natural environment;

AND WHEREAS the Cayman Constitution affirms our commitment to being a country with an immigration system that protects Caymanians, gives security to long term residents and welcomes legitimate visitors and workers;

AND WHEREAS there is much concern amongst Caymanians with regards to the behaviour, conduct, and practice of some individuals in the Real Estate Industry;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Government considers amending the necessary legislation and regulations to regulate Real Estate Agents in the Cayman Islands.

AND BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Government considers limiting the number of non-Caymanians and non-Permanent Residents that may be licensed as Real Estate Agents.

The Speaker: The Motion has been duly moved. Is there a seconder? I recognise the honourable Member for Bodden Town West.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Mr. Speaker, I rise to second the Motion.

The Speaker: The Motion has been duly seconded. Does the Mover wish to speak thereto?

Mr. Bernie A. Bush: Yes, Mr. Speaker, very briefly.

Mr. Speaker, I've been honoured to have been in this House for eleven-and-three-quarters years now; something that has been consistent is people saying this over and over, but I could never see it reach.

I got different messages from three young Caymanians between the ages of 36 and 40; two are married—one with one child and another about to be born this month; another, a couple with one child; and the other couple, single. All holding jobs; all Caymanians who can trace both [family] sides way back through

Cayman's history. Two of them are building their first home and these are the different messages:

- Government should start its own real estate governing body to replace CIREBA [Cayman Islands Real Estate Brokers Association].
- All real estate agents must register with the Government.
- Only Caymanians can sell Cayman's land.

I decided to bring this because there are some apartments built really close to my house. Someone local called, and they were told none was available, so the young lady called her brother, who happens to live in Florida. He called the same number, same place, made sure he had an accent, and he was told there were ten units available. We've also heard our people complain about having difficulties paying the loans on their homes; the prices they receive for them, and who they are sold to.

Mr. Speaker, very simply, it's time for us to benefit from this market. The whole world knows what's going on here with all the real estate being bought by people from overseas; at least, let the Caymanians start to benefit now.

Mr. Speaker, thank you.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?
[Pause] Does any other Member wish to speak?
[Pause] The Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to add a few comments as it relates to Private Member's Motion No. 12 in regards to the regulation of real estate agents. Let me first start by saying that the Government is inclined to agree with this important Motion and thank the two Members for bringing the same.

Mr. Speaker, I note that real estate agents are currently regulated for Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) purposes, as they are considered designated non-financial business persons. This regulation is undertaken under the remit of the DCI [Department of Commerce and Investment] and CIREBA, who is designated as a self-regulatory body; however, Mr. Speaker, in the face of it, the Motion seeks greater regulation in line with what would be considered consumer protection provisions. It is with this view that we believe that regulating real estate agents in the Cayman Islands would lead to a path of transparency and fairness to all.

Mr. Speaker, as we all know, the real estate sector plays a vital role in the Cayman Islands' economy and the lives of its residents. Real estate agents facilitate property transactions however, concerns persist regarding the transparency, the fairness and affordability within the industry. Currently, licensing of real estate agents is voluntary through membership with

CIREBA, the Cayman Islands Real Estate Brokers, which regulates entry into the profession and maintains a Code of Ethics. However, there are no mandatory qualifications or entry requirements to practice as a realtor in the Cayman Islands. While CIREBA's voluntary membership offers access to multiple listing services (MLS), it does not provide a standardised framework for ensuring that real estate professionals meet minimum competency or ethical standards, Mr. Speaker.

In contrast, the real estate professionals in many developed countries such as the US, Canada, Australia, South Africa and even Jamaica are subject to mandatory regulation. While the UK does not mandate licences for real estate agents, professional bodies like the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and the National Association of Estate Agents (NAEA) set voluntary standards for their real estate agents, including requirements for handling of clients' funds compliance and regulations such as the Estate Act, 1979 and the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations, 2008. Increasingly, Mr. Speaker, there are calls for more stringent regulations in the UK to prevent rogue agents.

With your indulgence, I'd like to refer to an article that was published on the 29th October relating to real estate agents in the United Kingdom. I would ask the Serjeant-at-Arms if he would provide a copy to you and the movers for their ease of reference. I'll just merely refer to [where] it says that the housing minister Matthew Pennycook, MP **"stated that reforming the sector [that's the real estate sector] included raising professional standards amongst agents to protect consumers and defend the reputation of good agents from the actions of rogue activities [sic]."** It went on to say that **"The Regulation of Property Agents (RoPA) Working Group published a set of recommendations in July 2019, proposing minimum qualification requirements and a code of practice for estate and letting agents in the UK [sic]...The aim is to protect the consumers from unscrupulous practices and ensure they receive professional and ethical service."**

Mr. Speaker, although RoPA is yet to be implemented in the UK, it is still on the itinerary of priorities, so we are certainly very much timely in relevance to what this Motion is proposing.

Mr. Speaker, some of the benefits of mandatory regulation for real estate agents are as follows:

1. Competence and integrity – We believe that mandatory regulations would ensure that real estate agents possess the required knowledge, the skills, the qualification and ethical standards necessary to serve the public.
2. Consumer protection transparency – We also believe that the regulations would safeguard buyers, sellers and renters from fraudulent and unethical practices. Clear

rules governing commissions and fees would ensure fairness and mandatory disclosure of fees upfront would reduce hidden cost and ensure transparency. Regulations would also help prevent conflicts of interest, such as agents undervaluing distressed properties for personal gain.

3. Accountability and fair business practices – We believe that a regulatory framework would provide a formal mechanism for handling general complaints that are non-AML or CFT and enforce ethical conduct ensuring that agents adhere to fair practices.
4. We believe that it would build trust in the public. Importantly, licencing real estate agents would enhance public trust in the profession, as consumers would then have the confidence that agents have met the established international standards. This would improve the overall reputation of the industry.

Mr. Speaker, with any proposed new regulations or regulatory regime there are, of course, potential drawbacks. For example:

1. Market distortions and reduced competition – Price controls in commissions and fees would limit competition, resulting in market inefficiencies; over regulation might also push smaller agents out of business, reducing consumer choice.
2. Increased cost for consumers through over regulation – We believe that the cost of compliance for real estate agents might be passed on to the buyers or the purchasers and sellers leading to higher transaction costs in the housing market.
3. Administrative and bureaucratic challenges – We believe that enforcing rules against unethical practices such as self-dealing or property flipping would create bureaucratic hurdles. Distinguishing between legitimate business activities and exploitative practices may also prove difficult.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, we need to strike the right balance. The Government believes that the goal of regulation should be done because it would enhance transparency, protect our consumers and protect fair business practices without stifling the market efficiency. A balanced approach is absolutely necessary and one that maintains competition while safeguarding the interests of the public.

Mr. Speaker, it should also be noted that consultation with the industry stakeholders, including real estate agents, consumer advocacy groups and financial institutions, is essential in developing a relevant

regulatory framework that addresses concerns about affordability, fairness and ethical practices, while keeping the housing market dynamic and competitive.

Mr. Speaker, we believe any proposed regulatory framework should focus on the following:

- Entry requirements – establishing clear qualifications and standards for real estate agents;
- Ethical standards – setting out a code of conduct that governs the actions of realtors;
- Ongoing professional development – ensuring continuous education to maintain high standards; and
- Accountability – holding real estate agents accountable for their actions through a formal complaints process and adequate penalties.

As a lawyer, like myself, I'm sure you've had occasions where persons thought they were buying property from a genuine person only to find out that they did not own it. We have a joke—my friend from Cayman Brac West probably knows who I'm referring to, he sold one piece of property three times and his poor mother had to go and rescue him and give him another piece of the family's estate.

- Professional liability – requiring agents to maintain adequate professional liability insurance.

Mr. Speaker, I believe a well-designed regulatory system, will enhance consumer protection, foster trust in the real estate profession, and help to build a stronger, more ethical real estate market in the Cayman Islands jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, as it relates to non-Caymanian agents, I have long held that only Caymanians should be real estate agents, and I believe that the Constitution would protect us in that and it would not fall within the category of discrimination; however, we have a jurisdiction of 130 plus nationalities, and I guess the Movers contemplated that by wishing to put a quota in that particular category. Everything is done in a step by step basis but, as Caymanians train, as we build the middle class and endeavour to build wealth among our own Caymanians, I believe it should be a consideration that is put on the table.

In implementing such a provision, the Government need only provide a transitional provision to allow current real estate companies to train Caymanians for the agent post. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the White Paper on the proposed immigration Draft Bill that my honourable Minister spoke to twice a few days ago (and there is still a pending Motion on the Order Paper) will provide an opportunity for Caymanians and residents alike to have their say because, regarding the provision whereby we're asking companies to provide scholarships, I believe there is insufficient monitoring of the

scholarships. We need to take it to a level where there are tangible results.

I believe this is one area our young Caymanians can go into, just as is done in the legal profession and receive training within these companies. Cayman has been good to many foreign, expatriate real estate persons who came here with a briefcase before we had X-rays, but if there was an X-ray, there probably wasn't much more than birth papers and a passport, and today the briefcase is probably lined with 24-carat-gold.

I rest my case, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? The Honourable Minister for Labour and Border Control and various other things.

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I will speak briefly on this Motion.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to provide my contribution in relation to Private Member's Motion No. 12, regarding the regulation of real estate agents namely, consideration by the Government to limiting the number of non-Caymanians and non-permanent residents that may be licensed as real estate agents.

Mr. Speaker, the real estate sector is pivotal to the Cayman Islands' economy, influencing both economic growth and societal development. Ensuring that Caymanians have ample opportunities within this sector is essential for maintaining local economic stability and community integrity. Section 61 of the Immigration Transition Act (2022 Revision) provides a framework to limit the employment of non-Caymanians which can be instrumental in managing their participation as real estate agents.

Mr. Speaker, this approach ensures that Caymanians are given priority in employment opportunities within the real estate sector. The Government inclines to agree that this approach is acceptable, and an order would also have to be drafted and approved by this Parliament; thereafter, the Work Permit Board, the Business Staffing Plan Board and the Cayman Brac and Little Cayman Immigration Board will be required to grant or renew work permits in accordance with the quota determined by the Cabinet, which shall also be gazetted.

Mr. Speaker, I agree that the Government should consider amending the necessary legislation and regulations to regulate real estate agents in the Cayman Islands, and that the Government considers limiting the number of non-Caymanians and non-permanent residents that can be licensed as real estate agents in the Cayman Islands.

Mr. Speaker, I've seen the many young Caymanians who are beaming with pride and joy after getting their real estate licence and the way they bloom and flourish. It's a joy to see how their life, their life status, changes, especially, there are many young women in the industry now, and it gives me great joy to see that. Caymanians can do this. At one point they made it feel like if you were Caymanian, you couldn't be a real

estate agent, that you couldn't sell your own land. I wonder how many of them know what Maiden Plum is, but Mr. Speaker—

An Honourable Member: Or cow-itch.

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour: As the honourable Premier alluded to earlier, the Government is inclined to support this Motion. I thank you, sir.

God-bless.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? *[Pause]* Does any other Member wish to speak? *[Pause]* Does any other Member wish to speak? If not, then I will invite the honourable Mover of the Motion to exercise his right of reply,

Mr. Bernie A. Bush: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

To the Premier: It was pleasing to hear that I'm not alone in feeling what it should be— but I heard the Minister for Border Control use the phrase “societal development”; then he turned around and said that he seems to know quite a few people who have blossomed and flourished. Well, I'm happy he knows them, because I've only known three or four Caymanians and they have struggled. It's a close network that only lets certain people in. That's what I've been told, and that's what I'm shown, but I'm very happy to know that he knows some, so I'm hoping that we'll hear many more of those stories where we Caymanians are in the driving seat.

Mr. Speaker, believe you me, I wanted to put a figure of zero. I will not try to play the game of trying to appease everybody. I wanted to put zero, but I was warned by a friend who helped me with this who actually said the same thing that the Premier just said— “be careful, go small steps”. Then the next move can be only Caymanians. Really and truly, I don't want to limit the number of non-Caymanians. I want to limit it to just us. It's time. Other countries you go to, have things just for them. Since I've been here I'm hearing “the Constitution this [and that]”, yet Caymanians—

Someone works here for six, seven years and we can't roll them over. We cannot say, “*Okay, your time is up, it's time for you to go*”. Oh, there's an appeal and they can win and they can get to stay here forever. Everything you hear in this country, is as if we owe these people something. They have never lived as good in their life as they live when they come here. You come here for six or seven years? Thank you very much. You've made some good money, find your way home. Light a candle, find your way home. You've had six or seven years to find some bright, young Caymanian you could train, but we don't push this. Other countries—

You know where I see doing it? Take a look at this place in Camana Bay, called Cayman Dental. Look at the set of young Caymanians who are there as dentists and hygienists who they have made sure to hire

and send them off and help them with their scholarships. In fact, the government helped two or three of them as well. Mr. Speaker, the intestinal fortitude and will have to be there; and that's what we don't have. A perfect example was standing up for that young, Caymanian pilot whom they ran from here, to Trinidad, to England all just to get him to fly his own plane. They keep moving the goal posts on us and none of us in here—very few—will stand up and say it as it is.

Well, I'm gonna give you all a warning—those of you who are here, and those who want to get in here: It is a different breed. A pile of marl, a window, money toward a casket or burial will not... These younger generations, these forty-and under, are not joking. *"You all better start to represent us."* We better start to represent them, and *represent them*. Stand up; be counted—and they are wise to some of the tricks. Asking every Tom, Dick, and Harry to come and join your committee won't help you get elected.

Like the Member for West Bay West said this morning, get out there and do some work in the community. Let people see you. Got Casper the friendly ghost appearing back after 3.5 years. Surprised you don't hear them on a roundabout yet.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Bernie A. Bush: This is the beginning, ladies and gentlemen. We have to start marking stuff just for us, and I have heard the same thing, from some of the new Caymanians in my area, that the Member for Bodden Town West heard. I asked them, *"If we were to say that the North Sound could only be worked by Caymanians, what would you say? That you deserve it— you built it"*; well, we don't want to take on certain of them that don't want to hire Caymanians. Why? They can hold a work permit over somebody's head, that's what they like. When they have a Caymanian who can stand up for their rights, they don't like it. That's a fact.

To the Premier: thank you very much, Ma'am, and I do hope, God's willing, because I know how these things go; they'll drag on, but the next election is just a couple of weeks away and the next Government, you all will be held accountable because it's here.

With that, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

The Speaker: Private Member's Motion No. 12 of 2024-2025 entitled Motion to Regulate Real Estate Agents.

The questions are: BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the government considers amending the necessary legislation and regulations to regulate real estate agents in the Cayman Islands; and

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Government considers limiting the number of non-Caymanians and non-permanent residents that may be licensed as real estate agents. Those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Speaker: I believe the Ayes have it.

Mr. Bernie A. Bush: Mr. Speaker, could I have a division please, sir?

The Speaker: Madam Clerk,

Division No. 30 of 2024-2025

AYES: 13

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly
Hon. Isaac D. Rankine
Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour
Mr. Bernie A. Bush
Hon. W. McKeever Bush
Hon. Joseph X. Hew
Ms. Barbara E. Conolly
Mr. André M. Ebanks
Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks
Mrs. Sabrina T. Turner
Hon. Heather D. Bodden
Mr. Moses I. Kirkconnell
Mr. Christopher S. Saunders

NOES: 0

ABSENT

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan
Hon. Johany S. Ebanks
Hon. G. Wayne Panton
Mr. Roy M. McTaggart
Mr. David C. Wight

The Speaker: The results of the division: 13 Ayes, [zero] Noes, 5 absentees.

Agreed: Private Member's Motion No. 12 of 2024-2025 passed.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

BILLS

The Speaker: The House will now resolve itself into committee to consider the Bills.

House in Committee at 6:46 pm

COMMITTEE ON BILLS

The Chairman: The House is now in Committee.

[Extended pause]

The Chairman: All right, honourable Members, we are ready to go.

The House is now in Committee; with the leave of the House may I assume that, as usual we should authorise the Honourable Attorney General to correct minor errors and such the like in these Bills? I will take the silence for assent. Madam Clerk, would you please state the first Bill, and read the clauses.

**REFERENDUM (CRUISE BERTHING
INFRASTRUCTURE, GAMBLING AND CANNABIS)
BILL, 2024**

The Clerk:

Clause 1	Short Title
Clause 2	Interpretation
Clause 3	Holding of referendum

The Chairman: Are there any questions on Clauses 1, 2 and 3?? If not, I will put the question. The question is that Clauses 1, 2 and 3 do stand part of the Bill. All those in favour Please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clauses 1, 2 and 3 passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 4	Matter of national importance and referendum questions
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The Chairman: Honourable Deputy Premier. You have an Amendment.

Amendment to Clause 4

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: Yes, Mr. Chair.

In accordance with the provisions in Standing Order 52 (1) and (2) I, the Honourable Kenneth Bryan, Deputy Premier and Minister for Tourism and Ports, give notice to move the following amendments to the Referendum (Cruise Berthing Infrastructure, Gambling and Cannabis) Bill, 2024. That the Bill be amended in Clause 4(3) by deleting the words “shall be in the form set out in Schedule 1” and substituting the words “shall be in the Form provided in accordance with the Elections Act.”.

The Chairman: The Amendment has been duly moved. Does any Member wish to speak thereto? If no Member wishes to speak, the question is that the amendment stand part of the Clause. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Amendment passed.

The Chairman: Does anyone wish to speak on the Clause as amended? If not, I will put the question. The question is that Clause 4, as amended, stands part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 4, as amended, passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 5	Entitlement to vote
Clause 6	Conduct of referendum
Clause 7	Observers
Clause 8	Legal challenge

The Chairman: Are there any questions on Clauses 5 to 8? If not, I will put the question. The question is that clauses 5 through 8 do stand part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clauses 5 through 8 passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 9	Application of Elections Act
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Amendment to Clause 9

The Chairman: I have received notice of the Amendment to the Bill and I have given the Member leave to bring the Amendment.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Orders 52 (1) and (2), I, the Honourable Kenneth Bryan, Deputy Premier and Minister for Tourism and Ports give notice to move the following Amendment to the Referendum (Cruise Berthing Infrastructure, Gambling and Cannabis) Bill, 2024. That the Bill be amended in clause 9(2) and (4) by deleting the words “Schedule 2” and substituting the words “the Schedule”.

The Chairman: The Amendment has been duly moved. Does any Member wish to speak thereto? If no Member wishes to speak, the question is that the amendment stand part of the Clause. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Amendment passed.

The Chairman: Does anyone wish to speak on the Clause as amended? If not, I will put the question. The question is that Clause 9, as amended, stands part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.
Agreed: Clause 9 as amended, passed.

The Clerk:
 Clause 10 Expenses of referendum
 Clause 11 Regulations

The Chairman: Are there any questions on clauses 10 and 11? If not, I will put the question. The question is that clauses 10 and 11 do stand part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.
Agreed: Clauses 10 and 11 passed.

The Clerk:
 Schedule 1

Amendment to Schedule 1

The Chairman: I have received notice of an Amendment to Schedule 1 of the Bill and I've given the Member leave to bring the Amendment.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 52 (1) and (2) I, the Honourable Kenneth Bryan, Deputy Premier and Minister for Tourism and Ports give notice to move the following Amendment to the Referendum (Cruise Berthing Infrastructure, Gambling and Cannabis) Bill, 2024: That the Bill be amended by deleting Schedule 1.

The Chairman: The Amendment has been duly moved. Does any Member wish to speak thereto?

If no Member wishes to speak, the question is that the Amendment stands part of the Clause. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, no.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it. The Amendment stands part of the Clause. Does any Member wish to speak on the Clause as amended? If not, I will put the question. The question is that Schedule 1, as amended, stand part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.
Agreed: Schedule 1 deleted.

The Clerk:
 Schedule 2

The Chairman: I have received notice of the Amendment of Schedule 2 to the Bill—namely, its deletion—and I've given the Minister leave to bring the Amendment.

Amendment to Schedule 2

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Orders, 52 (1) and (2) I, the Honourable Kenneth Bryan, Deputy Premier and the Minister for Tourism and Ports give notice to move the following Amendment to the Referendum (Cruise Berthing Infrastructure, Gambling and Cannabis) Bill, 2024. That the Bill be amended by deleting the heading of Schedule 2 and substituting the following heading: "Schedule".

The Chairman: The Amendment has been duly moved. Does any Member wish to speak thereto? If no Member wishes to speak, the question is that the amendment stand part of the Clause, all those in favour please say Aye, those against no.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.
Agreed: The Amendment passed.

The Chairman: Does anyone wish to speak to the Clause as amended? If not, I will put the question. The question is that the Schedule as amended stand part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.
Agreed: The Schedule, as amended, passed.

Amendment to the amended Schedule

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: Mr. Chair, there's now a proposed Amendment to the amended Schedule 1— or the Schedule, as it is.

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Orders 52 (1) and (2) I, the Honourable Kenneth Bryan, Deputy Premier and Minister of Tourism and Ports give notice to move the following Amendment to the Referendum (Cruise Berthing Infrastructure, Gambling and

Cannabis) Bill, 2024: That the Bill be amended in Schedule 2 (as amended) by deleting the amendment to Form 24 of the Elections Act.

The Chairman: The Amendment has been duly moved. Does any Member wish to speak thereto? If no Member wishes to speak, the question is that the amendment stand part of the Schedule? All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Amendment passed.

The Chairman: Does anyone wish to speak to the Schedule as amended? If not, I will put the question. The question is that the Schedule, as amended, stands part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Schedule, as amended, passed.

The Clerk: A Bill for an Act to provide for the holding of a Referendum on the proposal to develop cruise berthing infrastructure; to provide for the holding of a Referendum on proposal to legalise gambling in the form of a national lottery; to provide for the holding of a referendum on the proposal to decriminalise the consumption and possession of small amounts of Cannabis; and for incidental and connected purposes.

The Chairman: The question is that the title do stand part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The title passed.

CUSTOMS AND BORDER CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

The Clerk:

Clause 1	Short title and commencement
Clause 2	Repeal and substitution of Section 22 of the Customs and Border Control Act (2024 Revision) - temporary imports
Clause 3	Amendment of section 86 - inward passenger and crew manifests
Clause 4	Amendment of section 94 - entry by persons other than Caymanians or persons legally and ordinarily resident

Clause 5	Amendment of section 105 - offences relating to illegal landing and powers of arrest
Clause 6	Insertion of section 128A - application fees non-refundable
Clause 7	Amendment of Schedule 1 - administrative offences
Clause 8	Amendment of Schedule 2 - form of ticket

The Chairman: Are there any questions on clauses 1 through 8? If not, I will put the question. The question is that clauses 1 through 8 do stand part of the Bill. All those in favour, please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clauses 1 through 8 passed.

The Clerk: A Bill for an Act to amend the Customs and Border Control Act (2024 Revision) to introduce a rate of duty of two per cent on temporary imports; to introduce new offences; to provide for administrative penalties in respect of certain offences; to provide that, unless otherwise specified, application fees are non-refundable; and for incidental and connected purposes.

The Chairman: The question is that the title do stand part of the Bill. All those in favour Please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The title passed.

BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP TRANSPARENCY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

The Clerk:

Clause 1	Short title
Clause 2	Amendment of section 4 of the Beneficial Ownership Transparency Act, 2024 – meaning of beneficial owner
Clause 3	Amendment of section 6 - duty of legal persons to identify registrable beneficial owners, etc.
Clause 4	Amendment of section 10 - exemption
Clause 5	Amendment of section 11 - corporate services providers to review particulars
Clause 6	Amendment of section 12 - required particulars and written confirmation required for categories of legal persons
Clause 7	Amendment of section 13 - duty to establish and maintain register

Clause 8	Amendment of section 16 - retention on the register
Clause 9	Amendment of section 22 - access to beneficial ownership information
Clause 10	Insertion of section 22A - protection of searches from dissemination

The Chairman: Are there any questions on clauses 1 through 10? If not, I will put the question. The question is that clauses 1 through 10 do stand part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clauses 1 through 10 passed.

The Clerk: A Bill for an Act to amend the Beneficial Ownership Transparency Act, 2023 to amend the meaning of “beneficial owner”; to empower the competent authority to provide access to the search platform to the Customs and Border Control Service, among other entities; to ensure the continued effectiveness of the beneficial ownership legislative framework; and for incidental and connected purposes.

The Chairman: The question is that the title do stand part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The title passed.

ANTI-SEXUAL HARASSMENT BILL, 2025

The Clerk:

Clause 1	Short title and commencement
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The Chairman: Are there any questions on Clause 1? If not, I will put the question. The question is that Clause 1 does stand part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 1 passed.

Clause 2	Interpretation
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Amendment to Clause 2

The Chairman: I have received notice of an Amendment to Clause 2 of the Bill and I have given the Member leave to bring the Amendment.

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order, 52(1) and (2) I, the Honourable Isaac D. Rankine, Minister of Youth, Sports and Heritage give notice to move the following amendments to the Anti-Sexual Harassment Bill, 2025. That the Bill be amended in clause 2 as follows:—

- (a) in the definition of the word “**facilities**”, in paragraph (b), by inserting after subparagraph (vi) the following subparagraph —

“(via) services to a young person;”; and

- (b) by inserting in the appropriate alphabetical sequence, the following definitions —

“ “**child**” has the meaning assigned by section 2(1) of the Children Act (2012 Revision);

“**older person**” has the meaning assigned by section 2 of the Older Persons Act, 2017;

“**seasonal employee**” means an employee engaged in an activity which does not take place all year round or one which is substantially reduced during certain times of the year to such an extent that it is necessary or expedient to lay off some or all employees temporarily; and

“**young person**” means a person who has attained the age of eighteen years but who has not yet attained the age of twenty-five years.”.

The Chairman: The Amendment has been duly moved. Does any Member wish to speak thereto? if no Member wishes to speak, the question is that the Amendment stands part of the Clause. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Amendment passed.

The Chairman: Does anyone wish to speak on the Clause as amended? If not, I will put the question. The question is that Clause 2, as amended, stands part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 2, as amended, passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 3 Commission of an act of sexual harassment

Amendment to Clause 3

The Chairman: I have received notice of an Amendment to Clause 3 of the Bill, and have given the Member leave to bring the Amendment.

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine: In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 52 (1) and (2) I, the Honourable Isaac D. Rankine, Minister of Youth Sports and Heritage, give notice to move the following Amendment to the Anti-Sexual Harassment Bill, 2025.

That the Bill be amended in Clause 3 by deleting Subclause 2(a) and substituting the following subclause:

“(2) For the purposes of subsection (1)(a), the circumstances to be taken into account include —

- (a) sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, age, mental or physical disability, property, birth or other status;”.

And in 3(2)(a) by deleting the word preference and substituting the word “orientation”.

The Chairman: The Amendment has been duly moved. Does any Member wish to speak thereto? If no Member wishes to speak, the question is that the amendments stand part of the Clause. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Amendment passed.

The Chairman: Does anyone wish to speak on the Clause as amended? If not, I will put the question. The question is that Clause 3, as amended stands part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 3 as amended, passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 4	Anti-Sexual harassment policy statement and contents
Clause 5	Employer and employee obligations
Clause 6	Employer's duty to employee
Clause 7	Liability of employer

The Chairman: Are there any questions on clauses 4 through 7? If not, I will put the question. The question

is that clauses 4 through 7 do stand part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clauses 4 through 7 passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 8 Institutions

Amendment to Clause 8

The Chairman: I received notice of an Amendment to the Bill in Clause 8, and have given the Minister leave to bring the Amendment

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine: In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 52(1) and (2) I, the Honourable Isaac D. Rankine, Minister of Youth, Sports and Heritage give notice to move the following amendments to the Anti-Sexual Harassment Bill, 2025.

That the Bill be amended in clause 8 as follows —

- (a) in subclause (1), as follows —

- (i) in paragraph (a), by inserting after the words “a child,” the words “young person, older person,”;

- (ii) in paragraph (b), by deleting the words “children, wards, clients, patients, inmates, residents, and third party” and substituting the words “children, young persons, older persons, wards, clients, patients, inmates, residents, and third parties”; and

- (iii) in paragraph (c), by inserting after the words “that child,” the words “young person, older person,”; and

- (b) in subclause (3)(a), by inserting after the words “inmate, child,” the words “young person, older person,”.

The Chairman: The Amendment has been duly moved. Does any Member wish to speak thereto? If no Member wishes to speak, the question is that the amendments stand part of the Clause? All those in favour please say Aye.

AYES.

The Chairman: Are you sure? Those against, No? The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Amendment passed.

The Chairman: Does anyone wish to speak on the Clause as amended? If not, I will put the question. The question is that Clause 8, as amended, stands part of

the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 8, as amended, passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 9	Qualifying bodies
Clause 10	Associations and organisations
Clause 11	Goods, services and facilities
Clause 12	Accommodation
Clause 13	Real or personal property
Clause 14	General professional relationship obligation
Clause 15	Victimisation as a result of a complaint
Clause 16	Pressure to engage in sexual harassment
Clause 17	Establishment of Tribunal
Clause 18	Functions of Tribunal
Clause 19	Independence of Tribunal

The Chairman: Are there any questions on clauses 9 to 19? If not, I will put the question. The question is that Clauses 9 through 19 do stand part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clauses 9 through 19 passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 20	Composition of Tribunal
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Amendment to Clause 20

The Chairman: I have received notice of an Amendment to Clause 20 of the Bill, and I have given the Member leave to bring the Amendment.

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine: In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order. 52 (1) and (2) I, the Honourable Isaac D Rankin, Minister of Youth, Sports and Heritage give notice to move the following amendments to the Anti-Sexual Harassment Bill, 2025.

That the Bill be amended in Clause 20 as follows —

- (a) by deleting the clause heading and substituting the following clause heading —

“Composition, hearings and meetings of Tribunal”;

- (b) in subclause (3), by deleting paragraph (c) and substituting the following paragraphs —

“(c) has been convicted, either in the Cayman Islands or elsewhere, of an offence, other than a summary offence for which the person was not sentenced to a period of imprisonment;

(ca) has been accused of an act of sexual harassment which was substantiated by a tribunal; or”; and

- (c) by deleting subclauses (4) to (8) and substituting the following subclauses —

“(4) Where a vacancy exists in the membership of the Tribunal, the Cabinet shall, in accordance with this section, appoint a person to fill the vacancy.

(5) The Cabinet shall by notice published in the Gazette give notice of the names of the members of the Tribunal as first constituted and thereafter of every change in the constitution of the Tribunal.

(6) A person appointed as a member of the Tribunal shall act in the public interest to carry out the purposes of this Act and not based on the person’s personal or business interest.

(7) A hearing or meeting of the Tribunal shall be presided over by —

- (a) the chairperson;
- (b) in the absence of the chairperson, a deputy chairperson; or
- (c) in the absence of the chairperson and both deputy chairpersons, a member chosen by a majority of the members present to act as chairperson at the hearing or meeting.

(8) Four members of the Tribunal constitute a quorum for the purposes of hearings or meetings of the Tribunal.

(9) All decisions at hearings or meetings of the Tribunal shall be taken by a majority of the members present and voting and, in the event of an equality of votes, the chairperson shall have a casting vote.”.

The Chairman: The Amendment has been duly moved. Does any Member wish to speak thereto? If no Member wishes to speak, the question is that the Amendment stands part of the Clause. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.
Agreed: The Amendment passed.

The Chairman: Does anyone wish to speak on the Clause as amended? If not, I will put the question. The question is that Clause 20, as amended, stands part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes of it.
Agreed: Clause 20, as amended, passed.

**Clause 21
(Withdrawal of proposed amendment)**

The Clerk:
Clause 21 Tenure of members

The Chairman: Honourable Minister.

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine: Mr. Chair, I'd like to withdraw the proposed Amendment for Clause 21.

The Chairman: Honourable Minister, would you please move a Motion that the Amendment to Clause 21 be withdrawn?

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Mr. Chair, I, the Honourable Isaac D. Rankine, Minister of Youth, Sports and Heritage put forward a Motion that the proposed amendment for Clause 21 be withdrawn.

The Chairman: The question is that the proposed Amendment to Clause 21 be withdrawn. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.
Agreed: Proposed Amendment to Clause 21 withdrawn.

The Chairman: Are there any questions on Clause 21? If not, I will put the question. The question is that Clause 21 does stand part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.
Agreed: Clause 21 passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 22	Declaration of interest
Clause 23	Resignation
Clause 24	Revocation
Clause 25	Vacancy
Clause 26	Remuneration and expenses
Clause 27	Protection from liability
Clause 28	Complaint to Tribunal
Clause 29	Procedures to be followed on a complaint
Clause 30	Discontinuance of complaint
Clause 31	Hearing of complaint
Clause 32	Adjournment of proceedings
Clause 33	Findings of Tribunal
Clause 34	Agreement
Clause 35	Confidentiality
Clause 36	Publication of Tribunal proceedings
Clause 37	Appeal
Clause 38	Standard of proof
Clause 39	Regulations
Clause 40	Act binding and Crown
Clause 41	Repeal
Clause 42	Savings and transitional provisions

The Chairman: Are there any questions on Clauses 22 to 42? If not, I will put the question. The question is that clauses 22 through 42 do stand part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.
Agreed: Clauses 22 through 42 passed.

The Clerk:
Schedule

[Extended pause]

The Chairman: Honourable Minister. There have been two proposed amendments to paragraph one of the Schedule; so that it is clear and we can move along, you will need to move a Motion to withdraw the proposed Amendment to paragraph 1 of the Schedule, as contained in the Notice of Committee Stage Amendment filed on the 3rd of February.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Chairman: I can't move it for you, you have to move it.

**Paragraph 1(1) of the Schedule
(Withdrawal of proposed amendment)**

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine: Mr. Chair, I, Isaac D. Rankine, Minister of Youth, Sports, and Heritage move a Motion to withdraw the proposed Amendment to paragraph 1(1) of the Schedule, dated 3rd of February.

The Chairman: The Motion has been duly moved. Those in favour of the Motion that is withdrawing the proposed Amendment to the Schedule contained in paragraph 1(1) on the Notice of Committee Stage Amendment filed on the 3rd of February Please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Proposed Amendment to paragraph 1(1) of the Schedule in the Notice of Committee Stage Amendment, dated the 3rd of February, 2025 withdrawn.

The Chairman: Honourable Minister, I have received notice of a proposed Amendment to substitute a new paragraph 1 to the Schedule. Would you proceed to move that Motion now?

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine: Mr. Chair...

The Chairman: Honourable Minister, just read it as it appears.

Amendment to Schedule in Paragraph 1

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine: Mr. Chair, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 52 (1) and (2), I, the Honourable Isaac D. Rankine, Minister of Youth, Sports and Heritage, give notice to move the following amendments to the Anti-Sexual Harassment Bill, 2025. That the Bill be amended in the Schedule in paragraph 1 by deleting sub-paragraph 1 and substituting the following sub-paragraph:

“It is the policy of (name of entity), or (name of person), to provide an environment free from harassment of any kind and for any reason whether because of sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, age, mental or physical disability, property, birth, or other status.”

The Chairman: The Amendment has been duly moved. Does any Member wish to speak thereto? If not, I'll invite—

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: Mr. Chair, just in case Members are wondering what's happening, it would be helpful to point out that the language that has just been read out was used so as to trap the language in the Constitution. Those are the grounds on which you cannot be discriminated against.

The Chairman: Thank you, Honourable AG.

[Pause]

The Chairman: The question is that the Amendment to the Schedule in paragraph 1 stand part of the Clause. Those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Amendment to the Schedule passed.

The Chairman: I now invite the Honourable Minister to move the second Amendment, (Amendment to paragraph 6 of the Schedule), which is contained in the first Notice of Committee Stage Amendment.

Amendment of Paragraph 6 of the Schedule

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 52 (1) and (2) I, the Honourable Isaac D. Rankine, Minister of Youth, Sports and Heritage give notice to move the following for the Amendment of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Bill, 2025. That the Bill be amended in the Schedule as follows:

(b) in paragraph 6 by deleting subparagraph (1) and substituting the following subparagraph —

“(1) All inquiries, complaints and investigations are treated with confidentiality. While the identity of the complainant is usually revealed to the accused and witnesses, careful measures will be taken to ensure that information relating to the identity of the complainant is disclosed on a need-to-know basis.”.

The Chairman: The Amendment has been duly moved. Does any Member wish to speak thereto? If no Member wishes to speak the question is that the Amendment stand part of the Schedule. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Amendment passed.

The Chairman: Does anyone wish to speak on the Schedule as amended—Please, no.

[Laughter]

The Chairman: If not, I will put the question. The question is that the Schedule, as amended, stands part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Schedule as amended, passed.

The Clerk: A Bill for an Act to provide for the prevention of sexual harassment; and for incidental and connected purposes.

The Chairman: The question is that the title do stand part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The title passed.

GRAND COURT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025

The Clerk:

Clause 1 Short title

Clause 2 Amendment of section 2 - definitions

The Chairman: Are there any questions on Clauses 1 and 2? If not, I will put the question. The question is that Clauses 1 and 2 do stand part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 3 Amendment of section 19 - Rules Committee and Rules of Court

The Chairman: I have received notice of the Amendment to the Bill and I've given the Honourable Attorney General leave to bring the Amendment.

Amendment to Clause 3

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair in a court and the provision of Standing Order 52 (1) and (2) I, Honourable Samuel Bulgin, Attorney General, ex-officio Member give notice to move the following amendments to the Grand Court (Amendment) Bill, 2025. That the Bill be amended by repealing clause 3 and substituting the following clause —

3. The principal Act is amended in section 19 as follows —

(a) by repealing subsection (1) and substituting the following subsection —

“(1) There shall be a Rules Committee which shall consist of —

(a) the Chief Justice, who shall be the chairperson;

(b) the Attorney General; and

(c) not less than two and no more than five persons who are —

(i) entitled to practice as legal practitioners before the Court; and

(ii) appointed by the Chief Justice after consultation with the Cayman Islands Legal Practitioners Association.”; and

(b) by repealing subsection (2) and substituting the following subsection —

“(2) At a meeting of the Rules Committee a quorum shall comprise a majority of the members present, which majority shall include the Chief Justice.”.

The Chairman: The Amendment has been duly moved. Does any Member wish to speak thereto? if no Member wishes to speak, the question is that the Amendment stands part of the Clause. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Amendment passed.

The Chairman: Does anyone wish to speak on the Clause, as amended? If not, I will put the question. The question is that Clause 3, as amended, stands part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 3, as amended, passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 4 Repeal and substitution of section 21 - sessions of the Court

The Chairman: Are there any questions on Clause 4? If not, I will put the question. The question is, that Clause 4 does stand part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 4 passed.

The Clerk: A Bill for an Act to amend the Grand Court Act (2015 Revision) to increase the number of members of the Rules Committee of the Court; to change

the frequency of sessions of the Court; and for incidental and connected purposes.

The Chairman: The question is that the title do stand part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The title passed.

CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025

The Clerk:

Clause 1	Short title
Clause 2	Amendment of section 48 of the Criminal Procedure Code (2021 Revision) – procedure when accused found insane during proceedings
Clause 3	Repeal of section 158 and substitution - special verdict where accused found insane at time of offence charged
Clause 4	Repeal of section 159 and substitution - provision for custody of accused person found insane; insertion of new sections 159A and 159B
Clause 5	Transitional provisions

The Chairman: Are there any questions on clauses 1 through 5? If not, I will put the question. The question is that clauses 1 through 5 do stand part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The ayes have it.

Agreed: Clauses 1 through 5, passed.

The Clerk: A Bill for an Act to amend the Criminal Procedure Code (2021 Revision) to regulate the procedure when persons are found not guilty by reason of insanity or are unfit to plead; and for incidental and connected purposes.

The Chairman: The question is that the title do stand part of the Bill. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The title passed.

The Chairman: The question now is that the Bills be reported to the House. All those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Bills to be reported to the House.

House Resumed at 7.50pm

The Speaker: The House will now resume.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Madam Clerk.

REPORT ON BILLS

REFERENDUM (CRUISE BERTHING INFRASTRUCTURE, GAMBLING AND CANNABIS) BILL, 2024

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Deputy Premier and Minister of Tourism and Ports.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: Mr. Speaker, I am to report that a Bill shortly entitled the Referendum (Cruise Berthing Infrastructure, Gambling and Cannabis) Bill, 2024 was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed with amendments.

The Speaker: The Bill has been reported to the House and is set down for a Third Reading.

CUSTOMS AND BORDER CONTROL (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Minister of Border Control.

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I report that a Bill shortly entitled Customs and Border Control (Amendment) Bill, 2024 was passed without amendments.

The Speaker: The Bill has been reported to the House and is set down for a Third Reading.

BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP TRANSPARENCY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am to report that a Bill shortly entitled the Beneficial Ownership Transparency (Amendment) Bill, 2024 was considered by the Committee of the whole House, and passed without amendments.

The Speaker: The Bill has been reported to the House and is set down for a Third Reading.

ANTI-SEXUAL HARASSMENT BILL, 2025

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Minister of Youth, Sports and Heritage.

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine: Mr. Speaker, I am to report that a Bill shortly entitled Anti-Sexual Harassment Bill, 2025 was considered by the whole House and passed with amendments.

The Speaker: The Bill has been reported to the House and is set down for a Third Reading.

GRAND COURT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Attorney General.

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to report that a Bill short entitled the Grand Court (Amendment) Bill, 2025 was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed with Amendment.

The Speaker: The Bill has been reported to the House and is set down for a Third Reading.

CRIMINAL PROCEDURE (AMENDMENT) BILL 2025

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Attorney General.

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to report that a Bill shortly entitled the Criminal Procedure Code (Amendment) Bill, 2025 was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed without Amendment.

The Speaker: Honourable Attorney General, it is so unusual for me to correct you, but it's not the criminal procedure code; it's just Criminal Procedure. I think it is important that we get the title right.

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate it.

I beg to report that a Bill shortly entitled the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2025 was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed without amendment. I appreciate it. Thank you.

The Speaker: The Bill has been reported to the House and is set down for a Third Reading.

THIRD READINGS**REFERENDUM
(CRUISE BERTHING INFRASTRUCTURE,
GAMBLING AND CANNABIS) BILL, 2024**

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Deputy Premier and Minister of Tourism and Ports.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I beg to move that the Bill shortly entitled the Referendum (Cruise Berthing Infrastructure, Gambling and Cannabis) Bill, 2024 be given a third reading and passed.

The Speaker: The question is that a Bill shortly entitled the Referendum (Cruise Berthing Infrastructure, Gambling and Cannabis) Bill, 2024 be given a third reading and passed. Those in favour please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES and NOES.

The Speaker: I believe the Ayes have it but... Madam Clerk, may we have a division. This is one of those controversial ones.

Division No. 31 of 2024-2025**AYES: 11**

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly
* Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan
Hon. Johany S. Ebanks
Hon. Isaac D. Rankine
Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour
Mr. Bernie A. Bush
Hon. Joseph X. Hew
Ms. Barbara E. Conolly
Mr. Moses I. Kirkconnell
Mr. Roy M. McTaggart
Mr. Christopher S. Saunders

NOES: 4

Mr. André M. Ebanks
Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks
Mrs. Sabrina T. Turner
Hon. Heather D. Bodden

ABSENTEES: 3

Hon. W. McKeever Bush
Hon. G. Wayne Panton
Mr. David C. Wight

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan: Three times.*

The Speaker: The results of the division: 11 Ayes, 4 Noes, 3 absentees.

Agreed: Referendum (Cruise Berthing Infrastructure, Gambling and Cannabis) Bill, 2024 passed.

**CUSTOMS AND BORDER CONTROL
(AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024**

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Minister of Border Control, Labour & Culture, Sustainability & Climate Resiliency and Wellness.

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Customs and Border Control (Amendment) Bill, 2024 be given a third reading and passed.

The Speaker: The question is that a Bill shortly entitled Customs and Border Control (Amendment) Bill, 2024 be given a third reading and passed. All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Customs and Border Control (Amendment) Bill, 2024 was given a third reading and passed.

BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP TRANSPARENCY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hour gets late.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to ask that the Beneficial Ownership Transparency (Amendment) Bill, 2024 be given a third reading and passed.

The Speaker: The question is that a Bill shortly entitled Beneficial Ownership Transparency (Amendment) Bill, 2024 be given a third reading and passed. All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES and one audible No.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Beneficial Ownership Transparency (Amendment) Bill, 2024 was given a third reading and passed.

ANTI-SEXUAL HARASSMENT BILL, 2025

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Minister of Youth, Sports & Heritage and Home Affairs.

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill shortly entitled the Anti-Sexual Harassment Bill, 2025 be given a third reading and passed.

The Speaker: The question is that a Bill shortly entitled the Anti-Sexual Harassment Bill, 2025 be given a third reading and passed. All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Anti-Sexual Harassment Bill, 2025 was given a third reading and passed.

Mr. André M. Ebanks: Division, Mr. Speaker. I didn't hear any demurrer, but Madam Clerk may we have a division?

Division No. 32 of 2024-2025

AYES: 15

NOES: 0

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly
Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan
Hon. Johany S. Ebanks
Hon. Isaac D. Rankine
Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour
Mr. Bernie A. Bush
Hon. Joseph X. Hew
Ms. Barbara E. Conolly
Mr. André M. Ebanks
Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks
Mrs. Sabrina T. Turner
Hon. Heather D. Bodden
Mr. Moses I. Kirkconnell
Mr. Roy M. McTaggart
Mr. Christopher S. Saunders

ABSENTEES: 3

Hon. W. McKeever Bush
Hon. G. Wayne Panton
Mr. David C. Wight

The Speaker: The results of the division: 15 Ayes, [zero] Noes and 3 absentees. For completeness, the Anti-Sexual Harassment Bill, 2025 is duly passed.

Agreed: the Anti-Sexual Harassment Bill, 2025 was given a third reading and passed.

GRAND COURT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Attorney General.

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Grand Court (Amendment) Bill, 2025 be given a third reading and passed.

The Speaker: The question is that the Grand Court (Amendment) Bill, 2025 be given a third reading and passed. All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Grand Court (Amendment) Bill, 2025 was given a third reading and passed.

**CRIMINAL PROCEDURE
(AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025**

The Speaker: I recognise that Honourable Attorney General.

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2025 being given a third reading and passed.

The Speaker: The question is that a Bill shortly entitled the Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2025 be given a third reading and passed. All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2025 was given a third reading and passed.

MOTIONS

**Government Motion No. 6 of 2024-2025 –
Public Consultation on the proposed amendments
to the Immigration (Transition) Act (2022 Revision)
set out in the Immigration (Transition)
Discussion White Paper
[Withdrawn]**

The Speaker: I have received notice from the Honourable Minister that he wishes to withdraw this Motion. I invite him to now do so.

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We see the lateness of the hour.

Mr. Speaker, upon further consideration, I withdraw the Motion for the Immigration Discussion White Paper. I've spoken on this sufficiently and provided all the information necessary for the public and Members to consider what is being proposed. I believe it's a bit redundant to do so again today. I ask that persons seek out the published document and participate in the consultation exercise accordingly, so that the Government can be informed about moving important immigration-related matters forward.

Mr. Speaker, I believe there is useful information in the document on work permit reform; specialist caregivers; job adverts; status and permanent residency and slowing down thereof; marriage; efforts to clarify "native Caymanian", and increasing penalties for job hopping.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

The Speaker: The question is that Government Motion No. 6 of 2024-2025 be withdrawn. All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Government Motion No. 6 of 2024-2025 is withdrawn.

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour: Mr. Speaker, although it was withdrawn, I want to thank the members of staff in the Ministry: Senior Policy Officer, Ms. Rolna DaCosta; Acting Chief Officer, Ms. Danielle Roberts; and Director, Mr. Jeremy Scott for all their hard work. Thank you.

**Government Motion No. 9 of 2024-2025 –
Motion to Amend the Parliament Standing Orders
(2024 Revision)**

The Speaker: I recognise the Honourable Attorney General.

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move Government Motion No. 9 of 2024-2025, Motion to amend Parliament Standing Orders (2024 Revision).

The Speaker: Honourable Attorney General, would you proceed to read the Motion, please?

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Motion is—

WHEREAS Section 71(1) of the Cayman Islands Constitution Order 2009, as amended, provides that "Subject to this Constitution, the Parliament may from time to time make, amend and revoke Standing Orders for the regulation and orderly conduct of its own proceedings and the dispatch of business, and for the passing, intituling and numbering of Bills and for their presentation to the Governor for assent."

AND WHEREAS the Parliamentary Standing Orders have never been reviewed and amended in their entirety since they came into effect in September 1976;

AND WHEREAS a Standing Orders Working Group (SOWG), was convened by the Honourable Speaker on 26th January, 2022 to consider and propose amendments to the Parliament Standing Orders (2024 Revision);

AND WHEREAS the SOWG was comprised of:

- Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin – Honourable Speaker/Chairman;
- Hon. McKeever Bush, Member of Parliament/Past Chairman;
- Hon. Katherine Ebanks-Wilks, Member of Parliament/Past Chairman;
- Hon. Samuel Bulgin, Attorney General;

- **Mrs. Zena Merren-Chin, Clerk of Parliament;**
- **Ms. Cheryl Neblett, First Legislative Counsel;**
- **Mr. Garfield Ellison, Chief Parliamentary Advisor;**
- **Ms. Twila Escalante, Deputy Clerk;**
- **Ms. Nordra Walcott, Assistant Clerk;**

AND WHEREAS the SOWG met a total of 27 times and has produced draft revised Parliament Standing Orders;

AND WHEREAS the Standing Orders Committee, being a committee of the whole House, met on Monday, 3rd February, 2025 to consider the SOWG draft Parliament Standing Orders 2025;

AND WHEREAS following deliberation and amendments to the SOWG draft Standing Orders, the Standing Orders Committee agreed that the attached draft Parliamentary Standing Orders 2025 be reported to the House in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 87.

BE IT NOW RESOLVED THAT this Honourable House adopts the draft Parliament Standing Orders 2025 as the Standing Orders of the Parliament to come into force on the 28th February, 2025.

The Speaker: The Motion has been duly moved. Does the Honourable Attorney General wish to speak thereto?

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I wish to do so briefly.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed Amendment to the Parliament Standing Orders seek to modernise and develop more appropriate and contemporary procedures for the House of Parliament. The timing of these amendments is most fitting in light of the fact that this Parliament is now autonomous, since 2020. Accordingly, the proposed Parliament Standing Orders, 2025 is aimed principally at giving effect to modern and more up-to-date parliamentary practices and procedures.

Mr. Speaker, among other things, consideration has been given to section 71 of the Constitution of the Cayman Islands relating to Standing Orders committee in embarking on this initiative. The original Standing Orders came into being on about 1976 and has only had mostly minor amendments along the way since then.

Mr. Speaker, in order to put this in some sort of historical perspective, we initiated this process to amend the Standing Orders dating back some fifteen years or so. Past, and some present Members of this House, have visited various jurisdictions in an attempt to observe, adopt, and model what would be fit-for-purpose to our Parliament, with appropriate modifications where necessary. We believe, sir, that these proposed changes, whilst of course not perfect, represent a significant step in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, the Standing Orders Working Group was established to research Standing Orders and tasked with drafting appropriate amendments for the Parliament. As you heard earlier on, it was comprised of yourself; the Attorney General, (myself); the Honourable McKeever Bush, the Honourable Katherine Ebanks-Wilks; the Clerk of Parliament, Mrs. Zena Merren-Chin; the Deputy Clerk, Ms. Twila Escalante; the Assistant Clerk, Ms. Nordra Walcott; Ms. Tasha Porter; First Legislative Counsel, Ms. Cheryl Neblett; and Chief Parliamentary Advisor, Mr. Garfield Ellison.

Mr. Speaker, to arrive at this juncture, the steering group had a total of some twenty-seven meetings starting in January 2023, sir. The group basically adopted two approaches—firstly, to find gaps in the current Standing Orders, and thereafter to consider how parliaments in other jurisdictions address these similar issues recognising, of course, that each jurisdiction is unique. While being guided by what happens in those jurisdictions, we have drafted provisions that of course would reflect the Cayman Islands' position.

Mr. Speaker, we have incorporated new Standing Orders and carefully ensured that the initiative would not become too onerous or cumbersome for honourable Members of this House. The material changes, and the newly incorporated proposed Standing Orders, will be explained to Members in a sort of succinct summary way.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed Amendment is comprised of fourteen Parts.

Part 1, Mr. Speaker, contains orders 1 to 3, and deals with things such as citation and application of Standing Orders, as well as definitions.

Order 1 provides that this Order may be cited as the Parliament Standing Orders, 2025.

Order 2 stipulates that the Presiding Officer is responsible for rulings and that there is the ability to rely on the House of Commons on any matter not provided for in our Standing Orders.

Order 3 contains new key terms and definitions thereof, such as "Business Committee", "publish", "Business Paper", "Chairperson", "Hansard", "Order Paper", "Parliamentary precincts" and "Presiding Officer".

Part 2 of the proposed Standing Orders contains orders 4 to 10 and deals with Members of the House, Oath and Affirmation, permission to be absent and the use of English Language during proceedings and debate.

Order 8 provides that the Speaker may grant permission to a Member to be absent from the House if the Member is ill, or is absent due to family causes, or for personal nature; and for the Member to attend public business, as well. It now further prescribes (and the word "prescribes" there is what is used in the Constitution) that if, without the written leave of the Speaker, a Member is absent from the House for two consecutive Meetings, that Member shall, unless the Member satisfies the Speaker that such absence was

unavoidable, vacate his or her seat in the House pursuant to section 63(b) of the Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, Part 3 of the proposed amendments of the Standing Orders contains orders 11 to 19 and deals with meetings, sittings and adjournments of the House.

Order 11 is proposing that the House shall sit on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, and every adjournment shall be to the next sitting day unless a Motion is moved to adjourn to a particular day.

Order 14 stipulates that the House shall begin at 2pm and shall end at 8pm.

Order 15 provides for Fixed Recess so that the House will not be held from the first week of July to the first week of September in any year, unless it is for urgent and extraordinary matters.

Mr. Speaker, Part 4 of the proposed amendments of the Standing Orders contains orders 20 to 30 which deal with Business of the House.

Order 21 stipulates that the Order Papers are to be circulated by 10am before each sitting of the House. Mr. Speaker, of course, the 10am there contemplates that the House is going to meet at 2, so the Paper will be circulated early.

Order 26 requires that within 21 days of the return to the Islands from attending a parliamentary event, a Member or the head of the delegation, shall prepare a report to be presented to the House on the activities of the delegation. Mr. Speaker, again, you are aware that Members from time to time attend the CPA [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association] meetings; what this is requiring is that on such occasions then a report will be made to the House so that Members will be informed of what transpired.

Order 28 offers a time limit of ten (10) minutes for "personal explanations".

Order 29 provides a time limit of twenty (20) minutes which has been added for a Member of Government making a statement in the House, with the approval of Cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, Part 5 of the proposed amendments to the Standing Orders contains orders 31 to 38 which addresses matters concerning questions.

Order 32, a new provision, provides the opportunity that questions may be put to the Premier relating to current matters of national importance or on the general performance of the Government during Premier's Question Time. The Premier Question Time is slated for every Wednesday during a Meeting of the House for a period of 30 minutes.

Order 33 allows for urgent questions to be asked on the ground of public interest by any member, for a period of 15 minutes.

Order 36 prohibits Members from publishing Parliamentary Questions (PQs) before the Presiding Officer's approval and also prohibits the publication of answers to PQs before they are given on the Floor of the House.

Mr. Speaker, Part 6 contains orders 39 to 48 which deals with public business of the House.

Order 42 now considers period notice clearly stated in number of "business days". Mr. Speaker, this really clarifies some of the confusion surrounding the computation of time and what is business days, working days, weekends and so on. This now clarifies the notice periods exactly.

Order 48 requires Cabinet to provide and Table a report on its decision on every Private Members' Motion passed by the House which necessitates action on national policy issues. Again, sir, it is not unusual for this House to pass Motions which are sent to a particular ministry or portfolio that should conduct the subject matter, and nothing further is heard of the Motion. This is requiring that, where the Motion is passed, and transmitted to the relevant ministry or portfolio, there will be a report made back to Parliament to clarify what took place.

Mr. Speaker, Part 7 contains orders 49 to 57 and addresses rules of debate.

Order 49 allows for Members to use appropriate visual aids to illustrate a point being made during speeches, subject to approval of the Presiding Officer. It also stipulates a Member shall, before participating in consideration of any item of business in the House in which the Member has a financial interest, disclose the extent of that interest and recuse himself or herself from the consideration of the item of business.

Order 51 [SIC] clearly outlines the framework in which matters of sub-judice may arise. It prohibits Members from raising or pursuing matters which relate to active legal proceedings unless the Presiding Officer is satisfied, otherwise. That is, unless the Presiding Officer is satisfied that any discussion that takes place in respect of the matter is not likely to, in any way, prejudice the Hearing before the Court.

Mr. Speaker, Part 8 contains orders 58 and 59 which covers enforcement of orders.

Order 59 states that any personal remuneration or allowance to which a Member is entitled as a Member of Parliament shall cease in respect of the period of his or her suspension.

Mr. Speaker, Part 9 includes orders 60 and 61 that deal with voting.

Part 10 contains orders 62 to 77 which encompass public bills.

Part 11 covers orders 78 to 80 which deal with private bills.

Part 12 contains orders 81 to 88 and deals with financial procedures.

Part 13 contains orders 89 to 102 which deal with select committees.

Mr. Speaker, I must just point out that these are areas where there are no material changes to the existing Standing Orders.

Order 96 creates a business committee with its remit outlined therein. Its determination must be published and circulated on the Order Paper.

Mr. Speaker, Part 14 is a general provision which, among other things, includes orders 103 to 112 and contemplates suspension and amending of the Standing Orders, general authority of the Speaker and allowing Members to attend Parliament virtually in exceptional circumstances. We saw the utility of this during COVID-19 where, due to seating restrictions stipulated by legislation, not all Members could be accommodated within the Chambers because of the fact that we were required to keep certain distances. However, some Members were able to participate in the proceedings remotely via *Zoom*.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, there are justified reasons and procedural imperatives for the Cayman Islands' Parliament to enact this comprehensive and fit-for-purpose Standing Orders.

Mr. Speaker, transitioning to this modernised Standing Orders will not be such a sea change for our Members of Parliament, as some of them were already aware and involved in most of these parliamentary procedures and practices. Accordingly, in some instances this is merely a codification of the existing arrangement.

Mr Speaker, it is hoped that these proposed amendments to the Standing Orders will offer the desired and intended ease with the effective and efficient operation of the parliament proceedings. I clearly wish to commend the proposed amendments of the Standing Orders to this honourable House and to thank the Standing Orders Working Group for their steadfastness, commitment and professionalism.

Mr. Speaker, it is now being proposed that you waive the 12 days' notice under the Standing Orders and if so done, that this Parliament now adopts the proposed amendments to the Standing Orders.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Attorney General. I waived the notice requirement some days back, and it was noted on the Motion. Does any other Member wish to speak? The Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, beg your indulgence.

[Pause]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give some contributions because I think it is important that it's noted in history because like we say, the wish for perfection is the death of good.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: Something like that. It's late.

Mr. Speaker, I know you have worked very, very hard over your two decades in this honourable House, and it is definitely time for us to proceed with a

more improved, efficient, up to date manner of doing the people's work. Though there are some things in here that, in my mind, may cause much "hoopla" in the public domain, Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that we note that the acceptance of some of these amendments will have to come with some behavioural changes moving forward.

Most notable is the fact that we are moving forward now to a three-day week in Parliament. Normally, if we have to do a long Sitting of the House, the Premier would ask not to sit on a Tuesday because of Cabinet, and then we would work Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and, if any urgent matter, Saturdays, and these new Standing Orders highlight three days. I don't want it to be said that we are trying to reduce the amount of work that we do. I think it's important that these Standing Orders go along with additional behaviour of more time in this House doing the necessary things for the people we work for.

Mr. Speaker, it is also important to recognise that the hours will be amended; rather than starting normally at 10a.m., we will be starting at 2p.m. and going into the very wee hours. Now, there are some benefits to that, Mr. Speaker, particularly, from the perspective whereas the Government and the Opposition can get their documents, the administrative matters, prepared for the day's work, have lunch and be ready fresh at two o'clock to deal with matters and go into the hours of 8p.m. and beyond.

Our listening public—our most valued customers and the people we work for—may have an opportunity to watch the proceedings in the evening, but I must say that it may place a hamper on our gallery. Many people come to the gallery to watch live, in action, [something] other jurisdictions do not normally have because their parliaments are so large. If we start doing work in the evening most times, it could be good or bad in respect to our gallery attendance.

Mr. Speaker, some of the other changes in these Standing Orders, which is the House of Parliament's Bible, so to those newcomers who are trying to get inside here—I know *unna* got an uphill battle to do it—this is the Bible. I remember the Honourable Arden McLean said to me, "*make sure you read it*". This will be the new Bible.

Mr. Speaker, although the civil service arm, the Acting Deputy Governor, is not here to hear this, I think it's important that it goes in the Hansards of this honourable House, because we are introducing new elements that will need the necessary support staff, particularly to the Honourable Premier and Ministers, [such as] when we talk about trying to duplicate [processes] that happen in the UK. I know those who love the political arena, and being able to monitor what's happening in this Parliament, are going to be excited...

Forgive me, Mr. Speaker, I just want to find the section on Minister and Premier Question Time...

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: Section 32—thank you Madam Premier. Section 32.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The proposed Standing Orders that we are about to approve proposes that Question Time for the Premier will be on Wednesdays during a meeting, of the House there shall be a Premier's Question Time at a time designated on the Order Paper. During the Premier's question time, questions may be put with or without notice to the Premier relating to current matters of national importance.

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier, I think you are reading from the presentation we did on Monday, but in light of the issues that were raised, about the need for notice, the draft Standing Orders which we circulated, I think it was yesterday or the day before—

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Yes; it went to all Members electronically. It contained a provision for notice. We took on board the concerns that were raised, and I hope we've managed to address all of them. It was sent by email to all Members, along with the Motion. I checked.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I trust that you're a man of great detail, so I will not question you. I was not even trying to get into the details of the question time, but more so the fact that there was going to be a question time without notice. I'm glad it has been amended, because it would be truly unfair, in this profession of politics, that you would put the leader of the country in such a situation, without notice as to what they are going to be talking about. It would be a recipe for disaster, so I'm happy to hear that it will be amended.

Mr. Speaker, while discussing the new Bible of the Parliament, we do recognise that support staff will be necessary to assist, particularly through the Parliament and the Executive within the government building, and some of those staff may have to be contracted, because they get very political in nature. The other part that I would also highlight, Mr. Speaker, that I think would be prudent, if the Attorney General (AG) hasn't said so already, is that these Standing Orders don't come into effect—Well, they can't come into effect until after the election, anyway.

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier, the 28th of February. For them to be made by this House, they have to come before the House is dissolved. It wouldn't have any impact on us who are currently here, but they will take effect before the next group of Parliamentarians comes in.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker for the clarity. I was recognising that, as I recognise that this would be the last Sitting of the House, at least for this group; but as I assess there is going to be about 80 percent of us back.

[Crosstalk]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: That's why I said 80 per cent. Mr. Speaker, with the Lord's help and blessing and the good voters of the Cayman Islands.

Mr. Speaker, I also think it's important to put in the Hansards that the Clerk, and whoever the new Speaker may be—and it might be you; that the necessary finances will have to be increased for the rest of the administration after April 30th. You have a budget allocated to the end of this year. We have to be prepared to do that because, if you are going to change the operations of this honourable House in order for it to be efficient, the first question is *where are the resources for it?* I think it's important that we highlight that, not only here at the Parliament, but also the Executive at the Government Building.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: Also, space—thank you, Madam Premier.

As you are aware, Mr. Speaker, as the Minister for Ports, we temporarily have control of the Crown property behind the House of Parliament. I know that the Standing House Committee has been working hard on trying to transition to expansions of the Parliament, which has been necessary since before I got here. I remember, when I was your Personal Assistant, sneaking and overhearing some of the conversations you had—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: It is gone now, so I am allowed to say it now. Expansions were needed since then, so I think it's important that we recognise, the next set of Members and, if we are ever so lucky to be here, that we are prepared to address the issue of the land behind—Now, I don't want to put it on record to take away the Craft Market, but there's enough land that we can share, to expand.

I know the Clerk and her team have been working hard to design something so that we can have some more office space, because this is where many people come to see Members of the Opposition, Members of Government and other parliamentary matters.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: Yes; thank you, Madam Premier.

The other important part is that any good Parliament will have a library stocked with the appropriate

legal, conventional books for parliamentary proceedings, and the resources to have it available; particularly, because I remember that when I first got here, it was not the easiest thing in the world to get access to much of the knowledge of conventions within Parliament. I was so happy that I was able to train on parliamentary trips; but, having training courses and so forth available here, on campus, would be great for newcomers, because we're not always going to be here. There's gonna be somebody else who comes and, rightfully, takes the next space.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: As well as research staff—thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'll move on from the expansion of the Parliament itself, to another area you were successful in getting into the Standing Orders which I was very pleased about. Namely, a mandatory process for persons who travel—on the public purse, I dare say; to get knowledge through conferences, et cetera.

Let me say it, because I think it's important that the listening audience understands. We have something called the Parliamentary...

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). Thank you, it is a long day.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (the CPA), through which every Member is allowed to expand their knowledge on democracy. We work together with other jurisdictions training, and updating, even things like our Parliament Bible. Such training helps us, and these Standing Orders now mandates that it's not just a trip to Jolly Old England or wherever. You don't keep the knowledge to yourself; you have to do a report and bring it to Parliament—because we can't send everybody.

In CPA practice, we will select a Member from Opposition or Government, whether it should be a woman or a man or a Minister or a Member of Opposition or somebody who is in the Public Accounts Committee, depending on the conference that we are attending to expand our knowledge. However, when they go, they get all the knowledge and don't always commit to coming back and sharing it with everybody else. The new Standing Orders will mandate a report so we can get more value for money for those trips, so I'm happy that you accomplished that, Mr. Speaker.

There is another provision that the AG is going to enlighten me about, so I crave your indulgence just for two seconds, Mr. Speaker.

[Pause]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, forgive me. I'm a poor man. Something that triggered me when I heard it, and I know it may cause controversy, but I want to hear about it, was the ability to stop Members salary.

Number nine. Any person who is suspended... Now, you know that Jay goin' misbehave. Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's good that we go over why he was suspended because I remember, and it was an interesting one. Yeah.

Any personal remuneration or allowance to which a Member is entitled as a Member, ceases in respect of the period of his or her suspension. I don't know if it is convention, but I think it would be pleasing for those in the public to know, that this would be the first provision through which we can hold Members of this honourable House accountable. Now, I have no intentions of misbehaving, those days are behind me, sir, so you won't be able to take my money; but it's another level of holding accountable because I remember, Mr. Speaker, that some Members wanted to get suspended just so they didn't have nothing to do. I don't think so many people would want to get suspended now.

Those are some points, Mr. Speaker, that I found interesting because I think you see that I'm very interested in the Bible, the Standing Orders, of this Honourable House because I plan to come back, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't talk about when you miss Parliament intentionally, because we've seen some of that this term, trying to get away from certain votes and so forth, but whether their salary should be ceased is another question. I think the good news, sir, is that, like we said, the pursuit of perfection is the death of good. Is that how it goes?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier: Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good. All right, got it. Same principle, so we started somewhere.

The reason I'm going close with that, Mr. Speaker, is for this honourable House to remember that we are transitioning to something new. No Standing Orders are the same in any jurisdiction, so it doesn't mean it is gonna be automatically right. In my humble opinion, we have to do a period of at least one year assessing whether the changes are truly most-fitting for our jurisdiction.

I love the idea of a Premier being able to answer tough questions and holding them to account, but it doesn't necessarily mean it is gonna work in the Cayman context. We've seen examples of it in other jurisdictions— and I'm just using that as one example, so we got to be mindful, ready to make any amendments, if it doesn't go the best way that we see it. I can give a prime example of a law that didn't work too well, and boy, now we're fighting so hard to get it changed. I think

we all know which Bill it is, that we all thought was going to be amazing. I am not allowed to say it here.

With that being said, I just want to say congratulations, Mr. Speaker, because I think this is another one you can add to your long list of accomplishments. If indeed you just go off and do some farming and never come back to this crazy House, you can say, *“At least I left it with an updated guide document to rule the House of Democracy appropriately.”* Another notch on your belt—congratulations.

I'm happy to say that I'm here to be able to assist in the process of modernising it, for whoever the next nineteen honourable Members of this House may be.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Deputy Premier. Does anyone else wish to speak? the honourable Member for West Bay Central.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, Elected Member for West Bay Central: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be very brief.

Much of what I wanted to elaborate on in relation to the amended Standing Orders the Honourable Deputy Premier has just done, so I would only like to say congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, on this enormous accomplishment. I know exactly how difficult this task was, and I am pleased to have been a part of the journey along with the amazing staff of Parliament. I know they've all been listed but, again, no harm in recalling their names. I'm not going to do so because it would take a long time, and I know we're trying to get out of here; but Miss Cheryl Neblett, as well. I know you mentioned it in the committee room, but she worked extensively along with the Parliament staff.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say two things quickly. I know the Deputy Premier touched on the set recess. We've seen, through visiting other parliaments, how important it is for precincts upgrades but, also, what it does for the Parliament. Staff members of Parliament, and also civil servants, can now properly plan their lives knowing that there is a set recess. Lastly, you touched on the budget. I just want to say, and put it on record, that in order for us to continue to modernise our Parliament as it evolves, any government needs to not only budget for continued operation, but be very generous in what they allocate for Parliament.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I say congratulations again. I think it is a very good time and day for the Cayman Islands to have modernised Standing Orders.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be brief.

Mr. Speaker, I, too, rise to congratulate all of those who were involved in getting us to this point.

Mr. Speaker, the Standing Orders we've been operating under, and at this time I have to reminisce about Mr. Mclean, the former representative for East End, who constantly, constantly, begged and advocated for the updating of the Standing Orders, which are some 49 years old, and to say thank you to your good self, for picking up the mantle. I know there were other chairpersons, and we thank them, also, for their efforts before then in ensuring that these Standing Orders were able to get here this evening, before the end of the term, if you call it that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to say, and I don't even know how I ended up here, but in 2013 I was elected with the last group of multi-member constituents under your leadership, sir.

In 2017, I was elected, along with the first group of single Member constituents under your leadership, sir, and by your grace, you invited me to join you and travel to the United Kingdom to seek to modernise our Constitution. That will, certainly, continue to be a highlight in my political career. I mentioned a few weeks ago how, sitting in the room there, negotiating the modernisation of our Constitution and looking at the Wi Fi and seeing “Churchill's War Room” gave me goose bumps. I also want to thank you for that opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I say all of that not to talk about me, but to say that the country owes you a debt— even more than a Knighthood, in my opinion; for all that you have done throughout your career. I'm still hopeful that this is not the end of your political career, but to this point, Mr. Speaker, myself, personally, express gratitude for having the opportunity to share the last, almost twelve years, with you.

On behalf of the Official Opposition, I thank you, and once again, also thank all those who were involved. Whoever the next class of parliamentarians after the April 30th election, I hope that they will understand and appreciate the hard work and determination, the dedication, that was put into giving them a modern Parliament with a modern set of Standing Orders.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

Mr. André M. Ebanks, Elected Member for West Bay South: Good evening, Mr. Speaker.

I rise very briefly to say that it is exquisite work to modernise the Standing Orders, the way in which it's been compiled over many, many, many months. It started off with my colleague, the Member for West Bay Central, as the past Chair and to see its sustained effort, I can certainly understand why you would not have wanted it to pass through.

The Speaker: Just for completeness, because I believe in giving everybody credit who deserves it.

It was actually started by honourable MP McKeeva Bush who, although we only had one meeting—

[Laughter]

The Speaker: I don't mean that in any derogatory way; he passed the burden, or the baton, to the Honourable Attorney General and Ms. Cheryl Neblett and they started the work. Subsequently, MP Wilks was able to pick it up, and then I picked it up; so, this is a truly collaborative effort.

Mr. André M. Ebanks: It's good to have that chronology and to see it evolve. All those reasons support, even more, why it's good to have pressed to get it over the line now, and not let it wait, because then you don't know what would have happened.

I like the 2 to 8pm time. I have not seen a start, right bang on 10am, so hopefully, it will bode well that we will start right at 2pm and not at 5pm. That should be the hope, so it should remove the reason for the lateness. It will be interesting to see how that pans out.

[Laughter]

Mr. André M. Ebanks: That would be good.

While we're having lighter moments, our historic Business Committee Meeting, last business committee. I triple-checked before making my press statements and the Leader of the Opposition made similar statements because Business Committee, and I just double checked before I rose again, with a word search, is mentioned once in the existing Bible, and I think it's under 14. That's it. There's no other mention of Business Committee in the standing Orders whatsoever. No definition, whatsoever. I checked—well, all of us have.

I give credit to all of this Parliament, I think everybody's read the Standing Orders backwards and forwards. I could see it in all of our practices but, certainly, before I made that statement, I still saw no reference to Business Committee except once, so it's good to see very clear definitions. It's good to not just be right, but to *get it right*, and now that it's right, I think it's bolted on clearly, in the Standing Orders, how it should transpire going forward.

With that, Mr. Speaker, for us to have a modernised Parliament "Bible", to use your words, I think the next group should actually try to modernise the Parliament facility itself.

[Desk thumping]

Mr. André M. Ebanks: I'm not sure Westminster is the best example. They've been trying to fix their Parliament for a very long time, but it would be good to have research offices, modernise the Parliament. In some Parliaments, the legislative drafters are in situ in Parliament. Now seeing things from this side, for the Opposition, when you're doing your Committee Stage Amendments and you don't have access... It would be really good to have legislative council staff.

I think that's the next iteration but, certainly, this is a good note on which to end this final Meeting of the term, to leave and have it come in on the 28th of February and be ready for the next cohort, so congratulations to the entire chronology, and congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker. It's very, very, well done.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? [Pause] Does any other Member wish to speak? [Pause] The honourable Member from Bodden Town West.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. As I mentioned to you in an earlier debate, I think you have clearly left your fingerprints on the development of our democracy.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: I want you to cry. I want to see you cry.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Yeah.

Mr. Speaker, as I've said before, I guess one of my political regrets, and I don't have many, but to some extent, I wish I had an opportunity to work with you. I have come to admire your tenacity, your resolve, even when we disagree—and I can say one thing to the public: Disagreeing with the Speaker is not the best side to be because you normally are gonna end up losing, but nonetheless, it is something that you come to admire in politics.

I know many people started this process, but I'm glad to see you take it over the finish line. I know that, while the public has thanked you, and you have received your thanks in the past for the work that you did with the Constitution, which is the highest document in the land, I once again want to repeat it for the public—they need to recognise it.

Prior to the 2009 Constitution that we have, both the Legislative Assembly, now Parliament, and the Cabinet, were advisory in nature—the entire power rested in the Governor. Due to the efforts of the Speaker, and many other Caymanians, in terms of modernising the Constitution, we have a Constitution right now that allows the Caymanian people to decide more of our destiny and—except for those three areas in Section 55 of the Constitution that are reserved for the Governor—much is reserved for us. I think that, in itself, is a big step in moving away from our colonial past and helping our own people to decide their own destiny.

Being it is Bob Marley's Day, and considering the words he once said, *every man has a right to decide his own destiny and in this [judgement], there is no partiality*. Hence, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people that I am privileged and humble to represent, I want to thank

you for your contribution to this country, and highlight the fact that you made your contribution during the prime of your life; so, I always refer to you, as a "Prime Premier". You know, you didn't wait until you got old and dilapidated and your brain dried out and you used up all your thing there, and you made all your money and got bored. You decided to come serve the people of this country. You gave the people of this country the best years of your life, and for that, I am forever grateful.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to take the time to thank the Parliament staff. I know they do a thankless job to some extent, and we don't give them thanks and praise as much as we should. I really hope that in this process, as we modernise the Parliament, we also take a look at the remuneration and salary scales of the Parliament staff because, at the end of the day, we will be asking much from them. We need to modernise it also. In a previous address,

I raised the issue in terms of some of the differences between the Parliament and the court as institutions as part of the separation of powers. As we look to modernise the Parliament, please take the time to spend the money to modernise the staff and pay them properly, because people need to understand that if we don't have the right staff here, being paid the right salary. This is where the laws originate, so you don't want to get it wrong.

On behalf of the people I represent, I want to thank you, Ms. Zena, and your staff, for all the contributions and assistance—and all the stress that we have given you, because let me tell you... I know it's not easy. I just want you to know it has not gone unnoticed. It is greatly appreciated.

To my colleagues, I am glad to see that everyone agreed that this step was necessary in terms of modernising the Standing Orders. As the Honourable Leader of the Opposition said, it is something that my good friend Arden McLean from East End wanted for many years; I'm happy to see it come to light while he can still appreciate it—and there are other people. North Side's Ezzard Miller wanted something similar, and I know other parliamentarians also, who passed through these hallowed halls.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I want to say thanks for your work and thank everyone for their approval in moving us forward.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? *[Pause]* Does any other Member wish to speak? The Honourable Minister of Labour and many other things.

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I briefly want to thank you and the team for all the work. This has been talked about for some time now. I think we have Members sitting in the House today, who weren't born in 1976. I see some of them looking at me right now.

As has been said, the Ministers have some support from their Ministries, but when you are on the back bench, if you have ever sat on the back bench of the Government, or even in the Opposition, or even as a Parliamentary Secretary, you don't necessarily have the support that you need. We need to advance our politics in Cayman, and stop dumbing it down. I'm thankful. I think amending the Standing Orders is advancing politics in Cayman.

My only reason for standing up is to state my dismay, and I know that the Attorney General knows what I'm talking about, in terms of the length of time that persons are allowed to debate. I think the two hours that are set out in the Standing Orders should have been cut down to at least one hour.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour: I thought it should have been cut down to one hour because I stand in this House for some time now, having been elected first in 2009, when we represented everyone in our districts, rather than single-member constituencies.

The reason I say that is because I see people struggling, stretching it, or sometimes even repeating, just to make the two hours. Sometimes is like some persons want to prove that they can actually do two hours, and the Speaker has to say your time is almost up or you only have five minutes left. It's like it is a victory for them and they can pump their chest.

I think that we waste each other's time here by speaking so long. We need to be concise and try to get out of here as quickly as possible and try to do the people's business as efficiently as possible and get to the People's work. I mean, we don't get elected in Parliament nor the administration [building]; we get elected in our districts and as the elected Member for Bodden Town West always says, the MP is more important.

Mr. Speaker, with those short words stating my dismay, in terms of the allotted time that we speak in here... I think sometimes we don't realise that the public is listening and they want to hear someone else, too, they don't just wanna hear one person for two hours. If you ever listen to Radio Cayman when they rebroadcast it, just hearing one person, "*Oh, he's still on.*" Some people say, "*Oh boy, that one is so boring. I cannot wait till XYZ comes on.*"

Having said that, thank you for the work you all have done, especially the staff here. They work hard and many people don't know all the work they do. Likewise, the civil service—and likewise, I thank the Honourable Attorney General for bringing this. I don't even know if you knew that you were bringing it this week and in quick stead.

Thank you all. God-bless.

The Speaker: Does anyone else wish to speak? *[Pause]* Does anyone else wish to speak? *[Pause]* Does anyone else wish to speak? *[Pause]* If not I will

ask the Honourable Attorney General to wind up the debate on the Motion.

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the most difficult task to do, even though it is late. It is very pleasing to hear the appreciation, if you will, of honourable Members, Mr. Speaker, in the effort to get us to this stage where we will have a modern set of Standing Orders to aid and assist the delivery in this Parliament. It can only augur well for efficiency, Mr. Speaker.

Before I go any further, let me just recognise the effort of the Honourable Premier. There was a time when she was Speaker and was also Chair of one of the sub-working groups and made significant input into where we are, Mr. Speaker, including getting some of the updated constitutional provisions into the Standing Orders. Like most of us, Mr. Speaker, her fingerprints are also over these documents, and I really want to thank her for her efforts in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, the best way to describe your effort in all of this, and what has been said so far is to describe you as a Colossus, really. You have left an indelible mark on just about every institution. I know that much has been said, but it is worth repeating, Mr. Speaker, so we thank you for your guidance, your insight—your stewardship, in this effort.

Mr. Speaker, just to touch on a couple of things that were highlighted. The Honourable Deputy Premier made observations as it relates to the adequacy of resources. Of course, Mr. Speaker, for all of this to make sense—modern Standing Orders, modern way of thinking—it presupposes that there will be appropriate resources allocated to the Parliament for the business to be conducted efficiently. I hasten to say, though, that Members should bear in mind that it is within the gift of the Members of this House to ensure the adequacy of those resources.

There is a process called the budget, the Appropriation, and it is entirely within Members' gift to make it quite clear that there is a particular line item, as it relates to Parliament resources, so Members should bear in mind that it is within their gift. I certainly would encourage and support it being done, so that there are no excuses for not having pagers; not having high-speed internet—proper facilities. I think it is a bit archaic to have this desk running all the way here, without any break in between, Mr. Speaker. Simple things like that, you know. You have to be walking behind Members to get in and out. Simple things, like those logistical issues are things that need to be addressed in this Parliament; but Mr. Speaker, it is within the gifts of Members to make sure that it happens, so I'm confident that it will.

As it relates to the Standing Orders, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Deputy Premier also mentioned periodic review. If it doesn't work, you need to come back and have a look at them. It is true, Mr. Speaker. The current Standing Order 86, for what it is

worth, makes it quite clear that any of these Standing Orders may be suspended at any time, for a specific purpose, by the consent of the majority of the Members of this House so, again, it is within Members' gift, if something is not working, to revisit it, Mr. Speaker and tweak it in a way that makes it fit for purpose.

The 2p.m. start, I think, is a modern way of going about this, Mr. Speaker. It allows Members, Ministers, for example, to be able to deal with ministerial matters from whenever, until Parliament is ready to convene. It also allows Members who are not Ministers, but have constituency matters that they wish to deal with—

[Inaudible interjection]

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: Cayman Brac being the exception, thank you. Thank you, Premier, to attend to constituency office matters prior to coming to the Parliament. It allows for good planning, Mr. Speaker. You plan your diary accordingly, so I think it's a win-win, if I might describe it that way, sir.

Recess [or] vacation, Mr. Speaker, also allows for forward planning. Members can book vacation ahead of time with their family. They know there is a particular period within which the House should not be sitting and therefore they can book, get an early flight, "early birds" cheap fares, if I might put it that way.

Mr. Speaker, I am also attracted by the Honourable Member for West Bay South's idea about the possibility of having legislative council on hand and available to Members of the House—not just to the Government, but to all Members. In a contemporary society, it shouldn't be falling on Members to struggle with their own Committee Stage Amendments, among other things. I certainly will support that sort of initiative and ensure they are available.

Mr. Speaker, I think we are at a good place. I think it is trending in the right direction. With these new sets of Standing Orders, clearly, there is much to be proud of. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that there will be a time when some of the provisions would have outlived their usefulness and be ready and ripe for review, but certainly not for another 40-odd years, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I would like to thank you; the honourable Members; past Chairs—the Honourable Premier, the Honourable Katherine Ebanks-Wilks, Honourable McKeeva Bush, and others, for their stewardship and leadership in all of this, Mr. Speaker. I am certainly happy—I'm anticipating that it will be approved, but I'm certainly happy that we have arrived at this juncture, and that we will be able to have a new set of Standing Orders going forward and that the next term of Parliament will, certainly, start on the right note as it relates to that.

Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: The question is Government Motion No. 9 of 2024-2025, entitled Motion to Amend the Parliament's Standing Orders (2024 Revision).

WHEREAS Section 71 (1) of the Cayman Islands Constitution Order 2009, as amended, provides that “Subject to this Constitution, the Parliament may from time to time make, amend and revoke Standing Orders for the regulation and orderly conduct of its own proceedings and the dispatch of business, and for the passing, intituling and numbering of Bills and for their presentation to the Governor for assent.”;

BE IT NOW RESOLVED that this Honourable House adopts the draft Parliament Standing Orders 2025 as the Standing Orders of the Parliament to come into force on the 28th of February 2025.

Those in favour, please say Aye, those against, No.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Government Motion No. 9 of 2024-2025 passed.

The Speaker: This honourable House has adopted the Draft Parliament Standing Orders 2025 as the Standing Orders of the Parliament to come into force on the 28th of February, 2025.

God save the King.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Honourable Members, colleagues, I cannot thank you all enough for your cooperation, your insight and your valuable contributions to helping us get to this point. I know they have been thanked before, but the members I had the good fortune to work with over the course of the last almost two years, in getting this work done, I truly cannot thank them enough.

The Honourable McKeeva Bush, the Honourable Katherine Ebanks-Wilks, the Honourable Samuel Bulgin, Attorney General; Mrs Zena Merren-Chin, the Clerk of the Parliament; Ms. Cheryl Neblett, First Legislative Council; Mr. Garfield Ellison, Chief Parliamentary Advisor; Ms. Twila Escalante, Deputy Clerk; Ms. Nordra Walcott, Assistant Clerk and Mrs Tasha Porter, who is my Personal Assistant and who served as Secretary to the Standing Orders working group. An incredible group of people to work with.

When I said in the Standing Orders Meeting that Mrs. Cheryl Neblett was working on these on Christmas Day, I wasn't making a joke. The level of commitment that I have seen from the members of that working group is unparalleled in anything else I have ever done, and I cannot thank them enough.

Can I make a little confession? I felt badly, that after eight years as Premier, I still hadn't gotten the last piece of the constitutional and parliamentary framework updated. Whether you believe in God or in the Great Architect of the Universe or Karma; given all that no one could have possibly predicted would have happened, I wound up in the Chair at just the right time, so forgive

me if I say how incredibly satisfied I am about having done it.

I thank you all for your commendations and all of that, but I am beyond thankful and grateful for having had the opportunity to serve as a representative of my people for almost 25 years now, and to have had the opportunities I had to serve and to be able to do—to be part of getting the things done, that I've always been so passionate about. Tonight may well be the last time that I sit in this Parliament, at least in one of these chairs, but I do not want to spend any time talking about what I have managed to help get done. I will leave that for those who will eulogise me—which I hope not to be any time soon.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: I just want to say, Members, that we are a fraternity. In our system, the nature of this thing called politics is confrontational by definition. You have a Government. You have an Opposition. That's how the system is set up; it's meant to be part of the checks and balances on the other, and that necessarily means that things can get quite hostile at times. That's the nature of the business.

However, never forget that in all of the world, those who get to sit as representatives of their people are a very select group, and we are part of a fraternity. Never forget it in whatever fights or wars—

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: That you go through in this beautiful, brutal, business called “politics”.

I have been quite distressed, for quite some time at what, with my experience, I saw, and felt, was the dismantling of our parliamentary system—this experiment of independents. I am now becoming distressed again, at what I see as the “experiment of the inexperienced”.

Forget my political affiliation to the PPM and all of those things. Above all of that, which is why I'm in this Chair now, even though some of my folks, not just those there but broadly, felt that I shouldn't have taken the Speakership because my voice down on the Opposition benches was going to be shut down. I have always put my country above all other political considerations, and I believe I can say, with some credibility now, that to elect a majority to this House on the 30th of April, who consist principally of inexperienced people—I don't care how smart and successful they have been elsewhere—is to invite disaster upon Cayman.

I have never understood why people believe that you have to have all of these years of education and training and experience to become a good doctor, a good lawyer, a good accountant, a good builder, but in politics, it doesn't matter what you did before. All of a sudden, you get elected and you expect to be Premier, with not one-hour political experience. It is to invite

disaster upon our country, to go down that road. We do need a constant influx of new, bright, fresh people, but there needs to be a proper mix. I hope the country does the right thing in that regard. There are five empty seats coming up, five of us who are retiring from politics. The country needs to retain some significant number of the experienced people.

The institutional knowledge—and I do not wish to seem immodest, because that's not where my head is. The loss of institutional knowledge of five of us more senior representatives is going to hit very hard; so as a People, as a country, we need to keep some of the experienced here. I heard a bad, bad rumour, which I hope is not true, that the AG is considering going too.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: I have said this, many times: Samuel Washington Bulgin, Attorney General of the Cayman Islands is an institution in himself—

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: I don't think anyone in here has worked with him more than I have on very, very difficult issues; from the Constitution to tours across Europe into hostile nations trying to defend the financial services sector—every manner of work you can think of; and he and I haven't always agreed, but I have to tell you this, I have never known him to be wrong on any significant issue. Even when the Governor—not the current one, I don't know anything about that. Even when the Governor disagreed and said so-and-so, he said “No Governor, I don't believe you're right.” Not too many would be able to stand and do that.

He is long overdue for some huge honour. I don't know what they're waiting on. The Premier, too; I've been thinking about that, but I will see what I can do about such things. I know a few people in a few high places.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: I just want to finish now. As I said, I'm not going to talk about anything. Many of you who have an interest in politics will have read or heard that most famous quote from President Theodore Roosevelt called “The Man in the Arena”, and anyone who has been in politics will understand and feel that deeply because we are all subject to so much criticism and everybody knows better than us. As someone said today, I think it was the Minister for Labour, once you come in here, no matter how great and good they thought you were before, within two weeks of you being here you are the biggest you-know-what that ever was. I think that is why this is so important and touches us as politicians in such a way.

It's called “The Man in the Arena”. **It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how**

the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again... who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Those of you who know me fairly well will know that I don't just love music, I am obsessed by music and have been my entire life. Don't think I goin' try to sing, because I can't!

[Laughter]

The Speaker: But I know the words to a thousand songs and I can almost always find one that fits the moment. It is perhaps not Bob Seger's most famous song, it's called *The Famous Final Scene*, but there are a few lines from it which absolutely cause me to feel how I feel:

*“Think in terms of bridges burned,
Think of seasons that must end,
See the rivers rise and fall...
Everything must have an end...
Like a river to a stream, like a river to a stream,
It's the famous final scene...
Like a guest that stayed too long,
Now it's finally time to leave.
Yes, it's finally time to leave...
Now the lines have all been read
and you knew them all by heart.
Now you move toward the door.
Here it comes, the hardest part
Try the handle of the road,
Feeling different, feeling strange.
This can never be arranged
As the light fades from the screen
From the famous final scene.”*

I don't know about the famous, but this is the final scene.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Much better.

I don't know, it has been the tradition for as long as I've been here that if Members wish to say a few words on the eve of the Dissolution of the House—

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Oh, we're coming back tomorrow? Okay, well, I've delivered my soliloquy one day early.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: No, no, no, no. Okay, what business do we have tomorrow? Just that?

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Okay. In that case then, Madam—

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: There was only one PQ.

[Inaudible interjection]

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Madam Premier, I invite you to move the adjournment.

ADJOURNMENT

The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly:
Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move the adjournment until 10am tomorrow morning; for the final-final scene.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: The question is that the House do now adjourn until 10am tomorrow, 7th February. All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

At 9:36pm the House stood adjourned until 10am Friday, 7th February, 2025.