



**PARLIAMENT**  
OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS



# **PARLIAMENT OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS**

## **OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**Third Meeting of the 2024/2025 Session**  
*Fifth Sitting*

**Friday**  
**7 February, 2025**  
*(Pages 1-64)*

**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 West                                           |

INDEPENDENT OPPOSITION MEMBERS

|                                                 |                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Hon. Heather D. Bodden, OCI, Cert. Hon., JP, MP | <i>Deputy Speaker</i> , Elected Member for Savannah |
| Hon. G. Wayne Panton, JP, MP                    | Elected Member for Newlands                         |
| 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. 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**  
**FRIDAY**  
**7 FEBRUARY, 2025**  
**12:25 P.M.**  
*Fifth Sitting*

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*[Hon. Sir Alden McLaughlin, Speaker, Presiding]*

**The Speaker:** Good afternoon. Parliament is resumed. May I invite the Father of the House, the elected Member for West Bay West to grace us with prayers?

**PRAYERS**

**Hon. W. McKeever Bush, Elected Member for West Bay West:** 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.*

*And dear Lord, remember our families wherever they may be and keep a hedge of protection around them; wherever they are, whether here or overseas, bless them. Remember each one of us, bless us, give us health, and in the days to come in our nocturnal duties, help us oh Lord to be true to ourselves and to the people we serve.*

*So Lord bless us and keep us. Make your 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.

**ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS  
OR AFFIRMATIONS**

**The Speaker:** None.

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

**The Speaker:** I just wish to say that this is expected to be the last sitting of the Parliament of the 2021-2025 term, and to note the significance of that; and to simply wish all honourable Members in this House the very best going forward.

Madam Clerk.

**PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS**

**The Speaker:** None.

**PRESENTATION OF PAPERS  
AND OF REPORTS**

**The Speaker:** None.

**QUESTIONS TO HONOURABLE  
MINISTERS AND MEMBERS  
OF THE CABINET**

**The Speaker:** I have no answers.

**STATEMENTS BY HONOURABLE  
MINISTERS AND MEMBERS  
OF THE CABINET**

**The Speaker:** I recognise the Honourable Premier.

**The Premier**  
**Exceptional Circumstances for Section 11(5)**  
**Supplementary Funding – Ministry of Finance and**  
**Economic Development**

**The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly,**  
**Minister of Finance & Economic Development, Ed-**  
**ucation, District Administration & Lands, Financial**  
**Services & Commerce, and Health, Elected Member**

**for Cayman Brac East:** Good afternoon and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as required by section 11(6) of the Public Management and Finance [Act] (2020 Revision) (PMFA) I make this statement to Members of this honourable House with respect to the “exceptional circumstance” transactions that we had approved by Cabinet for the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development with respect to its 2024 Financial Year that ended on 31 December 2024: such transactions were approved pursuant to section 11(5) of the PMFA.

Mr. Speaker, there were two financial transactions that the Cabinet approved for the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, pursuant to section 11(5) in respect of the Ministry's 2024 Financial Year: The first transaction was an increase to the 2024 Appropriation entitled OE 121 - Additional Normal Cost for Pension Plans by \$895,000. The second transaction was a compensating decrease of 2024 OE 27 - Past Service Pension Liability appropriation by the said amount, \$895,000.

Mr. Speaker, in November 2024, Cabinet approved an increase to the pension contribution rates under the Parliamentary and Public Service Pensions Plans.

Meeting the definition of an exceptional circumstance transaction Mr. Speaker, the supplementary funding that was required for OE 121 - Additional Normal Cost for Pension Plans meets the definition of an exceptional circumstance as:

1. The increase to the contributions rates were not known when the 2024 Budget was prepared in December 2023;
2. The Government could be exposed to significant financial risks, potential legal liabilities and disruption of services if it does not pay the increased contribution rates; and
3. The increase to the contribution rates were approved in November 2024, making it impractical to request for the supplementary funding to be granted via section 12 of the PMFA as there were no planned meetings of the Finance Committee very late in 2024, nor are there any planned meetings for this sitting.

Mr. Speaker, the exceptional circumstance transactions did not result in an adverse impact on the Government's financial results—and that is seen as we are getting ready to put out new financials imminently—nor the principles of the responsible financial management FFR (Framework for Fiscal Responsibility) because the appropriation changes were merely a transfer of funds within the same Operating Expenditure category; an increase in one Operating Expenditure appropriation was mitigated by an equal reduction to another Operating Expenditure appropriation.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I thank you for allowing me to explain the exceptional circumstance

transactions which were in fact approved by the Cabinet for the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development with respect to its 2024 Financial Year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **Exceptional Circumstances for Section 11(5) Supplementary Funding – Parliament Management Commission**

The second section 11(5), Mr. Speaker that I am grateful for your permission to make this morning and I thank you for the opportunity to bring to the honourable House's attention the exceptional circumstances appropriation changes which have resulted in the Supplementary Appropriation initiated by the Parliament Management Commission (PMC) for 2024.

Mr. Speaker, on the 6th June, Cabinet considered and approved the following requests for section 11(5) appropriations in accordance with the Public Management Finance Act (2020 Revision) by the Parliament Management Commission. The Appropriation lines were to satisfy the 2024 expenditure needs as follows:

1. Increased 2024 Appropriation to OE 150 - Repairs to Parliament building by \$234,000; and
2. Increased 2024 Appropriation to EI 88 - Equity Injection to Parliament by \$8,000.

By way of explanation, Mr. Speaker, Parliament was approved for the sum of \$475,000 under EA 141 - Upgrades and repairs to the Parliament building, in the 2022-2023 budget and the sum of \$222,000 under Appropriation EI 88 - Equity Injection for Parliament for various projects. Due to the time constraints with organising the moving parts and logistics it needed to complete for the larger projects and having to divert focus to unexpected issues beyond the control of the Parliament Management Commission, the Commission was unable to complete about half of the originally planned projects and budgeted repairs and upgrades to the Parliament building before the end of 2023. As such, the capital or CapEx funds were returned as required under the normal budget protocol which goes back to central revenue.

Due to the urgent need for the funding to finish the uncompleted projects [in the] 2022 and 2023 budget period, the Commission requested, via a Cabinet Paper, emergency funding that was not set out in the 2024-2025 budget for the above mentioned projects. The amounts requested were \$8,000 to EI 88 and \$234,000 to OE 150, respectively. The funds were needed for urgent projects and they focused on the remediation to repair the severe damage to the House of Parliament's roof and building structure for \$121,650; replacing the aged and leaking A/C condenser unit with a unit and building management system (BMS) for \$47,550; upgrading the House of Parliament building internally with special care equipment and externally

with a handicap ramp for \$35,300; air handling unit and condenser BMS for the A/C unit for \$29,500; and repairing and updating the large and small committee rooms with proper cabinets and wiring to house electrical components in each room for the aggregate sum of \$8,000.

That concludes my explanation, Mr. Speaker, for the utilisation and exceptional circumstances which have resulted in the supplementary appropriations for Parliament by virtue of section 11(5) for the fiscal year 2024.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Honourable Deputy Premier, I have a number of statements from you, but I only have one for the Minister of Heritage.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**The Speaker:** You're not going to deliver it? Fine. You can go ahead Honourable Deputy Premier.

**The Deputy Premier  
Increase to the Seafarers and Veterans *Ex-Gratia*  
Benefits and long-term financial assistance**

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier, Minister of Tourism & Ports and Social Development & Innovation, Elected Member for George Town Central:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement to advise that the Government has intention to increase the Seafarers and Veterans *Ex-Gratia* Benefits and long-term financial assistance by \$250. This will mean that the long-term financial assistance payments will increase from a maximum of \$1,250 to a maximum of \$1,500.

Mr. Speaker, though this does not lie in the statement, I think it's an appropriate time to thank the original movers, the Progressives and the Leader of the Opposition, for their Motion in the earlier part of last year requesting this and after Government's consideration, we've decided to move forward.

Mr. Speaker, as we are all aware the cost of living in the Cayman Islands continues to significantly impact many Caymanians, particularly members of our most vulnerable population. I have made several directives to the Department of Financial Assistance (DFA) which I explained here in Parliament during the last sitting in December 2024, so I will not go into detail on those initiatives here again, but suffice to say that the intention of those directives was to improve the ability for Caymanians to access financial support when they need it the most.

Following on from the implementation of those measures Mr. Speaker, I am happy to announce that the Cabinet is in support of my request to further support Caymanians in need by increasing the Seafarers

and Veterans *Ex-Gratia* Benefit and long-term financial assistance by an extra \$250 per month.

This increase will be funded through Cabinet's approval for supplementary appropriations via section 11(5) of the Public Management and Finance Act. It is expected that those in receipt of the *Ex-Gratia* Benefit or long-term financial assistance will see this increase in February 2025 and it will be retroactive from January of this year.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, although I took responsibility for the Portfolio of Social Development with just a few months remaining before the upcoming election, I want to reiterate my commitment and the commitment of this Government to supporting Caymanians. The Cabinet and I continue to serve the country and in particular, to look out for the well-being of our most vulnerable members of society. It is with this commitment that we continue reviewing ways to improve the social safety net for our people and make decisions such as the one I have just announced today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's the first statement.

*[Desk thumping]*

**Watersports Zones**

In another set of positive news, Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to make a short statement on watersports zones.

Mr. Speaker, we are well aware of the long standing connection Caymanians have with the sea. While many of our young people no longer go to sea on oil tankers, the tradition is carried on by many of those who are now successful boat captains, offering charters to visitors, ranging from snorkelling to fishing and others.

Another way that this significant area of our culture manifests itself, is in our young people who take part in the sport of watercraft racing, Mr. Speaker. A number of young Caymanians have, over the years, established their names on the world stage, including such names as:

- Jason Smith;
- Gary Whittaker;
- Jordan McLean;
- Cline Glidden, Jr.;
- the Ramgeet brothers;
- Roshad Goff; and many others.

I dare say, Mr. Speaker that Cline Glidden is the junior of a former Member of Parliament.

The practitioners of this sport have proven their dedication by investing significant sums into their watercraft and sport. They have however struggled to find an adequate location to train and compete. For these reasons Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have partnered with my ministerial colleagues in the District of North

Side and East End to establish Watersports Zones attached to the seaside of public parks in the districts, which are located at the Kaibo Public Beach and at Colliers Beach, respectively. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that I have also agreed with my ministerial colleague from Bodden Town East, to establish a Watersports Zone at the new public beach in Pease Bay, Bodden Town.

These three locations will add to the South Sound location to provide prime locations to facilitate spectator participation and the execution of watercraft racing. Hopefully in the future we will have one in the West Bay district and Cayman Brac.

**Hon. W. McKeever Bush:** And I will support it!

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier:** And I have the support of the good Member for West Bay West—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier:** —and both members for Cayman Brac.

Mr. Speaker, because of the name that the Caymanian competitors have established internationally at the annual International Jet Sports Boating Association (IJSBA) world championships in Lake Havasu, Arizona—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier:** One of the nice lake down that side.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier:** —connections have been made which have resulted in international competitors travelling to the Cayman Islands to participate in our local races. These connections have also created sports tourism opportunities whereby we can now host international circuit racing at several quality locations across Grand Cayman.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to supporting the growth of this sport locally, as a healthy outlet for our young people to let off steam, while developing their skills and creating sports tourism opportunities for the future.

Additionally Mr. Speaker, the layout of these new Watersports Zones can be seen on the Port Authority website at [www.caymanport.com](http://www.caymanport.com).

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Exceptional Circumstances for Section 11(5) Supplementary Funding – Department of Financial Assistance**

Moving on to another statement. Just for the Clerk, this statement has to do with the Public Management and Finance Act for section 11(5).

Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement as to the circumstances why I, as Minister of Social Development and Innovation had to request the re-allocation of appropriations within the 2024 Budget, under section 11(5) of the Public Management and Finance Act (2020 Revision).

Mr. Speaker, last year, the Department of Financial Assistance had confirmed to the Ministry that its budget would be insufficient. Over the course of last year, the Department implemented new policy changes in alignment with the Financial Assistance Act, 2022, including adding additional categories of service to those receiving financial assistance; providing an additional stipend to those who are receiving the Seafarers and Veterans *Ex-Gratia* payments and those in receipt of long-term financial assistance prior to the arrival of Hurricane Beryl; and delivered a one-time stipend to bus wardens and bus drivers who are employed by outsourced bus companies but providing critical services to our education system.

Mr. Speaker, when we were planning for the holiday season, a shortfall was identified in TP 41 for financial assistance, as well as in TP 47 for the Seafarers and Veterans *Ex-Gratia* Benefit. The supplementary funding was necessary and urgent to avoid disruption of essential services to at-risk Caymanian clients at the Department of Financial Assistance.

Simultaneously Mr. Speaker, it was identified that there were savings in ITI 3, which is the appropriation for Digital Services, Strategy and Business Investment Services. The savings in this appropriation was due to delays in recruitment and implementation of major projects.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Social Development and Innovation requested to:

- Reduce ITI 3 - Digital Services, Strategy and Business Investment Services by \$330,000;
- Increase TP 41 - Financial Assistance by \$170,000; and
- Increase TP 47 - *Ex Gratia* Benefits to Seafarers and Veterans by \$160,000.

Mr. Speaker, the aforementioned exceptional circumstance transaction—which was approved by Cabinet for the Ministry of Social Development and Innovation during the 2024 financial period—did not cause any non-compliance with the Principles of Responsible Financial Management.

#### **Exceptional Circumstances for Section 11(5) Supplementary Funding – Children and Family Services (CAY)**

Mr. Speaker, I move now to another statement also having to do with section 11(5).

Mr. Speaker, I wish to make this statement as to the circumstances and reasons why I, as Minister of Social Development and Innovation had to request a reallocation of appropriations within the 2024 Budget, under section 11(5) of the Public Management and Finance Act (2020 Revision).

Mr. Speaker, based on the announcement of the honorarium of \$2,000 to civil servants and Statutory Authorities and Government Companies (SAGCs), the appropriation for Children and Youth Services, better known as the CAYS Foundation, was increased in order to allow the CAYS Foundation to award its employees with a one-time honorarium payment of \$2,000 per employee in December 2024; I dare say it was well-deserved. The honorarium payment was not anticipated and therefore it was not possible for it to be absorbed within the current budget of the CAYS Foundation. The supplementary funding was required in order to provide the honorarium recognising the persons who work long hours caring for and giving their hearts and souls to the children at the CAYS Foundation.

Simultaneously, Mr. Speaker, savings were identified in ITI 3, which is the appropriation for Digital Services, Strategy and Business Investment Services. The savings in this appropriation was due to delays in recruitment and implementation of major projects.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Social Development and Innovation requested to:

- Reduce ITI 3 - Digital Services, Strategy and Business Investment Services by \$88,000; and
- Increase CAY 2 - Children and Youth Services Foundation by \$88,000, a neutral result.

Mr. Speaker, the aforementioned exceptional circumstance transaction—which was approved by Cabinet for the Ministry of Social Development and Innovation during the 2024 financial period—did not cause any non-compliance with the Principles of Responsible Financial Management. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **Cayman Islands Tourism Industry's Year-End Performance**

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, a statement for the Cayman Islands tourism industry's year end performance.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to rise today to provide a brief update on the performance of the tourism industry, now that the year-end results for 2024 have been received. Members may recall that at the last Meeting of this Parliament I provided comprehensive results on the tourism industry's performance for the first three quarters of the year 2024. In that statement, I outlined the positive growth that had been recorded in each of the industry's key performance indicators. I am pleased to report that year-end results are equally as positive, and the top line synopsis is as follows:

Mr. Speaker, in 2024, stay over visitation increased by two per cent compared to the previous year (2023), marking another year of growth and resilience for this important sector of our economy. Two per cent may not sound like much, but when we consider that the 2024 hurricane season was particularly active, causing our airports to close at some of the busiest times for travel, the fact that the industry has still been able to register growth, is a noteworthy accomplishment.

Looking at the numbers, 437,842 stayover visitors were welcomed to the Cayman Islands between January and December of 2024, reflecting an increase of 8,558 individuals over the year 2023. Our core tourism markets showed steady growth throughout 2024, with strong US regional performance particularly evident in December of last year, which recorded the second-highest visitation on record—surpassed only by December 2019. In fact, March 2024 saw the second highest number of arrivals ever recorded for the Cayman Islands, with 57,040 stayover visitors, while December was our second-best month of the year with 52,046 stay over visitors.

It would be remiss of me to speak of this record-breaking success without mentioning that our Islands repeatedly experienced record-breaking visitation from Canada, in multiple months, while European markets also showed consistent growth throughout the year.

You would be aware Mr. Speaker that the Cayman Islands is marketed as a high-value, high expectation destination, and in this regard the industry's performance in the luxury sector did not disappoint. When this niche sector performs well it means that our Islands are successfully attracting more affluent, higher spending visitors - which is in keeping with the Ministry's philosophy of quality over quantity.

In terms of contribution to the Cayman Islands economy, proceeds from the accommodations sector have also registered positive results. The Government has collected over \$43.3 million in revenue from tourism accommodations tax between January and December 2024, which is \$3 million more than we budgeted, even in light of the active hurricane season and cancellations.

Mr. Speaker, throughout 2024, the Cayman Islands have benefitted from a notable increase in airlift. This has served as a game-changer for the industry, by providing greater accessibility to our shores from over 24 international gateways across the United States, UK, Europe, Canada and Latin America.

Mr. Speaker, these results are just a few of many, many, positives that have been achieved within the tourism sector in 2024. Candidly speaking, they are a testament to the sound decision-making, exemplary commitment and meticulous interpretation of market data and trends, by the staff within the Ministry and Department of Tourism.

With that said Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognise the contributions of the dedicated civil servants within those two entities who have been the backbone of these achievements. Whether they are:

- drafting policies to make lives better;
- managing projects to empower entrepreneurs;
- showcasing our Islands at trade shows,
- hosting journalists whose articles inspire travelers to choose us; or
- speaking at conferences to elevate our profile,

their expertise and collective efforts have been instrumental to the industry's success.

I also want to acknowledge the personal sacrifices they make, spending significant amounts of time away from their spouses, children, and families, to promote our Islands to the world and encourage travellers to visit our shores. Often times, we overlook or simply aren't aware of what it takes behind the scenes to keep the wheels of the tourism engine consistently turning.

Thus, I would like to say to all of the staff in the Ministry and particularly the Department of Tourism and Ports, you are the unsung heroes behind this statement of positivity and success, and I extend my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you for the last four years, and particularly for the year 2024.

As the late Steve Jobs, the visionary founder of Apple once said, **"Great things in business are never done by one person; they're done by a team of people."** We are fortunate Mr. Speaker to have a great team of people working on behalf of the Cayman Islands tourism industry.

Mr. Speaker, while the stayover sector is thriving, it would be a dereliction of my duties if I did not address the pitiful performance in the cruise sector. Passenger arrivals are still declining—and not just slightly, but at a staggering rate, month after month, on an ongoing basis.

To illustrate the severity of the situation Mr. Speaker, the projection for cruise passenger arrivals in 2024 forecasted a reduction of 100,000 passengers, compared to the previous year. Sadly, the actual decline was closer to 200,000 passengers. If anyone had any doubts as to the seriousness of the situation within this sector, these results should help to underscore the reality that we are dealing with, and the urgency with which it must be addressed.

I will not go into further detail on the cruise sector at this time, Mr. Speaker, as I have already fully ventilated my thoughts on this matter during the referendum debate. Instead, I will end this tourism update on a more positive note by revealing our stayover visitation and revenue collection targets for 2025. They are:

- to achieve over 15 per cent growth in stayover visitation, equating to 504,470 visitors, and

- to generate \$44 million in revenue from accommodations taxes and fees.

Throughout this year, irrespective of who is at the helm of decision-making for the tourism industry, I feel confident that the overarching goals will be to continue:

- building on the industry's successes;
- addressing its challenges; and
- positioning the Cayman Islands tourism industry for long-term, sustainable growth.

Mr. Speaker, I am also confident that through sound policies, strategic investments, and the dedication of our exceptional staff, those goals will be achieved. Tourism remains the lifeblood of our economy, along with financial services, and when the industry does well, our people do well and the country does well. At the end of the day, that is what we are all striving for.

On that encouraging note, I extend my heartfelt thanks to all of the industry stakeholders, for their partnership and collaboration during the year, and throughout my term in office. They too, are deserving of recognition and thanks for their contribution to the growth of our tourism industry.

Should I have the honour of being re-elected to serve the good people of George Town Central, and the privilege to serve again as the Minister of Tourism, I look forward to continuing the spirit of partnership and collaboration that has existed over this term, and to accomplishing even bigger and better results for this industry and our beloved Cayman Islands well into the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

**The Speaker:** None.

## OBITUARY AND OTHER CEREMONIAL SPEECHES

**The Speaker:** I have had a number of requests from Members for the opportunity to pay tribute to some of our outstanding citizens who have passed on recently. I first recognise the Honourable Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I promise to be short because I know that was a long contribution just now.

I rise to pay my respects and condolences to all families in the Cayman Islands who have lost loved ones so far this year, but notably, Mr. Speaker, in the Central George Town area, we've lost a few of the most notable members of our community.

One in particular that I know most of us know, those who are elected in George Town, the good soul

of Ms. Natalie Adolphus who was 90 years old. She was a very sweet and humble lady and my deepest sympathy goes out to her three children, Jill McDonald, Anthony Lee Truman (better known as Chilly Willy) and Chris Truman. Please, I beg the community to give them your heart, prayers and thoughts.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to send my heartfelt condolences to the family of the late Ms. Lillian Archer. Please note that she was the stepmother to one of our past Members of Parliament and she was my constituent.

Mr. Speaker, also Mr. George McLean, who recently passed away around the period just after Christmas. Mr. George McLean was a very prominent, strong individual in our community. Originating from Bonacca, Honduras, he and his many siblings became a foundation of Caymanians that they created. We know about the longstanding relationship with Bonacca, Honduras and the Cayman Islands, and his strength was a beacon for the George Town community and the development within the seafarers and farming community. I pray for his family as they deal with this challenging time of such an amazing person no longer with us.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I'm sad to announce the passing of what I call an icon to the heart of Central, Mr. Dave Rockett, who passed away late last night. Interestingly enough, he died on Bob Marley's birthday, and for those who knew Mr. Dave Rockett would have known that he saw himself as a proper Rasta man. I was with the family last night at the hospital and I ask this honourable House to pray for the family of all nine children and his wife. He will definitely be someone who will be missed from George Town and the Cayman Islands. I know he's renowned all over, from West Bay, George Town, Bodden Town, East End, North Side, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, and he surely will be missed.

Interestingly enough, as I was speaking about Miss Natalie who passed away, he was with the family as they were mourning the passing of her... just to announce late last night that he also passes.

I ask of the good Lord keep his protection over this Island because we are losing so many of our iconic people who made the spirit and the fabric of the Cayman Islands. May their hearts be covered in these difficult times and I pray for each and every one of their family members.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Christopher S. Saunders, Elected Member for Bodden Town West:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I will be brief also, but I just wanted to pass condolences on to the Jervis family. Ray Jervis from Ray's Photo Studio that was on Eastern Avenue, which I'm sure many Caymanian families

have memories of having him develop their film; he passed away. I just want to pass condolences on to the family and ask everyone to recognise them and remember them during this time. His funeral service is actually tomorrow at First Baptist Church.

Also Mr. Speaker, one of our good constituents in Bodden Town West, the late, great Charlie Watler. I just want to pass condolences on for his service to this country and most recently on the Caymanian Status and Protection Board [*sic*] where he was appointed when this Government started out. Mr. Charlie was a good man, a decent man, a solid man, and you know, we basically send condolences to his family for their loss at this time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The Honourable Minister of Labour.

**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. I just want to send my condolences to the families of persons in Bodden Town East and otherwise. Mr. Bolvin Jackson's family, he passed away; Ms. Mable Solomon's [family]; Ms. Marylou Dixon's family; and Ms. Vernell Byrd's family - she has her sisters still here, Miss Coreen and Miss Fay. Also to Mr. Dave Rockett who was a good friend of my father, and Mr. Ray Jervis. May their souls rest in peace and may their families find comfort. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** I recognise the Honourable Minister of Sports...

**Hon. Isaac D. Rankine, Minister of Youth, Sports & Heritage, and Home Affairs, Elected Member for East End:** Just say Member for East End, that's fine, sir.

[Laughter]

**The Speaker:** No, you're more than just a Member, you're the Minister. It's just that the names change so often I struggle to keep up with it.

[Laughter]

**The Speaker:** The Honourable Minister of Youth, Sports & Heritage and Home Affairs.

**Hon. Isaac D. Rankine:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I too, just speak briefly to offer condolences to those families in East End who have lost loved ones since we last met, but more recently, to the family of, we know her as Miss Arlain Connolly, from East End. Growing up as a child—no disrespect to my good friend, Mr. David Wight over there, but at the time—she had the best fried chicken you could get anywhere on

this Island, and pizzas and hamburgers. She was a staple in our district, especially on weekends, providing us an avenue to get some of that fast food and a way we could hang out.

Also to the family of the late Thomas Dixon; I think many of us in here know him as Pom-pom. He passed away after a short illness.

I'd like to offer condolences to all of those families on behalf of the district of East End. Thank you, sir.

**The Speaker:** The Honourable Member for West Bay South.

**Mr. André M. Ebanks, Elected Member for West Bay South:** Afternoon again, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Briefly, on behalf of my colleague, the Member for West Bay Central, she's actually absent now to be with the grieving family of Ms. Joely Manderson at Bodden, right now, for the loss of her daughter, gone too soon, Miss Alexandria Brown. That's sometimes what others may not understand, similar to your comments last night Mr. Speaker, about us being a fraternity, because those are the things all of us have to do and you don't do it for political favour, you do it because the family actually wants you there as the pillar of the constituency. Miss Kathy didn't go for political reasons, it's just because you're trying to be a rock for the family in their time of grief and Miss Brown is gone too soon; it's awfully hard when the child proceeds in death before the parent.

On a similar note, on behalf of the Member for West Bay Central, the passing of Ms. Ruby Hydes, the mother of the Member for West Bay Central's current contender; that's where politics has to be put to the side. It was a good send-off [for] Miss Ruby, I was there. You just have to be there for each other and remember at the end of the day, it's one community.

With that and for all the others who have lost loved ones in West Bay since the last time the House has met, condolences and rest in peace. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The honourable Member for Prospect.

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

I rise to publicly share condolences to the family of the late Joseph Berkeley McLean, known to many as Junior McLean. That was a funeral that took place yesterday. We know that when a loved one is lost, one thing during that grieving stage, there's not a particular time. You don't even know when, because it happens at various times. Even though it was concluded, one chapter was passed on yesterday with the service and the burial, the true healing, moving on with life really starts once you turn your back at that graveside.

I want to publicly send all of my love and regards to Miss Linda, to Kyle, Kevin and all of the grandchildren and extended family. Mr. Junior has played a big role in agriculture. That was his love, [along with]

dealing with slaughtering and those sorts of things. It's just that unique bond. It's a love story that many of us search for. They were kindred spirits and I know Miss Linda will need a lot of love, which she has, not only by extension in the Prospect constituency community, but definitely for who she is to so many around the Cayman Islands.

I also share publicly and extend condolences to the family of Mr. Charlie. He was a huge supporter of mine even though he's not a constituent of Prospect.

Tagging on to what my honourable colleague and friend from West Bay South stated, when a loved one in Cayman is lost, just the dynamics of who we are as a people, everyone feels it. For the number of people who have passed since we've last met, I share as well publicly my sincere condolences to all of those persons. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** The honourable Member for Savannah.

**Hon. Heather D. Bodden, Deputy Speaker, Elected Member for Savannah:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise this morning to offer heartfelt condolences to the many loved ones who have passed on. I just want to say that to all those who are grieving today. I send out warm condolences to the family of the late Mr. Junior McLean; Ms. Joan Steer; Mr. Charlie Watler; Mrs. Mable Solomon, a lady who used to sew mine and my sisters' and my brother's clothes when we were all attending school; Mr. George Warren, that's Mr. Al T. Thompson's nephew; Mr. Ray Jervis; Mrs. Rosie Overton; Mrs. June Lawrence; and so many more.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I know the family of Dave Rockett is feeling the sting this morning. Dave's mom, Miss Pam, has endured so many losses and I'd like to send out heartfelt condolences and love to her and her family and offer any assistance I can provide to them. Love and regards to all who feel the sting today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Does any other Member wish to extend condolences? *[Pause]* The honourable Member for Newlands.

**Hon. G. Wayne Panton, Elected Member for Newlands:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to add my condolences to the families of all of those who have been mentioned by other Members earlier. I think the truth is that we live in a small country and the web of connections are always extensive and across various constituencies and through various family members, so each loss I think touches all of us.

Mr. Speaker, in particular, I would join in extending condolences to the children of Mr. Charlie Watler and his extended family as well. Mr. Charlie was a man who contributed and had such a positive perspective and attitude to this country that he loved so much.

Particularly, he was always concerned about the opportunities for young people in this country and he of course, had an extensive record of service in relation to the various immigration boards that have been in place; I think at one point he was titled the Father of the Immigration Boards.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to extend public condolences to the family of Ms. Erna Whorms. The period over which some of these people have passed away, the holiday period, has always made it very difficult. Mr. Charlie, for example, passed away just before Christmas—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. G. Wayne Panton:** Just after Christmas, sorry. Miss Erna passed away on Christmas Day, at a time when her family was about to come together to celebrate Christmas with her, which she was so much looking forward to.

Mr. Speaker, she was of course a very interesting lady with the talent to be involved in things that... roles that typically related to the activities of men. For example, she was an amazing car painter and she perfected her art and techniques in relation to that. I remember seeing her coming out of the paint booth when I was a little boy being driven by, I looked over and I saw her taking the mask off and unwrapping the painting gear and struck by the fact that it was a slender, lovely looking woman who was coming out doing this.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to extend condolences to the family of Ms. Joan Steer. My colleague from Savannah has mentioned her already. She was a long-serving member of the Civil Service in the Department of Agriculture and she contributed so much in that area, particularly in relation to pest controls and helping agriculture continue to develop their crops and productivity. I remember just a couple of weeks before she passed away, she had been at our community office seeking to help wrap children's gifts because that was the kind of person she was. She just contributed so much in so many ways within the community, and otherwise.

I extend also condolences to the family of Ms. Arlain Connolly as well, mentioned by Ms. Heather, the Member for Savannah; Mr. Junior McLean, mentioned by others; of course, Mr. Dave Rockett as well. If you don't know Dave, then you haven't lived in Cayman. The Minister of Tourism mentioned that he was renowned across the country and that's certainly true. I extend condolences to his family, and his children in particular.

Mr. Speaker, I can't recall whether I did this previously, but I will take the opportunity to publicly extend condolences to the family of my dear cousin Dwight Panton, who passed away a few months ago, several months ago now, back into 2024. As I said, I don't recall whether he was mentioned previously, but I

raise it now because his service is scheduled for February 21st at 3pm, I think it is, at Elmslie Memorial Church. I suspect that there may be many Members who might be interested in attending that service.

Mr. Speaker, as you will know, Dwight was a lawyer, a father, and he contributed significantly over the years as well in the areas of the immigration boards. I think in fact, he had served as Chairman of the... I can't remember which one it was, whether it was the Protection Board or whether it was a later variation of one of those boards; but he served on that board for quite a number of years.

I just want to raise a matter that I think deserves our attention, because anyone who knew Dwight would never guess that he was in a situation or was discovered to be in a situation where he didn't actually have Cayman status, even though he served on those boards making decisions and contributing for such a long time. That is something that has happened to so many of our Caymanians with roots that we could never ever deny. I don't know, I've had conversations with the Deputy Governor in the past about trying to address these types of scenarios—because his was not unique. If we can ever find a way to address these types of issues for our sons of the soil, our daughters of the soil, who find themselves in this situation, I think we should. We must.

Thus Mr. Speaker, I extend condolences particularly to his children, Dylan and Frasier, and his sister and brothers.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much for the opportunity and I extend God's comfort and blessings to all of those families today who are grieving.

**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 briefly to join in offering some condolences on behalf of the Progressives and Official Opposition to Miss Pam and the family for the passing of Dave Rockett, who we all knew. You heard the Member for Newlands saying if you didn't know him, you don't know Cayman; but not everyone knew Dave for the person that he really was, the heart that the man had. I can tell you that many, including my nephew, many young Caymanians looked forward to catching his bus to Town. If they had money or not, it didn't matter to him, they could always pay him later and he enjoyed the conversation with them. Many may have thought that it wouldn't be positive conversations, but they went extremely well.

My nephew messaged [me] this morning being very upset about it, so he obviously had an impact in his life. He will be missed. Miss Pam has been a part of our family from the time that I joined and so our prayers and thoughts are with them today.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I was shocked to find out a couple of weeks ago—and I remember asking, I think it was over the holidays, or maybe New Year's Eve, about a person being found deceased on South Church Street. I was shocked to find out that it was our good friend and a member of the football world, Christopher Johnson, known to us as Bolo—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition:** Middle Road, at Middle Road. Yes.

So unfortunate and tragic; a young man, my age. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Johnson family at this time as well.

I just want to mention Mr. George Warren. George, we all knew him from A. L. Thompson's; Georgie. Sending out our condolences to the Giger and Thompson family on his passing.

Also, last week, Mr. Benjamin Wright, who passed away over the Christmas [season] but the service was last week; he had a wonderful sending off. Those of us would know Mr. Wright from Watlers Road (or Dog City as we call it) and remember the days when he was a cast man, he did all of the parking blocks and ornamental yard figures, fountains and statues and stuff. I think as you drive around the older communities of Cayman, you can still see his work in the patios and in the outdoor yard furniture if you want to call it that. I just thought I would bring our thoughts and condolences to the Wright family as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Does any other Member wish to offer condolences? *[Pause]* If not, I'll take the luncheon suspension and when we return, we will commence the traditional—how shall I phrase this?

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Swan song—Thank you, AG—of Members. Since I was under the mistaken impression that we were finishing last night, I've done mine already—

*[Laughter]*

**The Speaker:** —so I can listen to you all.  
We'll resume at 2:30.

**Proceedings suspended at 1:32 pm.**

**Proceedings resumed at 2:39 pm.**

**The Speaker:** Good afternoon. Parliament is resumed. Please be seated.

## RAISING OF MATTERS OF PRIVILEGES

**The Speaker:** None.

## GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**The Speaker:** No more.

*[Laughter]*

**The Speaker:** Before we adjourn, as I indicated earlier, it has long been the convention in this honourable House for Members to be given the opportunity to say a few words—in some cases, last words, in other cases, hopeful words. I'm entirely in the House's hands, as the Premier and Deputy Premier are not here there is no protocol to be followed, so please rise when you're ready and please don't pretend that you don't want to speak, because you all want to.

The Father of the House.

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

Mr. Speaker, on November 14<sup>th</sup>, 1984 I was elected to the honourable Legislative Assembly, so this is the 10th time I am rising on such an occasion. As at November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024, I had served 40 years, winning 10 consecutive terms, being the First Elected Member for West Bay from 1988 to 2013 and went on to win my West Bay West constituency from 2017 and 2021. That's 40 years and three months I have served the people of West Bay and these Islands, served from being a Member.

Mr. Speaker, I recall after the 1984 elections, the late Messrs Jim Bodden, a National Hero and Haig Bodden, nominated me for a seat on the Executive Council, but I had watched the proceedings in this House for two terms before that, so I knew I never had no chance. All that was, was to split our vote and give others a chance of being elected because we had the majority. I knew, but neither did I want to serve, I wanted to learn, sit on the backbench, move motions, learn the procedures, be involved with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to meet people, to gain experience, to go places, to learn what not to do and what could be done for best serving Cayman.

Truth be told, Mr. Speaker, if I could do so again, I would do so. While I've had some disappointments and challenges in this journey, to say the least—the lies that have been told, the schemes that have been made up! However, **“He that diggeth a pit, shall fall into it”** and whom God favours, no man can disavour. I have served my people and been true to them, and for this opportunity, I give thanks to an Almighty God. I give thanks to the people of West Bay, and indeed, my family and close confidants throughout this country.

Mr. Speaker, much has been said over the years about Cayman going in the wrong direction, and yes, while there are things that impact us negatively as a growing, developing small state, there is much to be thankful for in these Islands. I would not want to live anywhere else but here in Grand Cayman, with a visit

to Cayman Brac, a visit to other places like Jamaica, but staying right here in Grand Cayman, in West Bay. There would be no other place I would rather be.

Mr. Speaker, in my own district, much has been gained in these 40 years. I hear them, *"Nothing has been done,"* but I heard that when I entered Government in 1984. The truth is there were no football fields, [just] one and that had more [INAUDIBLE] in it as high as this table where I'm at now and more rock stones in it. Also, one cricket pitch, where they knocked that down. There were no pensions for the people, working conditions were poor. We were still under the Masters and Servants Law, the Truck Law, which was made for slaves. That's what we were being governed by in 1984, and I said enough is enough. I'll get back to that though, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when I consider where we were on education and training back then, I think the Bankers' Association was giving one scholarship per annum. The biggest and best training people could get was to go and work with Cable and Wireless because the truth is they were training people, they were training their workers and people had an opportunity. However, the rest of the Island and Government... well, it depended on, as I often say, *who ya family to, who ya mama is, who ya papa is* or who they voted for. Yes. Although we had made some strides from the 1940s to 1984, it was still lacking.

Look at where we have come from and where we are. Every one [of us] can go to high school. Think of it! [Everyone] can go to primary school free. Free lunches today! How many millions we're spending? Some people say no need to do it. Yes, we do need to do it. It's hard to know that people who can afford it probably don't appreciate what we're doing, but the fact is we have to do it for everyone. You can't just pick and choose as such.

We went from the Cayman Islands High School and upgraded. I remember one year, I believe we had three changes of the education system. I know it because my son was doing his O levels and A levels with A levels in physics—couldn't get A levels in physics anywhere back then. That was between 1984 and 1988. They had a secondary modern school, a system that was biased and backwards. Some people say it's a good thing we had some good teachers, like the man from East End who was good in woodworks and said we should be going in this direction, teaching those sorts of things. He has now passed away. I remember teacher McHale and the late Mrs. Theoline McCoy, they were the champions to try to change the system from the secondary modern school, so that the people's children had an opportunity to go to the high school—and not a few. Alas for me, they called my mother up before we got back from the Christmas holidays when I was just about to turn 14—*"No spaces left, he can't come back."* We fixed it.

Governments of the day then and Governments since then, some that I've been a part of and

some that I have led, have built more primary schools and high schools. As much as we all campaign about the high schools and stuff—and yeah, there are things lacking, but look at where we are. Look at the scholarships now. Back then, as I said, you couldn't get a scholarship and [now] if you apply yourselves, you can get a scholarship to do what you want today. Yes, I was part of it being fixed. I also fixed that if you didn't get the marks to qualify for a scholarship, we gave you [funds] to go to a school to improve your marks and then be able to go to your choice university once you've improved your marks. Yet, they say that we are going backwards. No! We've got problems that we have to fix. As I said yesterday, we have to find a balance.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, there are improvements to be made to systems. We know the difficulties. It's not all about the systems, you know? Sometimes the people, as I said, you put in place on these boards, they don't know the situation. They don't appreciate what some parents are being... Remember what I said about the so-called leader who said that if he, a multimillionaire, could pay to send his children to school, then everyone should be able to do so. Purportedly leading a party today...

[Inaudible interjection]

**Hon. W. McKeever Bush:** Mm-hmm.

[Inaudible interjection]

**Hon. W. McKeever Bush:** No, I do not have to call any names at this point! I don't, but I think we all know who I'm talking about. At least 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 of them on that side would have heard the same thing. Don't screw up *unna* face. *Unna* heard it; we talked [about] it in Cabinet and Caucus, who it was, so *unna* know. *It nah you, it nah him*, whichever one of *unna* is leading. I don't know which one of *unna* is leading, but it is not one of you.

[Laughter]

[Crosstalk]

**Hon. W. McKeever Bush:** Yes. I'm trying to be nice, Mr. Speaker. I'm trying to be nice. In fact, I'm going to have to leave because I have to get to the hospital to do some things for my wife there.

Know that we have come—what we as Caymanians have failed to do is to promote it ourselves! We're satisfied to do it. I know I am, I don't believe in getting on the social media and the radio shows. Not even in election time. I tell them I don't need to! People know who I am. People know what I do, even if some of it is lies. Plenty of it, the scandal is lies. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Lies.

We need to encourage, not to discourage. Not to, as my colleague from Bodden Town West says, *be bad minded*. We don't need that. That can't build a

country. It can't help our children, it can't help our grandchildren, it's not going to help our progeny; no. Don't divide! Because we divide - there are those who know about 'divide and conquer' and they will do it. Don't row over fire ants while elephants are trampling us. Think of those issues that are big that we can conquer and we can do something about! We can do it if we stop being jealous and wondering, "*I nah gon' support this one, y'nuh, because if I support him and he get elected and I get elected, he might get a chance to be in Cabinet over me.*" Uh-uh. First be elected by the people and then you make up your mind, and if you're not in the group, check to see if the group will bring you in and you work with them all the same. Perhaps that's the way I'll have to go. I don't know. I like the alliances. I like the party system.

We need to encourage, not discourage our young people. In education there is opportunity, from the primary level there are improvements, we have libraries in schools; so many facilities that people like us didn't have. I'm talking about 64 years ago when I started primary school. No, we didn't have anything like that. We went to school barefoot, too. Good thing I didn't have far to walk, because by then we had an asphalt road and it was hot at times, eh? Barefoot... They didn't have air condition and electricity to study in!

Those of us in this august Chambers ought to be thankful to Almighty God that you had the ability or you had parents that could do it, because some of us did not have, did not have the required food for lunch. Got to the point where you had half a pack of saltine crackers and a bottle of sparkling soda and that was good until you get home, then you might have had a stew dinner. Might have; mama was working, so didn't have that every time. Although she used to get up at 4 o'clock in the morning, cook breakfast, do some washing, then go to her work, come back 3 o'clock, and then go to another job—and we talk about having it hard.

They never saw it. They don't know where we've come from, so it's easy for them to cry down with the help of our opponents—I know it's about me—with the help of my opponents they have said all manner of evil and continue to do so. It didn't stop the people from electing me and I'll tell you why.

We have those opportunities for school, high school, further higher education in colleges and universities in various countries. I'll never forget, Mr. Speaker, my aunt worked for a family that owned what we used to call 'Crackenbush house', opposite The Strand, where I think Mr. Joe Imparato now owns; she worked for that. My mother worked at Pan Cayman house. Mr. Everhart and his wife were managers and they had a Captain Thompson who had apartment there. My aunt used to take me on weekends to rake up the beach, and the owner, Mr. Littleton, said, "*McKeeva, what do you want to do?*" So I told him what I wanted to do, I wanted to be a teacher. First, I wanted to go to sea, but my mother said, "*you nah going no sea because they're gonna throw you overboard for yah mouth,*"—

[Laughter]

**Hon. W. McKeeva Bush:** —and I couldn't get a chance to be a teacher and didn't get a chance to be a lawyer. I told him this. He said, "*Next trip back,*" that was mid-year and he coming back for winter, "*I'm gonna bring you a typewriter and I want you to learn how to type.*" This is not electric, we didn't have computers then; it's a manual typewriter. I think I still have it. He did. More than that, Mr. Littleton, Mr. Everhart and Captain Thompson, they had just started, a short while before that, the community college at the high school. I didn't have no car, I'd get a little ride up sometime, one of them would take me from work up there, but I had to get a ride back or walk from high school down to Delworths at night. That's where the community college was. They sent me to the community college, they paid for it; and that's why I value other people, those who come to help. I think Captain Thompson just died at ninety-something years old. I didn't realise he was still in Cayman. One of his beautiful daughters is married to one of my friends in fact, here in Cayman.

Then we came in, and in 1986—Benson was part of our Manifesto in 1984 to build a new community college and we built it, opened it and look at it today. Look at the opportunity that we have with our people. Many, thank God, are taken but much more—I say about that what I say about a National Children's Choir; you can have a thousand children in there with 84,000 people, but do we have it? They're not taking the opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on for my two hours, but I don't intend to do that—I don't.

Mr. Speaker, someone said I was sleeping the other day. I wasn't sleeping, I was listening to a good speech and I closed my eyes as I do in here to shut out the noise and the distractions around me. I was listening to a good speech from the Premier. I wasn't sleeping. They went on to say that I didn't have the respect for National Heroes...an event that I started in 2003, our quincentennial year. Well, I continued, because I had started it before then to recognise our people as nation builders.

Yes, Mr. Speaker. Look at where we have come from. Most of the National Heroes I put in place in my administration. Then, our own Caymanian medals, the inauguration of the medals where at least 100 persons received a medal, I think it was in 2011—at least! Also, putting our National Song into law; if I didn't respect our National Heroes, would I have done all of that? I have done all of that to recognise all of the things that they did.

Mr. Speaker, it's easy and I say that in this House: we should be nationalists, but you don't do it to the point where it becomes destructive. I think I am a sensible nationalist because we cannot be otherwise.

Then they went on to ask why people elect me. Really wasn't the first one; of course, all of my Opposi-

tion says that, “*Why do I get elected?*” I get elected because I have accomplished much for these entire Islands. I don’t hear it much in here, because I know the games people play, but I know the things I had to do, the things you had to fight, the systems we had to put in place and the people who we had to fight that didn’t want the things that were necessary for Cayman and Caymanian workers! For example, the Labour Law, as I said earlier. You know the fight I had for that and pensions? Oh, we were going to destroy the country! Hah! Oh yes.

One of my first motions was to get the Labour Law, next one was to get the pensions, and all two of them need reworking! Those are the things that I say, we now have to sit down and fix it. Whomever is here, whether I’m here or not, we have to fix those things to improve and ensure Caymanians that we are for them, and try to get away from the division and polarisation that is creeping into this country. As the old people say: *I ain’t gonna father that*. No.

The young people don’t know that I went to London after hurricane Ivan, after they invited me there—[it was] me, the present Premier and the Financial Secretary then (still is today). When we went to London, what did they say? “*What are you here for?*” Although they had invited us. That idiot Bill Rammel, Minister for the Overseas Territories, that’s what he was.

[Inaudible interjection]

**Hon. W. McKeever Bush:** No. Mr. Speaker, you can be nice to that extent, but not me. He was no honourable man then. He said, “*Cayman is not a Monserrat*.” Meaning: Montserrat had their earthquake, and that Cayman was well off and we could fend for ourselves. You know what they did? The young people don’t know this and some of you don’t know this. They told the Secretary of State in the United States, *you take care of Jamaica and the rest of the Caribbean and we will take care of Cayman*. Their intention was to let us rot!

[Inaudible interjection]

**Hon. W. McKeever Bush:** Come yuh with 50 water tablets and 10 horse blankets.

[Crosstalk]

**Hon. W. McKeever Bush:** Them! They don’t know the fight that we had when hurricane Ivan struck. [We] put a plan before the Governor, Mr. Speaker, for Marsh McLennan to do some of what Hazard Management is doing now, a plan. We’d have to pay for it. We would have had to pay for it and put it before another donkey Governor that we had, Dinwiddy, and what he did?! Knocked it out! Throw it out of Cabinet! It wasn’t long after that, that hurricane Ivan hit us, but we had the

plan! They didn’t want us to be prepared. That’s all I can say it was.

Young people don’t know that. They don’t know—because some of them wasn’t even born—that in one week’s time we had George Town up and running. Why? Because our business had been taken overseas. If we hadn’t scrambled and got it done, it would have stayed there. That was the advice. We scrambled, and George Town got their electricity and businesses were running. Oh, I took a lot of beating saying I was doing everything for West Bay. Oh, yeah? *Tha’ nah* so. I didn’t do enough, or perhaps I might have won the whole election instead of just winning West Bay, but no.

They don’t know that when I went in 2010 and they thought they had us where they wanted us, by the short hairs...Heh! They said, “*See here? You go back to your people and tell them this, put in income tax, put in property tax and value added tax (VAT)*.” If people don’t know what that means, it means that they would pay a tax on every item and every bill that you have. That’s what value added tax is. I told him, not today, Bobo, but I’m carrying the letter back. I called them down at the Ritz, over 600 of them, this is what it’s all about. Where would we have been today, young people? Where would we all have been today if I hadn’t fought the Foreign and Commonwealth Office against those “atrocious systems”, I call them.

The people support me because I brought motions to protect them. I fought the evil forces to protect them. I fought to give them a Labour Law when our own labour and business people here didn’t want it! I fought to give them the pensions. Mr. Speaker, don’t they know that nothing comes easy? My mother told me that long time. There is not such a case as something for nothing. You work; *nobody gon’ just up and give it to you* so. If you got a benefactor, maybe, but you got to work for it and it’s not going to come overnight. However, there is this attitude of immediate gratification and they want it now.

Honourable Members, I tell you, be careful of what these so called ‘new people’ are promising and telling people. I’ve seen it. It’s not good. It’s not good.

Mr. Speaker, I can say the same thing about the gains made here because they are made for the Cayman Islands, but look at what has been done for Cayman Brac. Not just by us, but all these years when doubtful people would say no, not the airport, not the jet, not this, not that, not the next thing—leaders took the lead and made it happen. Look at it! The Member for Cayman Brac West and Cayman Brac East who is now our Premier, I know they worked and I know the fights they had, and I know the others before them too, because I served with Captain Mabry and Captain Charles. They battled their positions because there was this feeling that, you know, Cayman Brac don’t need this and Cayman Brac don’t need that. Now they want to go up there and spend millions of dollars! They could have done it before too. They could have helped

people before, [but] they're doing it on the cusp of an election while people suffered before for the want of a nice place to go. Yeah... They're going now though!

Look at the infrastructure projects that are everywhere in Cayman Brac; road repairs. Thank God we started the water expansion when I was a member of the board; now it's all the way up. I know both Members, especially [The Premier], I have served [with] her a long time, and [know] how she had been fighting over the years to get it up to Spot Bay.

On the major, major district administration upgrades, let's not forget the hospital project. Look at how that has made a difference. When I was Minister of Health—that was only one year and I told the Governor, next year you take this from me, you hear? The hospital administrator wanted to be the doctor, the doctor wanted to be the hospital administrator, the nurse wanted to be the doctor, and the cleaner wanted to be the nurse; so I said uh-uh, Health Ministry *nuh made for me* [Laughter]. We stopped, but look, we got a new hospital and we didn't have to build it in a swamp. We got a new hospital. That new hospital, I think Cayman Brac Members and people would say that was a game changer for healthcare access in the Brac.

Schools have been repaired, affordable housing is in progress and both public and private investment continues to pour in—in Cayman Brac, but here too! In my constituency, the first one I put in place, 162 people got out of that scheme that was going to destroy the economy; 162 people between '92 and '96 through the government guarantee scheme. Then after that [other] governments broadened it and made it more helpful, since that 62 houses were built by us in my constituency, which was all West Bay then. Recently, my Minister put 19 in Lighthouse Gardens and we assisted private sector to build. We should be still doing more of that.

We, as a Government need to look at our systems and I know the Minister now, and myself as Parliamentary Secretary for even just two months, can shake it up a bit, because I do not believe in this thing, "We can't do that." Remember the Auditor General? What about the Auditor General!! If I am doing well and you can't say that I'm stealing—mind you, they will say that, but they can never prove it. They can come and knock on my door any day and they're going to find a huge mortgage. What about them?!

Do the job that you know your people want you to do. Do not worry about these systems that UK itself is breaking down! Didn't the Prime Minister say he's got about 1,000 pages that he's cutting out of planning so that they can get their work done and stop the stoppers? Stop the stoppers, yeah, that's what UK is saying. Yet we are here putting on more and pouring it on. Good governance! Better governance! Better governance for who? [All] so that they can get a tap on their back and go up the French Riviera to sit and sun their buns when they leave here? Huh? No.

Do not allow these systems to grow where we cannot do things for our people. We could get so much done before because we didn't allow the systems to overburden us. That's why they could do so much. Mind you, of course they called investigations on me, and what they found? *Went to London to see the Queen. What did they find?*

Mr. Speaker, in closing, hear what makes it even more impressive, what this administration and governments in the past have done—yours too, Mr. Speaker, yours too. The current Government is smaller than ever. Perhaps that's all we need, fewer [people] and get more done, instead of more people to fight more. Yet, it's accomplishing more than the critics care to admit, because despite limited resources, the Premier has delivered cost-of-living adjustments for people in our civil service and the year-end bonuses and salary increases, providing real financial relief for people. Just today there's another increase promised by our Deputy Premier through the Caucus and the Cabinet for our seniors, seamen and others.

Mr. Speaker, why the hesitation to call this what it is? It is success. We've got things to fix, but that's success. It is helping people. In our system of governance and our systems that we have to live by, the kind of economy we've got, the free economy, we don't have price controls—people want it. You hear them talking about it, they don't know how difficult it is. "Oh, you can just do it!" No, we cannot 'just do it'. That's not how it works.

Some would rather, Mr. Speaker, play politics than acknowledge reality. The fact remains, the Cayman Islands has made economic gains, but there is work to be done, cost-of-living increase to be curtailed, social development to advance and generally to improve the lives of our people. That's what I'm about. If I stand before a nomination desk on the 30<sup>th</sup> March, I think it is, then that's what I would promise the people, to fight—

[Inaudible interjection]

**Hon. W. McKeever Bush:** Nominations I'm talking about, not elections.

[Inaudible interjection]

**Hon. W. McKeever Bush:** No. April is election, the 30<sup>th</sup>, right? What?

[Inaudible interjection]

**Hon. W. McKeever Bush:** March 3<sup>rd</sup>? Oh, that's my son's birthday. That's a good day to get nominated on.

What I would promise the people is those things. Can we do it? Can I do it by myself? No. What I promise them is, if elected, I am going to work with a team with a manifesto similar to mine and I will look at others to see who's there that will speak out for us and

be objective, not be vindictive and think of others. That's why I'm running because I didn't have anyone that I could put there. Nobody came forward that I could put there, whom I thought would serve the people. The people! Not for the salary, because they're looking at that, but for the good of the people.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the many people around me who have assisted my journey. [There're] many people in the public service I must thank, whom I have had the privilege to work with and depend [on] to help my people, because that's how we get things done. Whether some of them like us or not, you know some of them don't like us. Like I said, I don't have to sleep with them, I don't have to eat with them, I don't stay with them; as long as they do their work, I will respect them and I hope they will respect me.

I want to name some publicly, Mr. Speaker, because what I am about to say is true: Ms. Lizzette from the Health Services Authority (HSA). There's not one time that I called that lady that she didn't answer. Whether she was off on vacation, off on weekends, it was time for her to go home or she was already home, that woman answered and tried to help. In most instances she would help fix the situation.

Ms. Tammy Hurlston, she is a champion that we need to be proud of from the Department of Financial Assistance (DFA). You know the *cussin'* that she and her staff take from our people when they can't just have their way, and they put their own meaning and assumptions about what is taking place? She works hard, and again, she could be off island, she could be home, holidays, [still] she is going to answer and she is going to try to help.

The Chief Officers (COs), especially Mr. Wesley Howell, who's presently one of my Chief Officers, [he] knows how to get things done. Capable, willing, wants to know how he can fix the problem. Mr. Eric Bush in the Ministry of Agriculture and other ministries, of course, under my Minister Ebanks. Ms. Tamara Ebanks, probably one of the youngest ones, and Ms. Nellie Pouchie. All of them my current COs, as I'm the Parliamentary Officer. They work. They work and their staff work to get things done.

We make laws to make it difficult for them and then we expect them to get it done. We have to shift some of the laws. We have to amend some of them if you are going to help your people, because you have tried something and it's not working.

There should not be a case, Mr. Speaker, where you come across a needed situation—like amputees. If everything is not A and B, the law says they can't do it. The Minister should have discretion. Take it to Cabinet, take it to Caucus and deal with the issue. The laws that we pass are not helping.

Chief Officers, Ms. Echenique and Mr. Welcome, they work. You ask them, they'll try to fix the situation because they know you're serving people. She's left the Chamber now, but Mrs. Gloria McField-Nixon,

who is the Chief Officer of the Portfolio of the Civil Service, I can't say anything other than when I asked Gloria to check on a matter and to look at it to see what can be done. Again, if the laws are not right the civil servants are not going to put their foot forward, you can believe that. I have found her willing to work and to help our people.

The Deputy Governor is the same and the present AG is the same. He is ever careful; he don't want to go no court. Not our AG. They are willing to tell you, and then it's up to you. Our laws, our regulations that we put in place are hampering us from getting the things done, Mr. Speaker. The bureaucracy, too much of it! It's hampering us from serving our people in good times especially. Sometimes you get something done, but it takes too long. We are dealing with people's lives and that's what I want to say, Mr. Speaker.

Brian Chin Yee from the National Roads Authority (NRA); the staff of this Parliament; Cabinet staff; Mrs. Paulinda Mendoza-Williams; and last but not least, Ms. Liz, and the Ministry of Culture's staff; Ms. Exie Panton of Minister Ebanks' Ministry, the ministry of all things; Mr. Demoy Nash and Dr. Peart of the Agriculture Ministry; these people work. They are willing, they have knowledge, but our laws and our regulations hamper us in far too many stages.

Last but not least, two things Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry to hear you say you will not be offering yourself.

**The Speaker:** Times have changed, eh?

**Hon. W. McKeever Bush:** Times have changed. I know when it was this time [last election] you were off, one foot out the door, ready to go! Now you're saying you're not offering yourself for re-election.

Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that you and I found ourselves on different political sides, we still could get together and do what was best for the country, and I think both of us showed that in 2017 with me taking the Chair and you going into a further term for Premier. We got plenty done. I hope, and I can say this and I think you would say the same thing, that we have found ourselves in a good relationship, respectful of where you come from and what you want done. That's what I tell people.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you. As I said, I'm not keen to know that you are moving on, because we do need people who have long-term experience.

Last, again, are my colleagues. I'll have more time to row with them, I guess, because while House will dissolve, Government will stand and still be in place until this election is called, and even up to a week after the election. I want to encourage our Members to pull together and stand firm and stop talking when someone else is talking—

[Laughter]

**Hon. W. McKeeva Bush:** —and listen.

I want to thank the Premier for her long service and her advice. She is a very calculated woman, you can believe that and she needs to run again.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

*[Desk thumping]*

**Hon. W. McKeeva Bush:** She needs to seek an extra term. Come on, it's not good for people of experience, mostly the older ones, to be leaving. I know what the younger ones are saying, and I know some of the older ones who don't want us, they don't want to see us. I know what they're saying over there, *"Unna need to go. Yeah, yeah, yeah."*

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. W. McKeeva Bush:** *[Laughter]* Well, that goes without saying.

But, Mr. Speaker, they have served; you have served. My Minister, the three Ministers who I work with now in the four ministries... The Deputy Premier has come a *long* way. I remember him, you know. He was close to telling all, but he didn't tell all. I know which programme I graduated him from when I was Minister of Social Development and the work he is trying to do to get the tourism industry back on track, especially our cruise sector which is suffering. We don't need to go through that again.

The Minister of Agriculture, Planning, et cetera—the youngest one, I believe—the work he has done. It's time for him to come to West Bay to do a little bit more though, you know?

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. W. McKeeva Bush:** Mm-hmm.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Culture, his heart is in his Ministry and his culture. I think they are working hard to fix the issues that affect Caymanians and that will improve Cayman. I have enjoyed working with Members on both sides. I was sorry to see my colleague, the Member for Bodden Town West shift up into that northeast corner by himself.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. W. McKeeva Bush:** Southeast corner, by himself. I know of his intelligence and his will to get the things done.

I don't know how much they will say about me afterwards, but I think I've put on record some of what I think was important for me, to remind myself when I started to write and hopefully for others to appreciate where we've been, where we come from and what we can do as a country. We're small, *we likkle, but we tal-lawah.*

Thank you very much and God bless us, God bless the Cayman Islands. We look forward as we go about our nocturnal duties—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. W. McKeeva Bush:** Campaigning, I mean.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. W. McKeeva Bush:** Let me make that clear, Mr. Speaker: Campaigning, I mean!

I wish them all well. Think no evil of anyone. God bless you all.

**The Speaker:** Does any other Member wish to speak?

*[Pause]* All right, don't do this to me this evening.

*[Laughter]* Does any other Member wish to speak?

*[Pause]*

The honourable Member for George Town South.

*[Pause]*

**Ms. Barbara E. Conolly, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Elected Member for George Town South:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise for the final time—and I don't want to cry—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Ms. Barbara E. Conolly, Deputy Leader of the Opposition:** —in this honourable House with a heart full of gratitude, pride, and an unshakeable hope for the future of these beautiful Cayman Islands. This is not a moment of farewell, it is a moment of reflection, now passing the torch to my successor who will carry us into a brighter tomorrow.

Over the years, my journey in public service has not just been about policies or politics, it has been about my people. It has been about the power of Caymanians to rise above challenges. Serving you all has taught me invaluable lessons and today I want to share some of those lessons which I hope will serve as a guide for those who come after me.

Sometimes you can't predict the path in life that God has in store for you. I never planned to be in representation and politics. My journey of getting here was perhaps my destiny, but I will share my journey so that others may see how one thing sometimes leads to the next, eventually manifesting in your calling.

My journey began when I had the privilege of working at the law firm of Truman Bodden and Company from the late seventies to the mid-eighties gaining invaluable exposure to politics while assisting with tasks for the then Minister of Education, Mr. Truman Bodden, who allocated his time between his law practice and at the Government Administration Building.

Then, I got the opportunity to work part-time at the Elections Office for my brother Kearny Gomez, the then Supervisor of Elections.

As a long-time supporter of the Honourable D. Kurt Tibbetts, I attended political meetings where I began to see and understand some of the intricacies of political leadership. I recall attending political meetings with my children who were toddlers at the time, and from those days, my family and I always supported the Honourable D. Kurt Tibbetts and whichever team he was with at the time. After the coup in November 2001 where the Honourable D. Kurt Tibbetts was forced to step down as leader, a group of key people, namely the Honourable D. Kurt Tibbetts, the Honourable Edna Moyle, Mr. Anthony Eden, Mr. Arden McLean, Ms. Lucille Seymour and your good self, Mr. Speaker, formed the People's Progressive Movement [PPM] in 2002.

It was when the party was established that I became an active member and we held our inaugural conference in September of 2002. I, along with several members of the party, organised a very successful event with the Premier [sic] of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the Honourable Ralph Gonsalves, who is still the Premier [sic] today being our guest speaker.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Ms. Barbara E. Conolly, Deputy Leader of the Opposition:** Sorry, Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, I worked tirelessly for the PPM party. I was appointed to serve as General Secretary of the PPM and on its executive until 2017, continuing as an elected Member thereafter.

In 2005, after the PPM won the Government, the Honourable D. Kurt Tibbetts called me saying he wasn't too thrilled about hiring a political assistant but was told he had to since the previous Leader of Government Business had one. He asked if I could find someone. That night, I mulled it over, discussed it with my family and called him back the next day, saying "*K.T., I found someone*". Naturally, he asked, "*Is it someone I can work with?*" I couldn't help but laugh and said, "*Well, I'm thinking of stepping away from financial services. How about me?*" He was thrilled, and I was just as excited to jump into this new adventure. Opportunities show up when you are ready for them and I was ready to dive into a life of public service.

Mr. Speaker, I was elected as a Member of Parliament for George Town South in 2017 after being asked to consider running just one day before nomination. At first, it wasn't because we thought I could win, it was to fill a gap. It was to fill that spot because the person that was supposed to put her name up to run in George Town South wasn't able to and we were left with that one spot empty; but I have never been the type of person who just does something for the sake of it. Thus, with an energetic team behind me, mainly women, as well as the Honourable D. Kurt Tibbetts, we

hit the ground hard for six weeks and after the ballots were counted, we emerged victorious and I was on my way to becoming a Member of this honourable House.

Since then, I have played critical roles across two parliamentary terms. Mr. Speaker, serving as Councillor (now called Parliamentary Secretary) to the Minister of Education, now our Honourable Premier, and later in that term I also served as Councillor to the then Minister of Finance, Mr. Roy McTaggart. Thank you, Honourable Premier and Mr. McTaggart for affording me that opportunity to serve under your very capable leadership. Those were four memorable years and I learned so much from both of you. I would also like to thank both ministry teams for their support during that time. Acting as temporary minister periodically under both of you allowed me to attend Cabinet meetings and make meaningful contributions while also exposing me to public speaking and carrying the message to the people, the work that was being done on their behalf.

Serving on the Public Accounts Committee and the Standards in Public Life Committee gave me a front row seat to the inner workings of Government. I had the honour of chairing the Youth Parliament Organising Committee, [and] was appointed Deputy Speaker later that term. I also served on the Education Council for a few years, which was also very rewarding for me.

At the constituency level, I was able to mobilise the necessary resources and teams to actually get things done, instead of just talking about getting them done. I pride myself on delivering results and I am proud of the many achievements I was able to implement. Some of these included:

- Renaming Humber Avenue to Claude Hill Road; that's the road adjacent to the Government Administration Building. Thanks to the Honourable Premier for assisting me with that. That was early in my term in 2017.
- Launching neighbourhood watch programmes in 10 areas of George Town South;
- Installing major drainage systems in Windsor Park and revitalising its pond and park infrastructure;
- Leading the renaming of South Sound beach to Consuelo's beach. Again, thank you, Honourable Premier and you, Mr. Speaker, as Premier at that time;
- Facilitating the installation of a pedestrian crossing at Smith Barcadere; and
- Co-sponsoring with my colleague, the MP for George Town West, free Wi-Fi in the park in Windsor Park.

That's to name just a few of my achievements during my time from 2017 to 2021.

Mr. Speaker, the one regret I have is not being successful in having the double yellow lines on Hawkin's Drive removed on one side of that road, but my constituents know that I tried my best, to the extent

of a parliamentary question coming to this honourable House. Sadly, there were forces that were fighting against me, evil forces, hence the failure to address and accomplish that one task.

Mr. Speaker, up until this past Sunday, I received a call from a constituent who was so stressed that I had to go and visit her to calm her down as a result of an incident that occurred on that same road. Today, I implore the Honourable Minister of Infrastructure, one more time before I demit this office, if he would be so kind as to work with the NRA team to remove those double yellow lines just on the one side of that road, I would forever be grateful to him and I could leave this office feeling that I've accomplished that one task that I have left undone as a result of whatever forces.

At the national level, Mr. Speaker, I represented the Cayman Islands at Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) conferences and workshops. I assisted young parliamentarians in their debates. I acted as temporary Speaker at a few Meetings of Parliament. One that I will never forget was when the extremely controversial Domestic Partnership Bill was debated; and as you will recall, Mr. Speaker, that debate lasted 2.5 days and was extremely emotive. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Honourable Attorney General for his support and guidance during that Meeting. What a stressful time it was, Mr. Speaker, sitting in that chair that you now occupy and having to preside over that debate.

Mr. Speaker, I must acknowledge that it was challenging to transition from Government to Opposition in 2021, especially because you know what needs to be done but have to remain patient while hoping that others will get it done. Admittedly, none of this could have been possible without the support of my party colleagues, my fellow Members of this honourable House, the various administrative teams that I have been able to work with throughout the years, and of course, the people of George Town South.

Mr. Speaker, I will always remain loyal to the People's Progressive Movement and to the people of the Cayman Islands, even as I step away from representational politics. If there is one message that I would want the younger generation to take away from this is that loyalty is a necessary ingredient for success, the ability to trust the people around you without having to watch your back or wonder if they're going to change their mind the next day or go in a different direction. Sure, there may be times when we hold different views, but our politics must mature to the point where we can sit at a table and discuss these views with the only outcome being a resolution in the interest of the people we serve.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to share three key lessons that I have learned throughout this entire experience:

First, there is power in unified effort. Over the years, I have witnessed first-hand the power of collective effort, the ability of communities to come together to rise above challenges. Time and time again, I have seen the brilliance of Caymanians shining brightest when we stand together; from rebuilding after storms to navigating the uncertainties of a global pandemic, our resilience is unmatched. Let this serve as a reminder that our strength lies not in what divides us but in what binds us together. A shared love for our Islands and an unwavering determination to leave them better for future generations.

Secondly, never underestimate the power of innovation and determination. Caymanians are among the most resourceful and creative people in the world, whether it's pioneering in financial services, excelling in education or sport, or transforming our communities, we have proven that the size of our Islands does not limit the size of our dreams. My time serving this country has shown me the extraordinary potential of our people. Colleagues, let us continue to create opportunities that nurture that potential and inspire the next generation to think bigger, aim higher and reach further.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, leadership is service. True leadership is not about titles or power, it is about empowering others, listening with humility and acting with integrity. It is about recognising that every decision we make today shapes the legacy we leave tomorrow. As I prepare to step aside, I urge my colleagues in this honourable House and across these Islands to embrace the profound responsibility of leadership. Remember the most important title all of us will ever hold is that of "servant to the people".

Mr. Speaker, our journey as a people has not always been easy. We have faced trials that tested our resolve, but time and time again, we have risen. It is this indomitable Caymanian spirit that gives me confidence in our future. I see it in the eyes of our children. I see it in the eyes of my 16 year old granddaughter. Wow, is she ever strong willed! I see in the dedication of our civil servants. I see it in the passion of our entrepreneurs and I see it in the compassion of our communities.

To my constituents, you have given me the honour of representing you, the privilege of hearing your stories and the trust to carry your voices to this honourable House. Together we have faced challenges and celebrated triumphs. I am proud of the progress we have made and I leave this role knowing that the spirit of George Town South will continue to thrive.

I could not leave without publicly thanking some of the key people who have been a part of this fulfilling journey. My children, Erica, Alex and Cliff and my beloved grandchildren, Ariana and Sierra, for their understanding and support; despite missing many family moments, you never once gave me a hard time and you understood that sacrifice was part of the job in order to be able to truly make a difference. My siblings

and extended family, for your patience during my absence at family gatherings. Special mention to my brother, Chet, for your readiness to help with the heavy lifting, literally and figuratively.

To the civil servants, both from my first term on the fifth floor of the Government Administration Building and various departments such as NRA, NAU (now known as the Department of Financial Assistance), HSA and CINICO, to name a few, for your steadfast guidance and assistance over these last eight years. To the parliamentary staff, the Clerk and her awesome team, thank you for your hard work, your passion and your commitment, not just to this institution but to all of us parliamentarians. It was indeed a pleasure and a privilege working with each and every one of you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

My fellow parliamentarians, past and present, for your shared commitment and effort to make the Cayman Islands a better place. To the Honourable Premier, thank you for your long, long service. You've been a faithful servant to the people of the Cayman Islands. You will be greatly missed. To my official Opposition Leaders, thank you for your support, guidance and friendship over these past eight years. To the Member for George Town West, we were a team. You were my sidekick and you believed in me. We shared a constituency office and worked together on many projects, events and programmes and had great times together. Thank you for your confidence in me and trusting my judgment.

Mr. Speaker, you and I go back a long way from growing up in Crewe Road and being a part of the PPM family for the past 23 years, and I was truly honoured to have you as my Premier for my first term and I will never forget the amazing work you did to protect us, the people of these Islands, during the COVID-19 pandemic. You and your team worked tirelessly. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Honourable Dwayne Seymour and Honourable Samuel Bulgin, our Attorney General (AG), for all of your support and commitment, along with our former Governor Roper, during that time. As you well know, Mr. Speaker, those were stressful days and nights, but thank God we are resilient people and we fared well. I would also like to thank you for always being there for me in the good times and the bad. It is indeed most appreciated.

Now, I turn to my other good friend, the Honourable D. Kurt Tibbetts, who's like a brother to me. He's also my mentor, advisor and was my personal campaign manager. I owe you a debt of gratitude for your unwavering guidance and support, as someone that I could call on any time for political advice and for so many other things. Thank you, K.T.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my personal assistant, Vicky Forero, affectionately known to me as Sulie, who stood by me through the many challenges that I faced over these eight years, defended me and had my back every step of the way, and celebrated with me during my many victories as well. Thank you again,

Sulie, for your tenacity, your love and your support. You are loved and appreciated and you will always be considered a part of my family.

I would also like to thank Julisa, the assistant to the Member for George Town West, for all of her assistance in our shared constituency office. Also, thanks to Sharon in the main PPM office and Lynette at the Honourable Leader of the Opposition's office.

Of course, nothing would be possible without our all-powerful and loving God whom we serve. Thank you for keeping me healthy and strong and for never failing me.

To my beloved constituents of George Town South—and this is when I get all emotional, Mr. Speaker. I wish to express my profound gratitude for your trust, your love and your confidence in me, and your support throughout my two terms. I am leaving you in good hands and will be working with my successor to ensure you get the best representation possible, so you won't miss me too much, I hope, and I'm only a phone call away. Good leadership is about succession planning and I will walk hand-in-hand to ensure a smooth transition to your new representative.

To my colleagues, I leave you with this charge: Lead boldly, lead wisely and lead with the people at heart. Cayman deserves nothing less.

To the people of the Cayman Islands, my faith in you is never ending. We are a small nation and we are mighty. We are diverse, yet deeply connected. We are rich, not just in resources, but in spirit, culture and ambition. The best days of the Cayman Islands are still ahead of us. Mr. Speaker, politics at its best is about people, but it is also about knowing when it's time to step aside to give space for new ideas, new voices and new energy to shape the course of our nation. As I step into the next chapter of my life, I do so with profound gratitude for this journey and a heart full of hope for what lies ahead. Let us continue to walk this path together, lifting each other up and striving always for a Cayman Islands that is more united, more innovative and more compassionate.

May God bless you all and may God bless these beautiful Cayman Islands that we all have the privilege of calling home. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*[Desk thumping]*

**The Speaker:** Thank you, honourable Member. That's a tough act to follow.

The honourable Member for Cayman Brac West and Little Cayman.

**Mr. Moses I. Kirkconnell, Elected Member for Cayman Brac West and Little Cayman:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise for my last time to express thanks for this parliamentary time that I've had. As I will not be seeking another term, I would like to spend some time sharing a few highlights from the last 20 years of

service to my community, Cayman Brac, Little Cayman and the country as a whole,

Today, as I stand before you, I find myself reflecting on the 20 years that has spanned five terms in the Parliament of this country. It has been an honour and a privilege to serve the people of these beautiful Islands and I'm deeply grateful for the trust and support they have shown me over these years.

First, let me thank the good Lord for his provision and protection during my terms in Parliament. I'd like to thank my dedicated committee in Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, and some here in Grand Cayman; but especially my personal assistant Ms. Liz Walton Thompson who for 20 years has been—not working five days per week, but as we all know in here—working seven days per week. They have been instrumental in finding out the needs in the individual neighbourhoods that they live and work in and communicating them on a regular basis so that we could strategise and look at how we could deal with those needs of the individuals and the community.

Also, the unwavering commitment from my wife, family and friends, as I've spent much of my time and energy with constituents and parliamentary responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, very importantly, I want to thank the Cayman Brac and Little Cayman constituents for expressing their faith in me to sit in their parliamentary seat for 20 plus years with 87 per cent of the vote in the last election. We all need to be sure and remember this is not our seat that we're here in, this is the seat of the people you represent and it's an honour to sit in this seat and represent them, and there's a responsibility that comes along with it. Certainly, we might be judged only once every four years, but they will certainly let you know if they want you back in their seat.

Mr. Speaker, from my first election in 2005 to this day, I've dedicated myself to advocating for the needs, as mentioned, and the aspirations of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. My roles, first as an MLA, then as an MP, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, the Minister of District Administration, Tourism and Transport and the Deputy Premier of this country, have provided me with the opportunities to contribute to the growth and development of our Islands.

I must take this time to say a special thanks to you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank you for your support, your advice, your friendship and the confidence you showed in me [by] leaving me as the Acting Premier of this country weeks at a time as you had to travel with your responsibilities to go abroad. Somewhere along the line, I think you had something to do with my receiving an OBE from the King.

I'm proud of the strides we've made together, particularly in the tourism industry and infrastructural development of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, as well as the country as a whole. As a community leader, I've always believed in the potential of our Islands and

it was fulfilling to see our opportunities for sustainable development evolve.

My heart has always been with the people and the needs within my community, my constituency, and I've supported many youth-related activities; through boys and girls sports, the work in installing the certified football field and track, a new 25 metre competition swimming pool, multipurpose hall, as well as programmes like Junior Achievers, public speaking competitions and the like. I'm a founding Member of the National Trust and a contributing Member of the Veterans and Seaman Society of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. I've always committed my full support for improved roads, improved healthcare, improved air service via Cayman Airways to Cayman Brac and Little Cayman and abroad, increased funding to improve fire and police services and the funding for district administration and public works.

Mr. Speaker, I have to stop here and give an example of working with my colleague who I have been with 20 years, side-by-side in Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. She as well, the Premier, will be retiring. What I just outlined is an example that I believe the country needs to look at, as far as, it didn't matter whether I was the Minister responsible for District Administration or she was the Minister, the projects that she started and I found, I worked on and the projects that I started, she found, she worked on. That's the reason the Member for West Bay West could stand here and talk about the infrastructure, because neither of us would have done it without being together and working for the people to get their projects and their needs answered.

Mr. Speaker, I also support educational facilities and I have given full support to the new school that is led by the Premier. It has been pushed and it's her tenacity that has moved this forward as quickly as it has, and my prayer is that it will continue to move forward and there would be a finished school as quickly as possible because our youth in Cayman Brac and Little Cayman deserve the very best. Hats off to her for the push that she's had with it.

*[Desk thumping]*

**Mr. Moses I. Kirkconnell:** Mr. Speaker, as we look and think of what we have accomplished in this country. It's absolutely correct to say that there's much more to be done, but we must recognise that the leadership of this country over—you talked today of 28 years, 24 years, 20 years, 8 years, 8 years; the people who are sitting here today that have years in, you must understand the success that is guided from the top up and look at how we enjoy our Islands.

We have the highest standard of education in the region—not by accident, by leadership and work. We have the highest standard of healthcare in the region, not by accident, but by investment and hard work and leadership. We have the highest level of social benefits. I heard the Minister responsible, who has just

taken over the portfolio, talk about his challenges and how he wanted to move it forward. It's the right thing to do Mr. Minister, and it will continue because as we say, it has to be worked on. It is, to our knowledge, the best that is available now and will continue to get better. We have a modern standard of living that no one can question. That's why people want to understand why we're so successful and why so many people want to move here and live here and enjoy our standard of living.

For Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, we looked at it and wanted to leave it in a sustainable way. The way forward. I'm happy to report that we have affordable homes, [which] the Premier has championed, and will be coming out shortly to join the other affordable homes that are there. We have solar electricity for both Cayman Brac and Little Cayman that are being worked on presently. Imagine when we're off grid, two Islands in this Caribbean region, what that will mean.

We have a marina that's being looked at right now with the investor already committing to the funds needed and working with the Department of Environment to get the permissions to go forward. Think about a \$60 million public sector project with schools side-by-side with a \$50 million private sector project for jobs and for sustainable development in Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, with the addition of a new plane for Little Cayman, with expansion thoughts of what has to be moved forward with both airports. The future is bright for the Sister Islands and the future is bright because of hard work and the leadership that it's had. I'm proud, Mr. Speaker, of what we have been able to do and I'm proud of how we will leave opportunities for the individuals and our citizens and our constituents that are there. These have been some of the most rewarding aspects in my political career, I leave Cayman Brac and Little Cayman poised to move forward in a sustainable way.

As I retire from my parliamentary duties, I do so with a heart full of gratitude and memories that I will treasure. My purpose was to move our Islands forward so they would be in a better position than when I began. I am thankful for the friendships, the challenges and the accomplishments that have defined my career and my time here in Parliament. It was always the spirit of our people that inspired me to work every day and I'm excited for the future of the opportunities it still holds for our Islands.

May God bless each one of you and may he continue to bless our beloved Islands. Thank you, Mr. Speaker for the time.

*[Desk thumping]*

**The Speaker:** Thank you honourable Member for Cayman Brac West and Little Cayman. Thank you too for your steadfast support as my Deputy, not once but twice, two terms; and then when I told you that you needed to be the next Leader, you said, *"Thanks, but no thanks—"*

*[Laughter]*

**The Speaker:** *"I've seen what the Leader has to do."*

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:** Mr. Speaker, let me first say thanks to the God Almighty above. Let me quote Pastor Garrett Haylock, he said, *"God puts us here"*.

To the staff here at Parliament, thank you. Another thank you—the first time I stood in here, the honourable Arden McLean said, *"Let no one else in here chart your course as an elected Member."* Mr. Anthony Eden said, *"Always follow your conscience and do not bend your principles."* Winston Connolly came and left, but I found him to be a man of his word; he was one of the people who I knew in here that when he said something, it was good. Captain Eugene told me, *"Do not waste no whole lot of talk repeating other people and talking all that stuff. Go out and do good. You've been doing good for a long time, just continue."* I listened to all of them.

The very first time I sat in this House, something I will not make you all forget, the TLEPS. I made the mistake, that's what the Member for Bodden Town West said, *"and they said, you mustn't poke the bear."* I poked you Mr. Speaker, and I said, *"Mr. Tibbetts, you know, you're the real leader,"* and when you got back up to speak to close off, you laid into me—not too hard—then you showed me the thing you had on your desk. You remember that? Don't start a fight, something like that?

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Bernie A. Bush:** That's right. You showed it to me and I learned my lesson. I didn't pick any fights, but I certainly didn't shun from them.

To the great people of West Bay North, thank you. Thank you for the great honour of representing you all. I am honoured and will forever be grateful. To my family, thank you, thank you. The late nights, the inconvenience of having no privacy, coming outside and seeing people sitting down at the dining room table, my constituents, other constituents, sometimes things not even to do with politics. Nights that you had to hide people from an abusive marriage or a child being molested—things that you don't put on Facebook, which is something that I don't do.

There are some people who've always encouraged and helped me, my close friend, it cost me a lot and he will ever be my friend, David Watler; Woody Foster; and Ulysses. Every time I've taken someone for a job, they try their best. If I need help with something, they help me.

Health City has taken so many people with no card or nothing and helped them. Winner's Circle, the number of young people who have gone to get shoes,

just pick them up, and every time I go, Chris would say, "Give me a \$25,"—and sometimes shoes cost a lot. Funky Tangs, the number of laptops that I've sent young people there to pick up. Sometimes it would be two or three, and Mark would call and say, "*You know, you haven't paid for it?*" But he knows I'm coming. Churchill's, someone will die and I'll say, "*Churchill, they want this, put it on my bill.*" Never a question. Al T, at A.L. Thompson's, and one of my favourites who looks at the big, big picture, Frank E. Flowers. Then there is Michael Johnson, otherwise known as Chris, at National Concrete, and not only from National Concrete, but out of his own pocket, a forklift here or his own personal heavy equipment to help.

I started this journey in 1980, Mr. Speaker. The late, great Ms. Olive Miller showed up at the high school and selected four people, Kim, Katherine, Tommy and me—Tommy Ebanks whose mother was an MLA, Ms. Esther Ebanks. Tommy to this day is still helping in the community, but like me, we're from the school where we don't advertise it. That's not something that we do, we just help people.

That was my first taste, the NCSS summer camp [*sic*]. It was my first taste of doing something like this and it felt good, working with young people. Who was in that group? Deputy Chief Officer Leyda Nicholson and Martha and May McField, the twins, those are just some of the people I can remember at this moment. It got me into it.

Along the way, the Special Olympics were started, when Mr. Skinner called me and said, "*Let's start the Special Olympics,*" [along with] Dodie Ebanks and Julie K. Wells. There was [also] a Canadian lady named Mrs. Marion, and what I remember most about her was whenever there was a trip to go on, she said, "*I was in Special Olympics, Canada, I don't have to travel. Make someone else travel.*" That don't happen too often these days. That's why half of these people claim they like the sports, they really just want to travel.

Then one day, along came my children and all of a sudden I was in a PTA with people like Collie Powery, Lorraine Ebanks, Carol Smith—just the ones I can remember. That PTA was exciting because we were the first primary school in this country to get A/C. All the money raised by us and it wasn't easy. The red tape started from then and the late, great Thomas Jefferson had to take Truman off my back because they did not want that school to have A/C. We even had a fund set up that was going to pay for the bill. We went out and we raised the money ourselves, so much so that when I left as PTA president there was over \$200,000 in the accounts. We were the first school. We were doing free breakfast from then. Laptops, we did it as well. Back then, Sports Day, Festival of the Arts, before the powers that be watered it down because we were so good we were beating everybody. When I say "we", I'm talking about all those little poor children in those schools, they were beating everybody.

Parents never had to go in their pockets for five cents. The PTA took care of everything. You know what we even did, Mr. Speaker? That PTA, at the end of every school year were able to watch and identify the teachers who went way beyond the call of duty and we would give them a little cheque on the side. I mean, there was one teacher in particular who went home for the summer and when she came back her car had been painted, fixed up and everything because of the extra effort she put in with the children. [She] never asked for anything. That's how advanced that PTA was.

Then one day Mr. Floyd Bush, Arnold Hanni and I got a call from Dion Brandon and John Kelly and then started a great club called Future. Along the way, Athletic Association was revitalised and brought up to par; the Cricket Association, along with the great man, Jimmy Powell, spending all his money; the Olympic Committee became Caymanian; and many, many more. Too much here to mention.

Mr. Speaker, I was working with Civil Aviation at Air Traffic Control and Mr. Winston Skinner showed up and he asked me a question, "*What's your favourite sport?*" Mr. Speaker, it took me [a bit of] thinking and I said, "*Okay, I got my answer: Every sport is my favourite sport, whichever one I'm watching.*" He said to me, "*Leave this, this is not your calling. Let's go build the sports office.*" I took a big pay cut and went and started the sports office. First, [it was] me and Mr. Skinner, then we convinced Andy Kisco Myles to leave the fire service, then Merta Day. We were doing every school, in every district, every sport all those years by ourselves. I [also] did Sundays with the Adventist Church.

Mr. Speaker, much has been done, starting the physical education (PE) programme at Truth for Youth and starting the PE Programme at Wesleyan, of which the Member, Ms. Katherine Ebanks-Wilks was part of. It's been a good and happy road. Not much in funds, but a lot of love, I wouldn't change it for the world. In my short time, I think I've done reasonably well; never playing politics, always doing what was the right thing and not pleasing people, because I would not follow certain people. Always, once again, doing the right thing. The thank-yous were always appreciated.

One of the things of my life that I'll always appreciate is getting a call from Mrs. Shirley Kidd saying, "*You and Floyd Bush finally got your wish.*" In 1981, I got a call from Floyd Bush, he said, "*I know you think you're something big now because you graduated and you're playing all this big club football and for the country,*" but he said, "*Come, we got a lot of children at West Bay Primary we got to start to work with,*" and we started down there in 1981. He had just come home from sea and we worked.

Every year you had Sports Day and different competitions and we would tell Mr. Crawford [and] everyone, "*We need four houses, operating with three houses is not nice.*" Years later, I can remember the spot, at that time there was no Esterly Tibbetts Highway, it was only the front road and we were passing the

entrance to the Yacht Club. She got a call and she said, "You got your wish." I said, "What is that?" She said, "We're putting in a fourth house," and I said, "God, I know Mr. Floyd would be happy. Is it Ebanks? Because at West Bay you've got Hunter, Smith and Bodden." She said, "Ebanks? No, we're naming it after yourself and Floyd, we're naming it the Bush house." What an honour, Mr. Speaker, to be so young and have someone say that to you. I thought I had reached the pinnacle. I pulled over, got a little emotional, but I was happy. We had the fourth house.

Mr. Speaker, in spite of all these things, no matter what you do, someone said it earlier on, there are always those who try to find something negative, whether perceived, made up or whatever; but in this line of work that we've all been asked to put in here, it comes with it.

A perfect example is Apple Orchid, whatever it's called, in West Bay.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Bernie A. Bush:** Apple what?

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Bernie A. Bush:** Apple Blossoms. I've heard Katherine Ebanks-Wilks, former Speaker of this House, every week when she was Speaker she would call and say, "Minister, please make sure you push Apple Blossoms." Then she came down and sacrificed to try to keep the Government on the way. Every Caucus and Cabinet she fought for Apple Blossoms. Yet, I would bump into some of my people—they're in her area, but they believe in me—and they would be, *oh*, putting her down for Apple Blossoms. I had to keep telling them you all don't know what you're talking [about], she is *fighting every week*. The system, like what the Minister for West Bay West spoke about, the red tape that you have to go through to get things done. God forbid if you have a Chief Officer or other people in your Ministry that don't believe in your policy or don't like you. *Oh*, it is not easy, Mr. Speaker. It is not easy.

Mr. Speaker, they said, "*Oh, you all go in there for the money. You all go in there for the pension.*" Every month I gave away \$2,500 in food vouchers. That's why when election time comes, it's nothing strange, and I do it all year round. We had so many people, not only in West Bay North but in other sections that I had to alternate them; you get something this month, you get something that month. There were so many people, I couldn't give them all something big, so I had to tell some of them, "You're getting one little bit. If I gave you all of it, they wouldn't get anything and if I gave them everything, you wouldn't get it, and most of the time they understood."

Mr. Speaker, the proud thing is, some of the things I learned in this game early, I made sure everything was out of my personal pocket, because many of

them in here are being helped by outside forces and those outside forces don't mean Cayman well or they don't mean Caymanians [well]. That's why I can tell you, I can list off two people who the *Compass* doesn't like: me and the present Premier. They don't like the two of us. When you hear of people who would FOI about where she buys her clothes or how much is the cost of her clothes that shows you the depth that they will go when they don't like you.

Mr. Speaker, I have done my best. I have come from a sporting background and when you [have] played defence or goalkeeper, as you and the Member for North Side did as goalkeepers, you know it is a thankless job. You'll stop the opponent 10-15 times and a forward will score one goal and he gets all the credit and he's the man of the match, the player of the match. That's the goalkeeper and defence.

Mr. Speaker, I remember the present Premier saying she could only remember one other time someone doing something similar, when I gave up my Ministry because I did not want an early election called; and, Mr. Speaker, to give up the Speaker of the House which Ms. Katherine Ebanks-Wilks did as well. That's what it's all about. That's team play. If anyone who was in that present [*sic*] Government says anything different about me, that I wasn't a team player... They cannot tell you I had sidebar meetings. I had none of the above. I wasn't cutting for any power. I wasn't cutting for any money. I just wanted to succeed.

Mr. Speaker, I had two compliments paid to me in the last month or so. One was from Winston Connolly, the former MLA here. He said, "*Bernie is misunderstood because he does not know how to bend. He says the things that a lot of people think, but no one must ever question his passion for his country or the passion for his people.*" That was one.

*[Pause]*

**Mr. Bernie A. Bush:** The second one was by Minister "Jay" Ebanks, he said, "*I thought I was Caymanian, [but] boy, you're Caymanian bad.*" I will hold those two very dear.

I want to thank some of the boards that I had when I was there. Neil Murray; one of the greatest women in this country, Dr. Ruthlyn Pomares; a lady who very few people know of but is sharp as the edge of a razorblade, Natasja Levy; one of my favourite people because he's ripped me apart but he's always done it to my face and he's honest, Johann Moxam; Shakeina Bush, who was my biggest critic but my biggest supporter; and who could be so blessed that they can tell the world that I had Michael Holding sitting on my Sports Commission, one of the greatest men whom I am lucky to have known.

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Speaker, like what Ms. Barbara said, there are some things that you regret you couldn't get done. Like I said, we got the pool in place, the five-a-side court in West Bay that was torn

down is being rebuilt right now (if we can ever get what is set aside for it) and two parks; but one of my greatest regrets is that my baby, and that's the sports office, I was not able to advance it. Like I said yesterday, people like Ronald Forbes are good enough, smart enough, intelligent enough and qualified enough to apply to the sports office and not get the job, yet, he can run a billion dollar project; but the powers-that-be hired a man who never studied nor played sports, nothing to do with sports, all of a sudden he's Director of Sports—and we expect sports to go forward. Not the individual's fault, it is those who hired him. They can make every excuse in the world, there's none in the world, because I cannot hire someone coming out to law school to be the Attorney General; but sports, people don't understand.

Just to show you how [it looks] when you plan properly. We hired a Throws Coach. Many people were asking, why? Well, do you know the history of the Cayman Islands? We have had more women collect medals at CARIFTA in throws than most other events; but you see, that's not a glamour event like the 100 metre and the 200 metre that most people see. Now, coming off of hiring Mr. Stanley, we have Kaliah Haye ranked number one in the world. Now, we have Gabriella Linton, the daughter of one of our national athletes, ranked number one in the world in shot put—and they're not 14 yet. Okay? They're not 14 yet, but in the under 15s they are number one in the world. That's when you understand what you're doing.

Many people didn't like the fact—in fact, even people within the association who should be rejoicing are not happy because the coach does his thing, getting results. Where did we start? In the primary schools, and all of a sudden...

I want to say thanks to Mark Ray—what most people don't understand is that he's a former CARIFTA medallist himself in a field event—for allowing one of my staff to go in there to work with these young children. The results have shown they've all improved across the board by 20 per cent, just by putting the right coach in the right place at the right time. If you could get an Arsenal coach now we'd be good.

Mr. Speaker, ego is a bad thing and that's why the sports office has been held back. [The person] who was there before knew nothing about sports and hired people who knew less and we wasted a lot of time and money. I was not able to get that fixed. A temporary fix, I understand, is there, but we can't interfere, no matter how [much] we know we are right. No matter when you ask, because it's not their idea, things are not done.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here today, having had some awesome children and when you know what they go through in their lives... My daughter took a big pay cut: after getting an engineering [degree] on a football scholarship at Florida International University, switched and decided she wanted to become a teacher. [From] \$110,000 per year to probably \$36,000 at that time. There were two of them who did it, they came off the most successful women's national team or the most

successful team this country has ever had in football. The captain, Shakeina Bush and the vice-captain Krishan Welcome, who was making upward of \$150,000-\$200,000 per year I'm sure, at the biggest law firm in this country, left and became two school teachers. I hope, one of these days, people will sit down and ask them [about it], as two young Caymanian women—and they were both recognised as good teachers, but of course one of them had the misfortune of belonging to Bernie Bush. What made it worse? She became school teacher of the year, she received a [Golden] Apple Award.

All of a sudden the victimisation began by the sawed-off Napoleon thing from somewhere up in Wales or England.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Bernie A. Bush:** He must have been Roper's twin.

Mr. Speaker, when the lawyer walked in, the meeting took 13 minutes and because my daughter insisted that she was being victimised. Nothing was found that she did anything wrong. All of the facts, all of the evidence showed otherwise. They wouldn't put anything on his record. Even though they said they took it off of hers, there was nothing, she was innocent, what they put her through? That's Cayman for you.

Then look at my son, captain at 21 years old on the Express. You know who loved him to death? The man who just spoke. Put him on the jet as well. Captain on the Express, flying the jet, then in comes the Saab and all of a sudden he was not good enough to fly the Saab. He picked up and left the country and six months later, he was good enough to fly the biggest plane in the world. First Caymanian to do so, and at the age of 29 became Captain on that same big A380-800, but wasn't good enough to fly a little Saab. That's our country for you and this must change.

Look at what happened to Darren McLean. Too many cases of young Caymanians who are good and we move the goal posts, especially when our masters say so. Mr. Speaker, we better start to think about us first, the double standard has gone on in the Civil Service—and they don't like to hear this, but I've got the evidence; that's one thing I love—and in the private sector and Caymanians are fed up. We keep burying our heads in the sand, but guess what? You all will have to face the music because the younger ones are not putting up with it.

Mr. Clive Vernon Glidden and Lillias Clarinda Ebanks-Glidden, I was born in their house and never left. I never spent much time with my biological mother, so that was my mother and my father. Mr. Clive, or "the Chief" as I called him, taught me something. His best friend was Mr. Calvin Anderson, apparently they came home from World War II on the same boat or something, but anyhow, the two of them never parted ways. He always said, "*God first, country, then family.*" Some people, they never understood that, but I understood

why. He said, *"Look at these Jamaicans that are here. Do you think anyone loves a country any more than them? Yet they're here. Why? Things are not good in their country,"* and it's a beautiful country. It was his favourite place besides Cayman.

He said, *"If your country is doing well, your family will do well."* Just make sure you instil ambition and make sure you help them get an education. I have lived by that motto and I want to thank my family for putting up with that, because it's not easy. When people ask me about my children, about what stands out, I tell them from the time that they were small they said, *"Daddy, I need this,"* and Mr. Speaker, I've said, *"I don't have the money,"* then up would walk a next child and say I need a pair...I'd look and see them and say, *"Let's go get a pair of shoes."* My children never were upset and never were jealous. It's as if they understood that child needed it. They didn't need, they only wanted. They grew with that and I'm happy to see that my oldest has also grown to adopt that motto; despite all the success she's had, it is God, country, family and then herself. Luckily the only family she has is me and you don't have to worry about me. I'll survive, and her mother.

Some people like Miguel Smith, Michel Rollin Ebanks, have stuck with me from the beginning. They have been out there, they're loyal, and what I have had from them is they always tell me the truth, which is very important. Not [just] tell you what you want to hear.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's time to call it. Thank you all. I have been honoured.

[Pause]

**Mr. Bernie A. Bush:** I've been here three terms and my name has never been associated with any corruption or anything. I started off—Chris, *not for sale, not for rent*—and I stayed true to the end. The Head of Barkers is such a hot item, nothing can happen again. Those, once again, in Caucus and Cabinet can tell the world. If they say something different, they are liars and you said not to use that word in here. I have constantly said, our young people are saying they're not coming back home. What are we doing about it? I've [also] always said the Head of Barkers must not be touched, it will not be touched.

When I was thrown under the bus, people thought it was a low point—no. [That was] when people like Woody Foster put their hands around my shoulder and said, *"We're proud of you,"* and Kenneth and André stood with me. I wanted to be kicked out completely because the country needed a martyr anyway. When I was able to show the corruption—and it was there—they switched it the sharp way, all of a sudden the Chief Officer resigned because of me, when four weeks before that he had written his resignation because his wife had inherited a company and they were going to United States. Never resigned because of me! [He] resigned long time, but that's the magic of the top echelons.

Then the *Compass* came after me. Once again, that backfired. Two affidavits signed by two people, saying what was said, I never said—but it is what it is. There is a saying, Mr. Speaker, and someone sent it to me around that time and I have saved it. I remember the time that I read the one that goes, *"If you come here and find it here..."* and Mr. Anthony Eden asked me for a copy of it. I saved that and this one here. This one I will keep forever, and it says, *"People can destroy your image, damage your personality, create rumours about you, but they can never take away your good deeds, because no matter how they describe you, you will always be admired by those who know you best."*

I have done well. My country is here. Thank you all very much.

[Desk thumping]

**The Speaker:** Honourable Member, the number is now six, *soon not gonna need no election.*

The honourable Member for George Town West.

[Inaudible interjection]

[Laughter]

**The Speaker:** Before you begin, may I ask the Honourable Premier to move the suspension of Standing Order 10(2) in order that we may continue beyond the hour of 4:30, which we are well beyond now.

### Suspension of Standing Order 10(2)

**The Premier, Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I so move that we suspend Standing Order 10(2) so that the Parliament can continue beyond 4:30 pm.

**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 4:30. All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

**AYES.**

**The Speaker:** The Ayes have it.

**Agreed: Standing Order 10(2) suspended.**

**The Speaker:** The honourable Member for George Town West.

**Mr. David C. Wight, Elected Member for George Town West:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the weak continue to forgive and support the wicked, the wicked will continue to be wicked.

[Inaudible interjection]

**Mr. David C. Wight:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a short statement. Well, before I start that, Member for George Town South, Ms. Barbara, I think you've made the wrong decision; after listening to you today—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. David C. Wight:** I think you need to reconsider.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

*[Laughter]*

**Mr. David C. Wight:** Okay. I'll be nice, I'll change my—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. David C. Wight:** *[Laughter]* No, I'll be nice, for real.

Mr. Speaker, I was raised by my parents to love God, love my country and love my family, and I have always done so. I also appreciate anyone who will do the same, love God, love their country (no matter where they are from) and love their family. I pride myself on being an honest, caring, and loyal person and that includes my time involved in politics.

One of the greatest things, Mr. Speaker, over these eight years is anywhere that we had a Caucus or any meetings to sit and listen to you, we'd be talking and then all of a sudden there's some quote you're going to say. I am going to quote one of them that you always quote, it's with me too and I love it: *"You may love Cayman as much as I do, but you do not love Cayman more than I do."*

Mr. Speaker, I got involved in politics before the 1984 elections. Christopher, our brother from another mother, Tommy and I started to support and campaign [for] Dr. the Honourable Linford Pierson. We were actively involved in all elections from then until the most recent election.

Mr. Speaker, in 2017, I agreed to put myself forward as a candidate on behalf of the PPM, representing the constituency of George Town West. I put myself forward with the intention to do my best to make Cayman a better place and to improve the lives of my constituents and all Caymanians, and I have spent the last eight years working towards this goal to the best of my ability and as part of the PPM family.

It deeply saddens me, Mr. Speaker, to say this, but I feel that I cannot put myself forward for the upcoming elections. In my view, it would be unfair and dishonest to the people of George Town West and the Cayman Islands, as I believe if I were to be honoured and re-elected I will not have the time, the will, the commitment and the energy needed to continue to represent them honestly and properly in Parliament and within the constituency.

Before I go any further, I just want to ensure the constituency of George Town West that we have been talking with someone who will take my place as a

PPM candidate for George Town West, but as PPM is introducing new members periodically we will just wait now until our leader "Joey" and the PPM unveils who we have. I want to apologise to the people who I feel I am disappointing with my decision, but I have to follow my heart and be honest with whatever decision I make.

Mr. Speaker, as in most things, I compare my experiences with sport. I was very honoured every time I was selected to represent the Cayman National Team in any international tournament, but I have never been more honoured and proud than when I was elected by the constituents of George Town West to represent them in Parliament in 2017 and then again in 2021.

Mr. Speaker, I have been fully committed and loyal to the PPM for over 20 years and I will continue to do so wherever and however I can help, because in my opinion, the PPM is the best way forward for the Cayman Islands. For eight years the PPM formed the Government and provided a PPM Premier, and during all of this time, they gave our country a solid and unified Government without a hint of corruption or scandal. I just have to add, in those eight years and in fact before that, anytime PPM were in charge, the Government never fell apart.

Mr. Speaker, the PPM was not thrown together through envy and jealousy, but built on love of country. Over the years, the PPM has proven that honesty, experience and loyalty is the only way forward in the best interests of the Cayman Islands.

There are so many people who I would want to thank, but I'm going to have to cut the list down and just thank the ones that are possible. In the beginning, there was Dr. the Honourable Linford Pierson, who as I previously said, we campaigned for and supported for over 18 years. For many of those years we also supported the Honourable Norman Bodden who was loved by everyone. I give special thanks to the Honourable D. Kurt Tibbetts and to you, Mr. Speaker, Sir Alden McLaughlin, both of whom gave me the confidence to take this bold step and gave me the best advice always. I want to thank all my PPM colleagues who gave me guidance and support over the 18 years I've been in Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, I know that I have all my PPM colleagues and those who support me within the PPM, but I just have to thank two Ministers who were with me in the first four years, 2017 to 2021, who asked me to be their Councillor/Parliamentary Secretary. I was deeply honoured to have been the Parliamentary Secretary (it was Councillor in those days, but it's the Parliamentary Secretary now) for Sports in the Honourable Juliana O'Connor-Connolly's ministry and for Tourism and Transport in the [then] Honourable Moses Kirkconnell's ministry. This is an experience I lived for, four years that I will always treasure and will never forget. I learned so much under the Honourable Juliana and the [then] Honourable Moses.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for you. Anytime I was involved in the Government, in Parliament, having you

with us made me feel so confident. Mr. Speaker, I sat for four years as a Backbench Member of the ruling Government with you as Premier and with great colleagues, and it was a pleasure for me.

I have to make mention of two Members who always had encouraging words and advice for me, either by texting, calling or in person—even when Parliament was not sitting. I would get reminders, check your constituents. Did you remember to do this? How are things going? That advice came from the Member for Bodden Town East, the Honourable [Dwayne] “John John” Seymour and the Honourable McKeeva Bush from West Bay West. These little acts truly meant a lot to me.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for George Town South, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Ms. Barbara Conolly and I shared a constituency office and I'm proud to say we shared our personal assistants. Sueleta Forero was officially Ms. Barbara's PA and Julisa Ramoon is my PA, but we definitely worked 100 per cent together. I want to thank Julisa and Sueleta for the great and tireless work you both did for Ms. Barbara and me, but also for the people of George Town South and George Town West. I also want to thank my first PA, Denise Miller, for all she did to help me and the people of George Town West.

Mr. Speaker, I have to give special thanks to Ms. Barbara for everything, the way she guided me over these eight years and sharing the office with me. I remember just a couple of months ago when we were sitting in Caucus, we were trying to figure out who would be running again and who was stepping aside. We went around the office and we went around the table and you spoke and then Ms. Barbara said that she wasn't running and then it came to me and I said, well, I wasn't running either. I'll never forget, you said, “*Yeah, I know that was coming because you follow Barbara in everything she does.*”

*[Laughter]*

**Mr. David C. Wight:** Thank you, Ms. Barbara.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. David C. Wight:** Political mother, yeah.

Mr. Speaker, when I decided to run in 2017, I had two persons who nominated me Ms. Kay Ebanks and Mr. Neils Godfrey, and I thank both of them for blessing me with their confidence and trust to nominate me. Mr. Speaker, in 2021 Mr. Neils Godfrey nominated me again and I deeply want to thank him for the trust he has had in me and there are no words adequate to deeply express my gratitude for Mr. Neils. I was also nominated in 2021 by a very special lady, Ms. Valney McLaughlin and I truly thank Ms. Valney for all the love and kindness she has shown me, not only in the last four years, but for many years previously.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot end without thanking the staff in the ministries of the Honourable Juliana O'Connor-Connolly and the Honourable Moses Kirkconnell between 2017 and 2021, especially Gina Matthews and the great Ventisha Conolly; they made my life much easier and more comfortable as I learned the ropes. I thank the staff of the Legislative Assembly, which is now Parliament, over the eight years who looked out for and helped all elected Members in every way possible. These eight years are an experience I will treasure forever.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I have to thank every member of my family. They have supported me in every decision I have made, even when I first decided to run for election, which really surprised most of them. They have all been there for me and gave me encouragement along the way. I have special thanks for my daughter Delicia who has supported me always. My only regret is that my parents, Derek and Marguerite Wight were not here to witness when I was first elected in these last years.

With that, I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me the time, and God bless the Cayman Islands. Thank you.

*[Desk thumping]*

**The Speaker:** Well, honourable Member for George Town West, our brother Tommy has gone on, so you and I will have to carry the flag once we get out of here.

*[Laughter]*

**The Speaker:** Does any other Member wish to speak? *[Pause]* The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I made these notes this morning, Mr. Speaker, I had not realised it would be during happy hour. I would have made them a lot shorter.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition:** Mr. Speaker, I do not plan to go anywhere. *[Laughter]*

*[Inaudible interjection]*

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition:** I do want to thank the people of George Town North for entrusting me for the past, almost four years and I will confirm that I, with their blessings and their vote, look forward to representing them for the next four years after the elections of April 30th.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot say that I have thoroughly enjoyed the job as Leader of the Opposition, and I will say that it is not a job that I aspire to return to.

[Laughter]

**Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition:** Mr. Speaker, Seneca once said, “Every new beginning comes from [some] other beginning’s end.” I have to say a few words about my colleagues who have just given their final speeches here in these hallowed halls.

To David: I always call him “the power of two” because when we got David, we got Christopher, and when I went to speak to them about a few matters, some that I weren’t sure how they were going to react, I said, “David, I can handle you being mad at me, but I can’t handle Christopher being mad at me,” [Laughter] so I need both of you here as we discuss this. David, your love for this country is indisputable and I know, as you have said, you will continue to be an integral part of the PPM family and I look forward to continuing to work with you and Christopher and also play my role in remembering our friend, Tommy.

To Moses: the honourable Moses Kirkconnell, Member for Cayman Brac West and Little Cayman, I owe you a depth—

**The Speaker:** Honourable Leader of the Opposition, I am just going to say to all Members that I’m allowing delivery with some latitude because of the emotiveness of this situation.

**Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** You can drop the formalities for this, if Members wish.

**Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition:** I have to give you a vote of gratitude. Having the opportunity after being elected, perhaps you felt like you were a bit responsible because it was you and Honourable D. Kurt Tibbetts who convinced me to contest the 2013 elections. In giving me the opportunity to serve four years as your Councillor in Tourism and Transport, what is now known as the Parliamentary Secretary, I want to thank you for your trust and belief in me. You always involved me and allowed me to participate in all aspects of the Ministry. I can’t say that I thoroughly enjoyed attending every event for you on the weekends while you were in the Brac, but— [Laughter]

[Inaudible interjection]

**Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition:** Yes, I was a victim of my success in that one; if I had messed the first one up, you probably wouldn’t have had me return for the others. I can say this to you, and the Speaker just gave me permission, Moses that you

always had my respect, but we’ve now also become very good friends and I will always give you a call and say, “Moses K, my MLA!” and ask for your advice. The people of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman owe you a debt for all that you’ve done, and I’ll touch on that a little bit further on. I want to also say that I owe you for your unwavering commitment and support to myself.

To my friend, Barbara, Member for George Town South, the hardest working person in the group: We were at a podcast and we were talking about women in politics and they asked me, I said, “You want to find out about women in politics, whether we respect them?” I said, “We don’t respect Barbara, we’re afraid of her!” [Laughter] When Barbara said, “jump”, we said “How high?” And you better not make her repeat it twice. Her dedication to her constituency and to her country is to be moulded and admired. She may be retiring as an MP, but I know that she remains committed to her constituency and committed to the People’s Progressive Party.

Minister Ebanks, she’s not going to let you get away, she’s going to keep going at those yellow lines, I can tell you that. To the last day.

Mr. Speaker, to yourself, sir, much was said last night, but like Barbara, I know that you remain committed to the Red Bay, Prospect and PPM family and I look forward to continuing to work with you in your role as Chairman of the party.

Mr. Speaker, it would be remiss of me not to also thank the former Leader of the party, Mr. Roy McTaggart, Member for George Town East, for his trust in me and for his support in putting me forward as the Leader of the Opposition. Once again, this showed continuity, stability and reliability in the People’s Progressive Movement.

Mr. Speaker, with the big shoes that I have to fill, myself, Roy McTaggart, and a group of young and enthusiastic, experienced and some new candidates are ready to rise and not only fill but to make even bigger footprints on the political landscape of our three beautiful Islands.

Mr. Speaker, I know your love for music and this moment takes me to a song originally written by a Nina Simone and in recent times made popular by Michael Bublé, the chorus goes,

*“Birds flying high, you know how I feel.*

*Sun in the sky, you know how I feel.*

*Breeze drifting on by, you know how I feel.*

*It’s a new dawn, it’s a new day,*

*It’s a new life for me,  
and I’m feeling good.”*

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, it is very sad to see my colleagues moving on, but we are ready, and with the support of the former Leader, Mr. Roy McTaggart, [and] I, our candidates are willing, ready and capable of carrying on the mantle and representing the People’s Progressive Party and the people of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to take a moment to just say thank you to all colleagues in this House, for over the past term you have all been respectful to me and I hope I have been the same to you. I started on this side with the Opposition and then we slowly grew to the point where we have to call ourselves the Official Opposition, but no matter what side each of you were on, I thank you for your respect and I hope that I paid you the same.

Members of the Government, I thank you for your commitment to the country, to continue to work together for the betterment of all of us and our constituencies, to get us to this day and to show the world that we are a mature democratic society. This is what democracy is about. It is not perfect and you will have these instances, but it's how you react to them, and we showed the maturity and the love of country to continue on. I thank each of you in the Government.

Good friends, Minister Seymour. Yeah, we don't have to say nothing right?

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition:** We're good. We've got the plan.

**An Hon. Member:** Solid.

**Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition:** Solid.

To the Premier, Honourable Juliana O'Connor-Connolly, *cuz*. I know she's listening in the other room, she had to step into a meeting. Let me take a moment to recognise you for your unwavering commitment to serving our country even in the most challenging of times. Madam Premier, your dedication and resilience have not gone unnoticed and I appreciated your willingness to respect our agreement to support your minority Government and more importantly I commend you for the spirit of unity and cooperation that you have consistently displayed throughout, not just the last few months, but your entire tenure. The people of the Sister Islands have been fortunate to have such committed representatives in the honourable Moses Kirkconnell and Honourable Premier Juliana O'Connor-Connolly over the years.

I recall a time when the Brac faced significant challenges: the declining population, lack of infrastructure, lack of growth, no real future; but under their leadership over the last almost two decades, we have witnessed remarkable progress. Today, the residents, including the new ones who want to come there now and take over, enjoy world-class infrastructure including paved roads dissecting across the Islands, piped city water across Cayman Brac and more recreational and open public spaces per capita than I'm sure in anywhere else in this region.

This progress has transformed the Brac and Little Cayman, providing residents with the quality of life

that they deserve. Now, instead of a declining population, we see many, many Cayman Brackers moving back home, moving back to Cayman Brac where they find a better quality of life, even [better] than here on Grand Cayman. I will admit we have a family home in Spot Bay and I love to vacation and find time to go there, but I want to make sure that everyone knows I'm not one of those who now want to come and run things. I like to just go enjoy myself and come back home.

I sincerely hope that friends and family in the Sister Islands recognise and appreciate the tremendous achievements that these two have accomplished and what they have achieved over the years, but I can tell you what, over the next few weeks I will be sure to remind as many as I can.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to take a moment to speak about the Deputy Premier. I just want to say to him that it has not gone unnoticed, the tremendous maturity and the loyalty he has displayed in his commitment to his Government, but most importantly to the people he served over the past couple of years. As tumultuous and challenging [as] the political landscape has been, the Honourable Deputy Premier has shown a steadfast dedication to his principles and to the welfare of his constituents. Many may criticise his style and I see many who are taking aim at him. In fact, it seems many of the new groups have made it their goal to remove him from office because of his unwavering commitment to his people, but especially those who he can identify with, those who need a voice, those who are often written off by our society.

We heard the Honourable Deputy Premier's story on Wednesday during his winding up on the Referendum debate. We heard of the role that you, Mr. Speaker, played in that story. Well, let me say today that I hope that his story will continue to be written and let me also say, if he wishes, we in the PPM would be happy to be a part of that next chapter.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I will close with a quote from Winston Churchill, "**To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often.**" Colleagues, people of the Cayman Islands, thank you very much and may God bless you all and see you in the next realm.

*[Desk thumping]*

**The Speaker:** The honourable Member for George Town East.

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart, Elected Member for George Town East:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am mindful of the time, so I will be even briefer than my predecessor.

Mr. Speaker, I have to begin this afternoon by saying a huge thank you and just really *biggin' up* the Minister of Tourism for the message he brought this morning with regard to his announcement that the Government was increasing the monthly assistance given to those who most need it from \$1,250 to \$1,500 per

month. I was overjoyed when I heard it and I say thank you to you, Kenneth, from the bottom of my heart.

*[Desk thumping]*

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart:** You know, and every other Member in this House knows that I have advocated incessantly for that these past four years in my role as Leader of the Opposition; first, to increase it to \$1,250 and then to the \$1,500. I say thank you to you and to your Government for your response in acknowledging that and in taking the step that you did today. I truly say thank you. I will sleep [well] and I have a much bigger smile on my face now than I had when I came in here this morning, Mr. Speaker, over that, so thanks again for that.

Mr. Speaker, the next thing I wanted to address is just an ugly rumour that has been circulating about me in the last few weeks. Several people, including Members inside this Chamber, have asked me and said they have heard that I am not running. I have struggled with that because I have no idea where it comes from, but as early as January, I had declared in my New Year's message that I would be seeking re-election in April, so someone is stirring some mischief. I don't think it's anyone inside this honourable Chamber, but I felt it was important that I actually clarify and state so here when I had the opportunity, and I will say so again in other public forums and declare now, I will be a candidate in the April elections. I'm not going anywhere.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

*[Laughter]*

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart:** Also Mr. Speaker, honestly, today is a very sad day for me and I say this with a great heaviness of heart as politically I'm saying farewell to five people who have been such a central part of my political life and people who have done so much to help mould me into the representative that I am today. Of course, Mr. Speaker—I should say of course, Sir Alden, I am speaking of you—my good friend Moses; Ms. Barbara; David; and I cannot forget Ms. Julie, I served two terms with her. Mr. Speaker, through your collective interest and guidance of all the names that I have mentioned [it's] been a real help and assistance to mould me and show me the way in ways that I could never have anticipated.

Sir Alden, to you, your unwavering support for me as political leader of the Progressives is something I can never forget. I don't think I could ever have been as successful as I was without having your backing, without having your guidance and having you there to show the way and to challenge me as a political leader. It is something and an experience that I've had that I can never forget and I owe you and everyone else that I have worked with a huge debt of gratitude for all that you have done. Although we are saying farewell to you

from this Chamber, I hope that as a Progressive it doesn't mean that we will not see you again. I remain hopeful that you, Moses, Barbara, David and Ms. Julie will be there to provide guidance and advice—

**An Hon. Member:** Yes we will.

**Mr. Roy M. McTaggart:** —when we need it. I know that in taking over the leadership of this party, it's a changing of the guard for the party. While it is just Joey and myself who are remaining on as the most experienced and having been here for 12 years, I know that we will need your help and advice as we move forward; but like Joey said earlier on in his contribution, Mr. Speaker, we're ready to step up and I think we, together with the new candidates that we will bring forward in this election, will demonstrate to the people of this country in the debates and the campaigning that we will conduct, that we are ready. Just because there is significant change, it does not mean that the Progressives are dead. It is a time of renewal and one where we will bring our experience and our desire to make the biggest impact that we can in helping our people to be the best that they can be.

I thank you all. I thank you for—I keep repeating myself, but thank you for your guidance, your help and all that you have done for us. I wish you all the very best, wherever your feet take you and in whatever you choose to do. Lord knows you've given so much to this country and I know you have more that you can give and contribute as well; so while we say '*So long!*', it is not farewell forever.

Mr. Speaker, I next want to thank the staff of the Parliament for their work. I've not known a more dedicated group of people and a team who have given so much in service to this country and to us as Members of this Parliament. They have been extremely responsive, supportive and have done everything they can to make sure that our lives here in Parliament are as easy and as comfortable as they could make it.

I know in my role for the last four years as the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, I've had two great Parliamentary Clerks to work with; the first being Ms. Susan Burke who left us at the end of last year and she's returned to go to University in Canada, and then also, Ms. Tishel McLean, who had joined the Parliament a few months before she [left]. They are both excellent Parliamentary Clerks and looking forward, I thank them for their work and their service. Mr. Speaker, like Joey said earlier, I hope [and] I'm going to do everything I can to make sure I don't come back in Opposition, because you have to take up chairmanship of the Public Accounts Committee, but I have enjoyed my work with them. I've enjoyed all of their interaction and their commitment to the parliamentary process and all that they have done for us.

Mr. Speaker, I have also to thank the office staff at the PPM office, Ms. Sharon Ebanks. My good friend, Roy Tatum, who has been a rock in his support

for me and working for me as political advisor and as my assistant; I could never have fulfilled these last four years without him. He's a man that gives 150 per cent and I thank him from the bottom of my heart for what he has done and the support he has given me.

I also wanted to mention as well, his daughter Sarah, who has been an assistant as well. She came on only within the last year, 18 months, but she has performed well in terms of the work and assistance that she has rendered to me in the office.

Sharon as well has been like Rock of Gibraltar, she's just always there, ready to respond, ready to do what you ask her to do. I'm hopeful that she will continue to be with us as we move forward in the office. [Also,] I hope to see Roy Tatum in a very different role as he is contesting this election as PPM candidate for the district of Red Bay. I'm looking forward to getting out on the campaign trail with him and working with him in that regard.

I can't sit down this evening without also acknowledging and thanking my family for the support that they have given me as well. Mr. Speaker, one of my... I always called him my biggest supporter, that was my father, and I lost him in this term. It left a really big hole in my heart and in my being. My father came to every rally we had, he supported me, supported me financially and gave so much of himself because he understood what I was trying to do and I was so grateful for him and for all that he did for me. Thanks dad, I hope you're resting well and we'll meet again someday.

I thank my wife, Glenda. She too has been like a rock and support to me. Lord, every election I have been through (I've been through three with her) she's helped me type speeches, she's worked on so many Excel schedules late at night—12, 1, and 2 o'clock in the morning—and then would get up and go to work by 8 o'clock to do her day's work. Thanks can never be enough for what she did.

My children, they have been so supportive of what I've been doing and understand too what politics is all about. It's their first time with having any exposure to this whole thing we call politics and being involved as they are. They have assisted me particularly during the election campaigns and monitoring of the voting process and so many other ways as well as helping with the canvassing, so I thank them all. You say thank you a million times, but you feel so empty because you just don't think those words... those words are just not enough.

Then, I need to conclude with thanking the good people of George Town East. Mr. Speaker, they have seen fit to return me to office on three separate occasions and each time I have gone to the polls I have won by increasing margins, and I am grateful for them. I say I must be doing something that they are pleased about, otherwise they would never do that. I know so many have expressed their support for me and I just hope that they will find it within their hearts as well to

return me to office on April 30th. I'm hopeful and praying that on the morning of May 1st that I will wake up and find myself having been returned to office one more time.

Mr. Speaker, I say thank you to all my colleagues here. It's been an interesting four years, not been the easiest of four years, but it certainly has been interesting. It has certainly been challenging, but here we are at the end of the four years and on the cusp of another General Election. I bid you all well and wish you all well and I look forward, once the Election is over, to being back here in this Parliament to continue the good work that I know we are going to lay out to the electorate in the coming weeks leading up to the Election.

I thank you Mr. Speaker and thanks to everyone else and farewell, too, to my colleagues.

*[Desk thumping]*

**The Speaker:** Honourable Members, there are still nine Members to speak, so I do not believe that I can survive here until that is over. We've been here for more than three hours now, so I'm going to call a brief suspension for refreshment. Let us endeavour to get back in here by five or ten minutes past six, by that clock, half an hour essentially.

**Proceedings suspended at 5:42pm**

**Proceedings resumed at 6:31pm**

**The Speaker:** Good evening, Parliament is resumed. Let's see if we can get this done at a breakneck speed and finish by 9 o'clock.

The Honourable Minister from East End.

*[Crosstalk]*

**Hon. Isaac D. Rankine:** Say that again, sir.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Isaac D. Rankine:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to give a short statement so hopefully you won't be here till 9 o'clock tonight.

As this is the last sitting of this term, first of all, I'd like to give God thanks for taking me through the last four years to serve, and Mr. Speaker, I have been honoured to represent the constituents of East End for the 2021-2025 parliamentary term in this honourable House. The experience and the knowledge I've gained over the last four years has given me a good insight into the legislative and administrative process of Government and there is much more to learn. It is my intention to run for election to represent the good district of East End, the people who trusted me over the last four years.

Mr. Speaker, much has been said about the accomplishments for my community but I will discuss

those on the campaign trail to the entire community, especially those who are parroting much false narratives and wearing blinkers.

**An Hon. Member:** Tell us how you feel.

**Hon. Isaac D. Rankine:** It has been a distinct pleasure Mr. Speaker to be a servant leader and with the help of the good people of East End, I will continue to do that come May 1<sup>st</sup>, as my colleague across the aisle said, he wants to wake up May 1<sup>st</sup> and learn that he's still representing George Town East. It is the people of East End I represent and who I work for and I want to let them know that I will continue to work tirelessly for them.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also express my sincere thanks to every single Member of this honourable House, because, truth be told, we all came here for one simple reason and that is to do well and ensure our country does well. Some of my colleagues in this House I knew before I got elected and some I met after I got elected, there were ups and downs, but along the way, I learned a lot from them, and Mr. Speaker, there is still much more to learn. I figure we are probably in Survivor series four about now, eh?

Mr. Speaker, I'm grateful for the time and the friendships I've made in this House. It has been a pleasure to work with you all. The staff of the Parliament have been awesome and I will always be grateful for their willingness to always help. To the ministry staff, led by the chief officers, Echenique and Ebanks, I say thank you to them all. I don't want to call names Mr. Speaker because I will undoubtedly forget many of them, so I just want to thank every single member of the ministries I've been associated with, and I'm proud to have been associated with, for their help and their kindness. I also want to thank those who work on the Boards that the Ministry is also responsible for, for them carrying out the mandate of the Government.

I also want to thank my Cabinet colleagues, the Governor, the Deputy Governor, the Attorney General, the Cabinet Secretary and his staff, and also my elected Cabinet colleagues for their support over the period of time that I spent in Cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, I want to again thank the good people of East End and my supporters across the Cayman Islands. I also have to thank some of my biggest supporters, one of them being my father, known to many as Papa Jeralow. He's been there with me from the first day when I mentioned that I was interested in doing this and he encouraged me to do it and he stood by me. Even more recently at an event where he and I attended, and while I was speaking to some other people there, he was standing about 10 feet away from me and I heard him say something on my behalf that I will forever, forever be grateful for—but he didn't know I was listening.

Mr. Speaker, much has been done in our communities and by the Government for this country and I

want to let them know that we will continue to work and, given an opportunity, continue to get to other projects that we started and hope to get started, like the East-West Arterial, where we will certainly be giving our people in East End a better quality of life once we can get that done.

Mr. Speaker, lest we forget all that we have been through in this House, the tumultuous times, the discussions, the fights—as you said, sir, it is a fraternity and we must always maintain the friendship no matter what side of the aisle we sit on, we must always maintain that friendship. I look forward to seeing many of you back in this House. I know there are some who are not going to be contesting election, and I will speak to them individually, but I want to thank each and every person in here who has helped me on my journey here.

Those who helped me on my journey from the beginning, the Premier, who I've had many discussions with and I'm indebted to her as well. Thank you Madam Premier, and the Attorney General for his advice, and all of my colleagues for their help in different projects across this country.

Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** [Does] any other Member wish to speak? *[Pause]* The Honourable Minister from North Side.

**Hon. Johany S. Ebanks, Minister of Planning, Agriculture, Housing, Infrastructure, and Transport & Development, Elected Member for North Side:** Mr. Speaker, I was looking at my speech just now and my first read-through was close to 40 minutes, so I decided that I'll have to save the list of accomplishments for when we're on the campaign trail and I'll cut it down to 5 minutes for you sir, just to make you happy.

Mr. Speaker, I remember the first day walking in here, excited, motivated, happy to be here, and happy to serve the people of North Side. I remember the first debate in this House and your first speech across the aisle, Alice in Wonderland was what you started with.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Johany S. Ebanks:** That story still follows me every day, thinking about it, because I still wonder if you're chasing me or I'm chasing you.

**An Hon. Member:** You're speaking about going down the rabbit hole.

**Hon. Johany S. Ebanks:** Yeah, and I don't want to get in the rabbit hole tonight with him again.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Johany S. Ebanks:** Mr. Speaker, I always remember that one. I said to myself when I went outside,

*"What I did to Alden so much that he wanted to come at me so hard?" And Kenneth said, "You're lucky, the first time he called me a leper."*

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Johany S. Ebanks:** I said, okay, all right, I'll take that then.

Mr. Speaker, I was thinking about it today, I had the privilege to serve with two Premiers, four Deputy Premiers, three Finance Ministers, three Speakers and two Governors.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Johany S. Ebanks:** I believe I should say I'm getting qualified for the job now after all of that.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Johany S. Ebanks:** Yep, and COVID on top of that too, sir. After going through all of that I said, boy, I think you got to pat yourself on the back, and when you list the accomplishments you got done, I think we did pretty well. However, Mr. Speaker, there are some things that are still there that we just never got the opportunity [to complete] because of the time or other means of obstacles that we found in our way sometimes, and many people have listed it.

I just want to touch back on one that the Member for West Bay North mentioned about the, Apple Blossoms site in West Bay. [That] was probably one of the sites that I was the most motivated about getting accomplished from when I first visited that site, and Mr. Speaker, with a glimpse of hope it's still there. I'm not sure about getting it finished, but I know I'm *gonna* push my hardest to get it started. That's one that I really am committed to just trying to see how we can get that started between now and April, because while we are out there campaigning, the work can go on.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the privilege of serving my people and it's been wonderful. There've been times of sitting and listening with some of them, arguing with them, some of them telling me, *"Boy, you know, you guys gotta get this thing together."* The challenges that we had, some of them sitting and having a drink with them, some of them even having a meal with them and then trying to work out every solution we could. Well, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to let them know that the North Side dream is still there. The North Side hope and the North Side aspiration that I came in here with, that fire still burns inside of me and I'm here to serve my people.

Mr. Speaker, it is what? Six people who have said so far that—or five? I think it's only been five who've announced that they're not running so far.

**An Hon. Member:** Six.

**Hon. Johany S. Ebanks:** Six. Okay, we'll see what the night has left to reveal then.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Johany S. Ebanks:** I don't know who else is retiring—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Johany S. Ebanks:** I'm going to do that right now sir, to let you know that I'm not one of them who will be retiring. I will be coming back for the next election. As a matter of fact, I was saying to my friend next door to me right here, the Minister from East End you called him, that I wonder if I could just leave my folder right here until May 1<sup>st</sup> and come back and find it right there.

Mr. Speaker, I've had a great time and learned a lot. I thank the first Premier I served under for giving me the opportunity, for seeing the light in me and giving me an opportunity to stand up here to serve as a Minister, the Honourable Wayne Panton. Also my second Premier for continuing to see that light in me and said, *"No, I want you to continue doing what you're doing and working along with me."*

Mr. Speaker, it's been a very emotional time for everyone. I'm not usually the person who gets too emotional, but sometimes I do. I just want to say to everyone, it has been a great opportunity working with many of you all. It was a major learning curve. Mr. Speaker, I worked with you on and off too, but I always know where to find you, as a farmer. I'm sure I'll get the opportunity to come and visit your farm someday in the future.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Johany S. Ebanks:** Oh, no. I leave that for someone else.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Johany S. Ebanks:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hardworking team back in the Government Administration Building, led by the very well-known Chief Officer Eric Bush—and yes, today also is his birthday, if you'd just give me time to say hello, happy birthday to him. I know he's watching and listening. I actually missed the little gathering that they had today for him for his birthday in the office. You know, Tristan Hydes, Leyda Nicholson, Andrea, Quinland, Exie Tomlinson, Wendy, Jason, Liz-Anne, the whole bunch of them, and Mr. Wesley Howell, Ms. Debbie, Ms. Nellie, all the chief officers that I've had an opportunity to actually work alongside, ask questions and were able to point me in the right direction when we needed to, giving us the right advice. It has been a pleasure working

with them and I look forward to coming back and working with some of them right after this Election.

Mr. Speaker, not to take up too much of your time, I'll leave the rest for the campaign trail, but I just want to thank everyone in here. I'm sure everyone came in here with the right motive and the right reasons, to serve your people in this country. That was the main thing that we all came here for first, to make sure we put the Cayman Islands first, the people of this country first, and that's what we want to continue doing, make sure that we put country and our people first. That is my motive, Mr. Speaker, no man shall be left behind.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Johany S. Ebanks:** And no women, let's make sure we get that straight too. Let's get it straight.

Mr. Speaker, I could not dare leave out the Deputy Governor, Franz Manderson, [he's] always willing to help, always there to answer a phone call no matter what time of night. Sometimes I'd call him at 11 and 12 o'clock and say, *"Well, just checking to see if you're up."* He'd said, *"Oh, no, no, no. Minister, how can I help you?"* He always answered. That's one thing for sure. If he didn't answer, he would text me right back, *"Minister, I'm in a meeting, but I'll call you right back as I finish."* Ms. Gloria, it's been a pleasure. Attorney General, it's been a pleasure with you. I know you said that you're—oh, you may be one of them that's announcing tonight that you may be... Okay, I'll leave that. I won't break it. It's been a pleasure working with you too, sir, for all the advice you have given.

I wanted to thank everyone tonight and I want to thank my constituents in North Side for giving me the opportunity to come and serve them. I look forward for that opportunity coming in April, returning and continue hitting the road hard and working as hard as we ever work for them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*[Desk thumping]*

**The Speaker:** Does any other Member wish to speak?  
*[Pause]* The honourable Member for Bodden Town West.

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

Usually I use my own birthday time to reflect and to give God thanks for allowing me to see another year; the thing is, I know most people may not be aware of this, but there was a time in my life where I actually wrote my own obituary. I went to work one day, Mr. Speaker, and the next day I woke up in the hospital and a week later I was actually fighting for my life in Cleveland Clinic. While I was there waiting on the surgery, I remember being in a lot of pain. I made the mistake of—well, back then I think Yahoo was the main search engine, it wasn't Google—doing a little search on my

illness. I looked at the mortality rate and realised, wait a minute, Chris, you're actually going to die.

At that point, at 33 years of age, having spent about 12 years of my life at that time outside of Cayman (eight years of school in Jamaica and four years of school in New York), I decided to do my family a favour: while I'm up—couldn't sleep—let me just do my funeral programme. [I'll] pick out the songs and write out my obituary, because the eight years of school in Jamaica and the four years in New York, no one would have known about those, and I said, let me save them the trouble. It was when I reached the part of my mother, my relationship with my mother and being Rose Saunders' only son, I recognised that while I may have deserved to leave this Earth, I don't think God would have taken Rose Saunders' one son from her. It was at that moment I actually stopped typing and decided, you know what? I'm *gonna* live through this.

It took me a while, about two hours, to accept the fact that I was going to die. I can tell you, the first two hours were a bit brutal. You think about your kids, your wife and everything else, and a certain peace came over you of just accepting it—but then, the will to live comes on. It was at that time, Mr. Speaker, [I realised] I also didn't like what I wrote about myself, in the sense that, I was given an education that was paid for by the people of the Cayman Islands and I never really gave much service back to the people.

I spent my time making money for other people and not serving the people who gave me that initial investment and that was one of the turning points where I decided to get more active in social issues. Not just political issues, but doing more in the community: trying to give back, starting to tithe, taking at least 10 per cent of my salary and giving it away. Whether it be someone in the supermarket or something [else], but just started giving back.

It is almost like Alfred Nobel who invented the Nobel Peace Prize; that came about because he was reading his own obituary in the newspaper and they referred to him as a 'merchant of death' because I think he had invented dynamite or TNT or something. He didn't like his own obituary and that's how the Nobel Peace Prize came about.

I say that to say, Mr. Speaker, as I listened to my good friend, the Member for George Town Central and the Minister of Tourism and Deputy Premier [when he] spoke about his second chance in his recent debate, I too remembered my own second chance. Mr. Speaker, at 18 years of age I was let loose in the streets of New York to go to university on a government scholarship. [Did] Christopher go to class? No. Christopher went partying like crazy. I was let loose in the Big Apple, the big city. Since I was one of those persons who was lucky enough to cruise through high school and get good grades from not studying much but having a really good memory, I thought I could have taken that approach at university. First year GPA: 1.69.

[Inaudible interjection]

**Mr. Christopher S. Saunders:** Oh yeah! All of those rules I said to people that the Education Council has now put in to catch people with all of those bad grades, was because of me.

[Laughter]

**Mr. Christopher S. Saunders:** In four years of government scholarship, I don't think I ever once produced any grades to the Education Department that were bad; they only saw the good grades. All the rules that they put in now were designed to catch people like me back then who were basically getting away.

[Inaudible interjection]

**Mr. Christopher S. Saunders:** Yeah, that's right. It's a confession. No, but it is part of the process. I know what it is like to have a second chance and that's why education has always been a passion of mine.

This morning when I was getting ready I was almost tempted to wear my red tie, which was the last present I got from my father.

[Inaudible interjection]

**Mr. Christopher S. Saunders:** Mr. Speaker, I've never had an opportunity to really thank my father for pushing me to get involved in politics, but also to the point that I never really appreciated him when he was alive and that is the one regret I have in this life. I think I could have been a better son, although I focused on him being a better father.

Mr. Speaker, I remember the first time I went to school in Jamaica. I didn't want to go to school in Jamaica, but according to my father, he didn't want me growing up around four girls and turn no sissy, and I had to go to Jamaica get toughened up. You know what? While I hated him at first for it, I can tell you, looking back at those eight years of going to school in Jamaica, I'm glad I did. The resolve, the tenacity and everything else that was instilled in me, prepared me for just about anything that comes.

Mr. Speaker, four days from now, February 11th, is going to be the 35th anniversary of when Mandela was released from prison. I remember that Sunday, my father made sure we were all in the living room and we were watching that on television, Mandela being released from prison after 27 years. I mentioned in one of my earlier debates about one of the three poems that was instilled in us; one of those poems is actually *Invictus*, a poem that Mandela read just about every single day in 27 years of captivity in South Africa, and one of the poems that my father first introduced us to.

For those of you who knew my father will know that Dr. Frank was a good friend of my father. My father is one of them who used to spend a lot of time at the

library and he used to spend a lot of time over there with Dr. Frank. That's one of the reasons why, despite whatever differences I may have with Dr. Frank, I could never say anything bad about him because of his relationship with my late father.

The thing about *Invictus* that I like, Mr. Speaker, it goes:

**"Out of the night that covers me,  
black as the pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
for my unconquerable soul.**

**In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
my head is bloody, but unbowed.**

**Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
looms but the Horror of the shade,  
[and] yet the menace of the years  
finds and shall find me unafraid.**

**It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate,  
I am the captain of my soul."**

It is those words, Mr. Speaker, instilled in me that give me the tenacity and resolve to keep going ahead. That's why sometimes when people would think that something bothers me, my super strength is actually the fact that nothing really bothers me on a personal level. You know that song, *If Jah is Standing by My Side*, there's a line in it that says, **"My foes attack and I just smile, because they don't seem to understand my style."**

Let me tell you something, Mr. Speaker, I now know all of those years I spent away, it gave me the thickness of my skin, but also more importantly, it made me appreciate what we're fighting for here in Cayman. It is only after you have really been away from Cayman and you have seen other places that you'll know how special this place is and why it is worth fighting for.

The one thing, Mr. Speaker, I have always taken in my own political approach is to just ask myself one question, *"What is it that keeps me awake at night, and more importantly, what keeps the people of the Cayman Islands awake at night?"* That's the reason why the issues of healthcare, pension reform and cost-of-living have always been issues for me, because those are the issues that are keeping our people awake at night, their quality of life and everything else to go with it.

Mr. Speaker, as we prepare for another round—and I can tell you right now, I am definitely running for election as long as I got good health and everything else. I'm definitely going for it, so I won't be joining the six.

From a political and legislative standpoint, I really want to thank some of the Members who were here the first time I got elected: Ezzard Miller from North Side, Arden McLean from East End, Tony Eden from Savannah, and Bernie Bush from West Bay North, who were good colleagues with me on this side. However Mr. Speaker, the best political lessons I've actually gotten since being elected in this Parliament actually came from observing you. You always said to sit down and to study your opponents is something else, but to watch you work and watch you operate is a master class in itself. I hope you actually do write a book.

I'm going to say to people, the Member for North Side mentioned the Alice in Wonderland story, and I'm sitting down thinking to myself, if that's all the licks he got from Alden, he got away with plenty. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, I will never forget August 2017 when we were doing that Strategic Policy Statement (SPS). You gave a very good speech; it was your last term, you're going out big and bold, and you can't be Premier again. We in the Opposition got up, we wished you all the best, we congratulated you for forming a Government again, and on your reply you beat the hell out of us. I'll never forget that. I remember Mr. Tony saying to me, "*Chris, was that really necessary?*"

[Laughter]

**Mr. Christopher S. Saunders:** I said, "*Mr. T, yes and I'm gonna make him eat them words.*" I made up my mind that every single thing you brought from then on I'm going to oppose, even if I agree with it I'm going to oppose. There was one thing you made clear to us, [you said], "*It is not your job to agree with the Government, it is your job to offer an alternative to make sure we are doing our job,*" and in doing so you've made us better legislators, because even if you came with a good idea, it forced me to find out what else could have been an alternative.

Coincidentally, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we learned at Pace University, which is a Jewish University, is they have something called a '10 Man Rule', where if there are 10 of you in a boardroom and you're meeting on a monthly basis, each month one person is set aside who must be the designated person to disagree with the other nine, even if you're in agreement which is to ensure that you never fall into the phenomenon of groupthink.

In politics, people talk about you wanting people who are like-minded, [yet] that is probably one of the worst things you can have in politics—*groupthink*. You need the diversity of opinions, you need the diversity of views and you need the arguments. This is what democracy is about, having the difference of opinion, having difference of ideas; and then you debate them, you discuss them, you have the dialogue; and then you find consensus. However, we have reached a point in Cayman politics now, Mr. Speaker, where we are trying

to find consensus without having to debate. We're trying to find consensus without the arguments and these are where we make our mistakes. Opposition is good. Difference of opinion is good. Having a different outlook is good and this is what we need to focus on.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the people of Bodden Town West for giving me the opportunity to represent them. Of all the jobs I've had, I can tell you, this has been the best job I've had; the most stressful one, but the most enjoyable one, because at least for every single day, even if there's one person who you have helped, you can say you've made someone's life a little bit better.

Mr. Speaker, one person I really have to thank more than anyone, is my family, [specifically] my wife. Last year, I almost would have been number seven. I got a really great job offer that I really thought about for about a week; I'm almost certain I was gonna take it and my wife talked me out of it. She said, "*Chris, until you get that healthcare thing sorted, you're going to hate yourself for the rest of your life. I know you.*"

For me, that free healthcare is one of the things that I am not going to let go. There are at least 14,000 Caymanian voters who are going to be hitting 65 in the next 12 years and they are going to be struggling with healthcare. In 2023, 2,000 people costed us \$78 million. Think about that, 2,000 people costed us \$78 million, costed the taxpayers \$78 million. What do you think is going to happen when 14,000 people hit?

Mr. Speaker, that is one issue I cannot and I will not let go. More than anything, that is one thing I'll be championing because in a service-based economy where 95 per cent of the people, including us inside here, make a living from providing a service, what do you think will happen? We have one heart attack, a stroke, aneurysm... We're literally one medical emergency away from our families being bankrupt and for us being unable to provide for our families. Are we comfortable living in a country with so many resources, which God has abundantly blessed, that so many families can be one medical emergency away from being bankrupt? I think we need to put that safety net in and I'm not going to let that issue go.

Mr. Speaker, I've said it before, I don't know what or how I will behave when Rose Saunders closes her eyes, but I will say this much, people have already put my mother in the hospital and I'm telling you upfront, the next time she goes back inside there, there is going to be a side of me that people are going to pray never ever comes out, okay? They have done that to my mother already. While I can live with the stress and the thickness of skin that I have been blessed with to ignore much of this stuff, the people in our lives take these things to heart.

I'm telling the people out there that have this nasty way of dividing our people with their nasty politics, they better pray to God that Christopher Saunders' intelligence continues to be used for the betterment of

this country. The day I decide to use my mind for something else, know that I'm getting away with it. Don't think—I'm not going to tell anybody that I'm going to prison for anybody. I'm not going to prison for anyone, I'm getting away with it. I want to send that message clear because I already got some nasty comments coming out, and I will tell you, this is how it starts.

Thus, the reason why I'm glad the Member for West Bay West brought the Motion he did. Trying to divide this small population already as it is, is not the way. We are all Caymanians. The purpose of elections is to determine the will of the people, nothing more. There seems to be a power grab inside this country where people are hell-bent on getting power by any means necessary.

I will tell you this much, you study history. Revolutions aren't started by poor people. Revolutions are started by educated people. When our young Caymanians come back and can't get opportunities in this country, *those* are the ones that history tells you starts revolutions. Mr. Speaker, it is important for us and anyone looking to come into this Chamber to get it right to give every single Caymanian an opportunity. That's why I said what I said: Caymanians need to start feeling entitled once again inside this country. This thing of being passive and softy-softy and nicey-nicey, it doesn't work. We are competing with people who are coming from countries that don't play by the same rules as us.

Mr. Speaker, that's why I said I have come to appreciate your tenacity and your resolve. When you are focused and determined, I have seen it. Most of the time I think you have been on the right side of history; we have had a few disagreements along the way and I've come to admire that. You want to stick with the issues, you want to stick with ideas, you want to stick with ideology; I am fine with it. However, all the personal stuff? I tell people all the while, I come from a house with a praying mother, and let me tell you, I've seen people get sick; all I can sit down and say is, "You know what, God, I could not have done a better job than that," and I'll leave it as is.

I tell people up front, be kind and be nice. As I said in *Desiderata*, try to be on good terms with everyone because we are all just trying to make this place better.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank every single Member inside this Parliament, those whom I agreed with and disagreed with, because at the end of the day, I consider all of you patriots. I consider all of you as meaning well for this country, but it is very easy sometimes to get distracted and caught up. That's why I tell people find your relationship with God.

If there is one thing that politics has done for me, it has improved my relationship with God; because it is only through the grace of God sometimes that the other side of me, a side of me that I don't want my kids or anyone to see, a side of me that I let go... That's why I tell people, I pray to God, I thank Shawnette every day, because I know what it is like to be full of bitterness

and I know what it's like to be full of hatred. I have been down that path already and if it wasn't for my own illness, where I had to take a check on my own life and realised that I was not liking what I wrote about myself... God gave me the opportunity to change it. It is the reason why I can stand here today.

My good friend, the Minister of Tourism, Kenneth Bryan, I want to thank you for always being in my corner. It means a lot to me, so much so that no one can even say anything bad about you in my house. Even if I'm on the phone arguing with you and disagreeing with you, when I hang up off the phone, Shawnette is like, "You know, Kenneth could be right." I'm like, not today. I don't want to hear it. Even she defends you.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Christopher S. Saunders:** No, no, John John. I can tell you we have been on the same side, different sides or whatever, but your family and my family have a relationship that goes way back. It has not been lost on me that when everyone was trying to pull apart you and I, you stood there with me and you worked with me to help me get elected in 2017. I have not forgotten that. You have always held a special place in my heart. Regardless of what people may say, we don't agree on everything. I tell people, Kenneth and I have the most political debates and differences, but there's no one that I can tell I love more like a brother than Kenneth; and the same applies to you. Don't care where we sit, you know where you stand in my family and you know where your family stands with me.

David, I wish you all the best. I've said before that if I'm ever going into war, the one person I would want beside me is you and your brother.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Christopher S. Saunders:** You guys are stalwarts.

*[Desk thumping]*

**Mr. Christopher S. Saunders:** Can't take that from you.

Barbara, I'm going to miss traveling with you. Listen, she and I have been on the most CPA conferences and Barbara brings a kind of magnetism about her that don't care where we are, people will always come over to us. I know it's because of Barbara really and not because of me, but I've always enjoyed it. I can tell you, she really loves this country very much and I wish her all the best in her new life.

To the Member for Cayman Brac West, Brother Moses, thank you for the work that you have done serving this country. I know sometimes people give Cayman Brac a hard time, but my mother is originally from the Brac, so I do have a soft spot for the Brac. When my grandmother first settled in the 1940s, she settled in Cayman Brac and even my uncle George McCarthy

was born in Cayman Brac. My mother was conceived in Cayman Brac but was born in Grand Cayman.

I know many people pick on Cayman Brac, but I want you all to remember this, at one point Cayman Brac was the commercial hub of this island. If you look at the business people who drive commerce in Grand Cayman, it is the people from Cayman Brac, whether it be the Fosters, the Kirkconnells or otherwise. This thing of always trying to move Cayman Brac into a different category is something we need to stop. This is the reason why I always talk about one Cayman—three Islands, one Cayman. We need to get that steady, because what the people of Cayman Brac have contributed to this country cannot be measured.

Honourable Premier, I wish to God you would really consider running, even if it's just to keep out that other person from coming inside here. Let me tell you something, woe be unto the people of the Cayman Islands if that mindset that wanted to sell just about every single government asset, from Water Authority to Radio Cayman, every single thing he wanted to sell. You better pray to God and hope to God that the people of the Cayman Islands have enough sense to not unleash that kind of mindset into this Parliament, and especially sitting on that side.

How could you want to even sell Water Authority? Something that everyone needs. Everyone needs water. You're vex with Water Authority because they're not making enough money. You want Water Authority to charge us more for something everyone needs? What kind of conscience is that?

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Christopher S. Saunders:** Who I'm talking about? I'm talking about Dan Scott. That's who I'm talking about. That mindset, immediate sale of Radio Cayman.

Boy, Mr. Speaker this country owes you a debt, you know? Because after they put out the Project Future Report, at least you had the audacity, the temerity and the God-given common sense to say that this man is a madman in clean clothes.

**The Speaker:** I never quite said that.

**Mr. Christopher S. Saunders:** No, that's all right, that's all right; but I know that's probably what you meant. You know what I mean? The country owes you. No, no, it's good, because people need to understand the mindset. These campaigns come out where people put these nice, *likkle pretty-pretty thing*, and this-and-that, and *'how ya mama doing?'* and all of that, when they plan on cutting every benefit your mama gets. Something as simple as the free school lunch, they want to take away. Even the little Emancipation Day, one more little holiday for people; they want to take that away?

**An Hon. Member:** Yup!

**Mr. Christopher S. Saunders:** What did Radio Cayman ever do to him? Scholarships, same thing! Rich people... The Member for West Bay North didn't want to say it.

*[Crosstalk]*

**An Hon. Member:** Even the Government Administration Building...

**Mr. Christopher S. Saunders:** Yes, he wanted to get rid of the Government Administration Building too, yeah!

*[Inaudible interjection]*

*[Crosstalk]*

**Mr. Christopher S. Saunders:** Listen, Mr. Speaker, let me tell you something, if they believe— oh yeah, the charter schools, privatised schools and all of that.

*[Crosstalk]*

**Mr. Christopher S. Saunders:** Listen—poor Turtle farm.

You sit down and you wonder what could be the mindset to try to sell every single asset that people own, that we have worked hard to build. You want to sell it. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you, as the Premier from then for rejecting that mindset.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. Christopher S. Saunders:** Okay? If they believe that Christopher Selvin Saunders is going to sit back and allow that mindset to get up inside this Parliament without any resistance, they made a sad mistake.

Let me tell you this much and I'll say it publicly, my brother Joey, Leader of the Opposition, I wish your party well in the next Election, because if there's one thing I can say about the PPM, you guys have a social conscience.

*[Desk thumping]*

**Mr. Christopher S. Saunders:** I'll give you guys that. I never thought that day would come, but I will actually say it, because if that mindset is unleashed in this Parliament, God help us.

Learn from your then Premier who was able to reject it and stood against it. Don't believe that there are no elements in this country that want to take every single thing that the people of the Cayman Islands have. My friends, be on guard.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to finish for now. I thank my people of Bodden Town West once again. This Election is going to be the fighters versus the fat cats, and if they think we're going to roll over and

play dead, they better think again. The Cayman Islands will not be ending up like many of those other countries, where you have these rich oligarchs running everything and the poor people are left to a kind of a feudal system. That's not happening, not with the education that the people of this country have paid to give me. I'm going to use it to fight for them, I'm going to use it to defend them and I'm going to make sure that their lives are better.

I'll tell you guys right now, for anyone who doesn't want to deal with this healthcare issue, we're going to be at odds. I am not letting this issue go. If you want to be good friends with me, let's start looking at how we can get free healthcare for our people, because that is something that's going be badly needed. If not, it's going to bankrupt this country.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for your service. Thank you for your guidance. Thank you for your mentorship and I think it's safe for me to at least say thank you for your friendship, because for some of the stuff you have done for me, it could only have come from the heart. I just want to publicly thank you. On behalf of the people of Bodden Town West who I still represent, thank you for your service to this country and I wish you all the best. I would love to see you next go around sitting in that same chair, so we can move the Parliament and those Standing Orders that we just passed to the next level.

Thank you all very much. You all have a good night.

**The Speaker:** Does any other Member—  
The Member for West Bay Central.

**Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, Elected Member for West Bay Central:** Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing Members to say a few words before this final Meeting of Parliament is adjourned.

Mr. Speaker, I know it's no secret that you've spent over 20 years in this line of service and just last night you delivered your remarks in just a few minutes, so I will try not to be long.

I'd like to start my remarks the way that I start each day, with a few moments of gratitude. Tonight, it's life, a support system and being entrusted to represent West Bay Central.

Life, Mr. Speaker: I'm so grateful to God for His goodness to me. He has gifted me with good health, something that I never take for granted. No MP can fulfil their duties without being given this gift. I am also thankful to God for the wisdom and grace that He bestows to me daily.

Support system, Mr. Speaker: it has been said today by all the Members that have stood so far, how important family is to each of us. We all know how difficult this role can be, and they see first-hand the amount of sacrifice that is required from those of us who serve. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said, we miss a lot, which means they miss a lot. They

miss having us at various family functions because our life of service takes us away from them.

To my husband, Michael, who has been my rock, my confidant and my greatest supporter; my children, they're the reason why I'm here and I thank them for being so understanding when mum can't be there; and my mum, who started my political journey with my dad. I, too, like the Member for George Town East and the Member for Savannah lost a parent during this term. My mum now makes sure to remind me of how proud she is of me and how much my dad would be. She never fails to message me to encourage me and I look forward to her message every time I finish a speech. My siblings, my sisters, my brother, my aunts, my uncle and of course my Wilks family, they too have been my support system.

[To] my constituency team, Ms. Nikki Ebanks, Ms. Glenda Lee, Ms. Sophia Bryan and Ms. Betty Ebanks, as well as my former COAA [Constituency Office Administrative Assistant], Ms. Rachel Ebanks; parliamentary staff, especially the driver to the Speaker, Mr. Franklin Smith Jr. and the PA to the Speaker, Mrs. Tasha Porter, who, as you know, Mr. Speaker, are more than gatekeepers, they are guardians of the Honourable Speaker and they take that role with great pride and responsibility; to the Ministry staff, all of the staff of the Ministry of Sustainability and the Director of Environment; as well as my personal assistant (PA), Ms. Doris Jackson-Swaby. Lastly and importantly, I'd like to express gratitude to Miss Sophia, our nanny who lovingly cares for my children. Mr. Speaker, it's important that I mention how grateful I am for these individuals. They make my work seem easier and give me reason to smile every day as I work towards my pursuit to serve our country.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I'm filled with gratitude for being entrusted to represent West Bay Central. Serving as a representative of West Bay Central is one of the most profound experiences of my life thus far, one that has taught me a whole lot. Shortly after being elected, I learned a valuable lesson. What I learned was that my predecessor was correct.

Mr. Speaker, on the campaign trail my predecessor, Captain Eugene, advised about the learning curve and indeed there is a learning curve. "Young novice" is what he called me, Mr. Speaker, and he was right. Many of us were. Despite my background in government and legal training, I quickly realised that transitioning into the role of an elected official involved a period of adjustment for all new Members.

Mr. Speaker, on the last page of my manifesto I made a promise to my constituents. I ran as an independent, so I didn't want to overpromise and under deliver. I simply didn't know where I would land on election, and so I made seven promises to the people. I'm not going to list them all, but I will list two:

1. I promised to lead with honesty and integrity; and

2. I promised to always put my constituents first in any decision I made.

Mr. Speaker, transitioning from Deputy Speaker, to Parliamentary Secretary, to Speaker might not have been a smart political move; however, it was in keeping with my promises to my constituents. While stepping into that neutral position may not have garnered me the political support I could have sought, I made that decision out of a profound love for our country and its people. It was crucial for me to prioritise the interests of the Cayman Islands and it was no different than when I vacated the speakership or when I resigned as a Minister. Above all else, I have remained steadfast in putting the country above my own political advancement.

Mr. Speaker, to those on the Government side who I consider to be friends, I do hope that despite our political positions having been changed, we will one day be in a position to crack a joke again in the kitchen.

I would like to thank the Member for North Side for resuming the works in West Bay. I know that the Minister has been doing lots of work in other constituencies and on behalf of the people of West Bay Central, I'd like to thank you for recommitting to starting Apple Blossoms. In addition to that, I know you've been working hard on getting the Morgan's Harbour Dock started and I hope that we can see that sometime soon.

Mr. Speaker, he isn't here now and I hope he's listening, but my colleague from West Bay North, Bernie Bush, has been a force to be reckoned with. Despite my changed position, he has always showed me the same face while respecting the opposing positions we recently were in. He has displayed that you can have differences in opinion and still be true to who you are. I always tell people, I know you talked about war room, Mr. Saunders, but if I had to be stuck in a room with one person to fight for Caymanians, it would be Bernie Bush. He has been a man of his word and his fight for Caymanians will be etched in my mind and heart as I continue this journey.

As we look to the future, it is clear that we need a cohesive group of leaders who are dedicated to making decisions in the best interest of our country, rather than what may appear to be politically expedient. Our collective strength lies in our ability to unite for the common good, prioritising the welfare of our people.

I would like to say to the voters, whether you vote or not, a new Government will be elected. Despite feeling hopeless in your own country, voting is your chance to elect the best of what is presented to you. I found a Facebook post the other night and I want to quote it because I thought it was very profound. It's from a well-respected Caymanian man, Mr. Leo Anglin and I quote, *"The weight of political leadership is immense and the decision to seek such a role shouldn't be taken lightly. It requires a deep introspection, an honest assessment of one's own capabilities. Commu-*

*nity involvement is valuable, but it's not the sole detriment of fitness for leadership. A true leader must possess both emotional maturity and sharp intellect, qualities crucial for navigating the complex challenges that shape a nation's destiny. Formal education is important, yet as Sir Thomas Moore wisely observed, 'One of our greatest problems of our time is that many are schooled but few are educated.' This rings as true today as it did centuries ago. We need leaders who not only understand the issues but also possess the wisdom and empathy to make sound judgment for the betterment of all."* [UNVERIFIED QUOTE].

It is a call for thoughtful consideration, not just for the opportunity, but of the profound responsibility it entails.

Mr. Speaker, again, I want to thank West Bay Central for their trust and support. I look forward to taking the experience gained, along with all of the lessons learned, to return here to embark on legislating for a stronger, more united Cayman Islands where our people thrive and futures shine bright.

As I reflect on the past four years of serving West Bay Central, I would like to quote my father-in-law Clovis Wilks, who too, like some of the Members here today, just recently retired, *"I am not ready to retire. I am ready to re-fire."* With that being said, Mr. Speaker, I am humbly expressing my desire to continue the journey by seeking re-election for West Bay Central. It has been an honour to represent this constituency and I believe that there is much more work to be done, and with the support of my constituents, I'm looking forward to further advocating for the needs and aspirations for all Caymanians. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

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

The honourable Member for West Bay South.

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** Good evening and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Inaudible interjection]

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** Five minutes?

[Laughter]

[Inaudible interjection]

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** It's been too interesting a first term for five minutes.

**An Hon. Member:** Oh boy!

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** Mr. Speaker, it has been the honour of my professional life to be an elected Member

of this honourable House and to represent West Bay South and its good people.

Election night is a night that I think... I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if you remember your first election night. Is it a night that all of the Members won't ever forget—the first night that you won the election?

**Hon. Johany S. Ebanks:** Tell us about it.

[Laughter]

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** Tell us about it.

**The Speaker:** Can I tell you that in those long ago times, I was actually standing in the Grand Court addressing the judge in a manslaughter trial—

[Laughter]

**The Speaker:** —when I was told I had won.

[Laughter]

**The Speaker:** Because they took all night and into the afternoon before the count was in.

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** So, yes, yours was memorable. [Laughter]

The polling station for West Bay South is John Gray Memorial Church. As the good Lord would have it, that's the church that even when we lived in New York, when we'd come back home that was my dad's church. When the results came in, I think I went for the third box and my counting agent said *"You don't need to come back because there's not enough votes in the fourth box to overcome the lead."* I knew that when I returned to the constituency office it would be pandemonium, so I just stopped in the parking lot just to pray. I just said, *"Lord, if, if this has been your will, then I'll try to do as much good work as I can, as quickly as I can,"* and then of course, it was pandemonium.

In terms of the subjects I was able to manage and be responsible for—thank you G. Wayne Panton—for Financial Services and Commerce I had three goals: Get off all of these lists; refresh some of the products; and try to find new areas of growth. Then, for Investment, Innovation and Social Development, [the goal] was to modernise the legislation; increase some staff levels; enhance some of the facilities; and to bring online the National Digital ID. However, reopening the country got in the way at first.

**An Hon. Member:** Yup.

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** That was a very taxing time.

**An Hon. Member:** Oh yeah.

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** There were many drafting nights with Legal Drafting, all the restrictions, all the regulations, all of us had different constituencies with different views, open, not open, close, open, close—

**An Hon. Member:** Long hours.

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** Long hours. West Bay South is economically diverse so my WhatsApp went right down the middle; some said open, some said you're crazy to open!

[Inaudible interjection]

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** Long nights. Poor Cheryl Neblett and her team, telling them one draft and then come back with another; Sam Rose publishing things on a Saturday; so yes, we did some good work. I mentioned the business owner stipend and by the time we got all that out of the way, we were then able to get rolling.

Member for Bodden Town West, even as a civil servant, to me, you held one of the records of Finance Committee; I think we started at 9:06 and we ended at 9:30. [Laughter]

[Inaudible interjection]

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** Yeah, set a record.

Then we got rolling. Started to do some good work, the Financial Assistance Act got passed and started to get on the road with the Attorney General to get off of the FATF grey list. Many of those meetings in different cities, AG—Miami, Mexico City—trying to convince them, but eventually we wore them down.

Then there was the EU Parliament Tax Subcommittee Hearing and I'll never forget, rest her soul, Debbie Bodden, who was instrumental. It's hard to imagine now that, that she's been gone, but she was an absolute ball of fire walking into those halls of Brussels and telling me, *"Don't worry. Don't worry, Minister, you got this. You just got to tell them the truth about Cayman."* Rest her soul. Gene DaCosta was there [also]. We had some adventures on the road; he is our representative to Asia.

Then in 2023, we began the long, arduous road of trying to modernise social development legislation. The Older Persons Act, the Adoption Act, the Children Act, and Maintenance Act were just carried over the line once it was all packaged and done by the now Deputy Premier, but it was excellent policy work, an excellent journey. Also, the Digital ID legislation came online, so hopefully that's teed up and that can actually get rolling in the next term. Hopefully the trial period could start before this term ends.

Along that journey of those achievements, I can't forget the Ministry staff. We talked about him earlier this week, Chief Officer Dax Basdeo is an absolute soldier for Cayman. He's a man of few words, but the words that do come out, you need to listen to. He also

is unflappable. I don't think I've ever seen him panic and we've been in some tight, tight corners; I've never seen him panic.

On the Social Development side, Chief Officer Tamara Ebanks. A couple of times we had to pinch ourselves, we were just little kids running around John Gray Memorial Church on Sundays and now she's a Chief Officer and I was a Minister. It's just fantastic to grow up, to try to be responsible; you wouldn't want us to be Chief Officer and Minister when we were running around Matrix Nightclub back in the day, but we grew up.

There are also some stalwarts who I think are worth mentioning. We talk about [the] AG, but he has a co-pilot, Ms. Cindy Jefferson-Bulgin. *[Whistles]* Wow, a complete resource! The Register of Companies is literally on her shoulders with her staff. She's not just filing away and cranking out documents, she knows each of the laws that the entities operate under like the back of her hand. Anytime I've ever gone down to her with an issue that may come up with industry, she could stop me right there; *"Let me point to you section whatever, this is what they're not following"*. Which also begs the question in terms of when we talked about folks who are retiring, you have to look around the Civil Service and the Public Service. A lot of talent is about to go out the door to celebrate their soon retirement.

Cindy Scotland, Mr. Ritchie Smith, Joel Walton, these are some stalwarts who have built these industries. I know that each of them has various succession plans in place, but hopefully they get the recognition that they deserve because they've helped build, develop and advance some of the authorities that are responsible for some of the most lucrative transactions in the country.

I can't forget secretarial admin support, Ms. Angela Mowbray is an absolute rock. Antoinette Vernon was an absolute rock for me in the Ministry. All of the Ministry staff and all of the departments... Member for West Bay West talked about Ms. Tamara Hurlston, she is also a true soldier in the social development [Ministry] and help you be able to package things.

For example, we did some good work [with] the bus warden stipend—Minister Seymour, I'm gonna try to do my best impression of you, *"I been sayin' it, I been sayin' it, I been sayin' it."*

*[Laughter]*

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** It must have been at least 7-8 Caucuses straight. Pet peeve. *I been saying it.* We did it. It's in place. We've gathered the data. It was an interesting exercise because those are individuals who are not in the Civil Service system so Treasury was like, yeah, that's a cute idea, but they're not enrolled in the system, so we had to work with the bus companies. The data is there and I don't see why any administration wouldn't continue that, along with the good work that's

done at the Business Development Centre and the stipends and the classes that they do because small, micro and medium businesses are the heart of commerce in the country.

In terms of new growth areas that were identified as we really got rolling, reinsurance has come online big time in the country. The numbers that the Monetary Authority have are off the charts now, so we're seeing that continue to grow. Family offices are continuing to grow and there is a very large tech community here that's continuing to grow, so we'll see more of that. That's why I think some of the provisions that Minister Seymour has in the consultation paper will be important because there are people here who are going to provide real substance, real jobs for young Caymanians as they help the community grow and have a whole ecosystem here. That's what you want. You want them to provide scholarships, jobs and a future.

It was also good to get some good work done in the constituency. Minister Jay Ebanks did some good work, crosswalks that were needed in West Bay South, right around John Gray Memorial Church. Speed bumps [as well]. One of my notes on the campaign trail was that the good folks who live on Powell Smith Drive said it hadn't been paved in 12 years—that got done. Thank you, sir.

Minister, I'm going to echo Ms. Barbara's cries for one project that hasn't gotten done yet. I'm going to piggyback on you. As the Member for West Bay Central [mentioned], the Morgan's Harbour Dock...

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** You're chasing it. I don't know if you want to just say something off the mic in response to my *outstanding* parliamentary question (PQ) on the matter.

*[Laughter]*

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** I don't know if it will go. The existing Bible is still in place, so it'll just come in writing two days after this meeting.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** Any updates, sir?

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** Be there by March. West Bay South— March 2025?

*[Inaudible interjection]*

*[Laughter]*

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** March 2025, West Bay South, Morgan's Harbour Dock. He knows I'm going to do a clip and put it on Facebook.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** *[Laughter]*

Then we also did some good work, Member for Prospect, you help with transferring some funds so that I could beautify a cemetery in West Bay South, which is now the Batabano Cemetery. It's only phase one, but from the way that it looked at the time the term started to now is a world of difference. There's more to be done. It didn't even look like a cemetery, people were playing cricket in the parking lot, but now it looks more and more like a proper cemetery.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** We also did some transfers for Chapel Church, West Bay to finally put the roof on that eyesore. I'm still waiting for them to start, I chased the church to get updates to make sure that that is done, because there's a shortage of hurricane shelters in West Bay.

Then I'd like to thank all of those who helped get me here in the first place, my committee. We're *gonna* be back at it again. I'm joining the list of folks who are confirming that they are declaring in the upcoming election.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** Oh, good, this one was for Premier and she arrived at the right time.

I have a couple past campaign committee members who are a little grumpy with me, but the root cause of their grumpiness is that I would not entertain a secret meeting with someone who planned to run against my then boss. I didn't think it would fit with my principles to be answering to the Premier and her number two and then go off to have a secret meeting, so they may be grumpy but you have to stand by your principles.

**An Hon. Member:** Mm-hmm.

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** I didn't think that was right and I never did it.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** I'll tell you later. You didn't know. All you need to know is that I upheld my principles, for you.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mr. André M. Ebanks:** With that said, in terms of upholding principles, we made a painful decision, four of us, to separate. We felt it was in keeping with our principles and that if work was to continue, then it could continue with others. When we decided—just out of heart and what kept us together, what binds us and forms our camaraderie and collaboration and shared values, we formed The Caymanian Community Party. Not out of any sort of malice, mischief, or Machiavellian move, but just because we formed something that fits within our course.

To my constituency office staff, love you all to death. Laura; Di; Atlee McAlister Ebanks, my twin brother, I could not get through the term without you all, particularly with that heavy travel schedule.

To the Members who have announced their departure so far, as Mr. Speaker has given leave I'll just use first names. Bernie Bush, first and last name, is a true patriot, true soldier. You always know where you stand with him. You might get an outburst one way or the other, if he's in favour or not in favour of what you said, but you'll know. Loud and clear.

Ms. Barbara, you have represented very well and I think you've inspired other women to stand for politics by the way that you've carried yourself, your passion for your people, the way you chase projects down and you WhatsApp Ministers. I've gotten WhatsApps from you. I've gotten WhatsApps from you when I was in my prior, prior post as a representative to the UK and Europe. Remember that? You had a constituent trapped in Amsterdam. Your passion was always obvious and evident.

Moses, I think you are the gentleman of the House. Never a wry word, even when I could see something has upset you. You may go red, but the language never goes red. You always still smile and call people by their nicknames; always. That sort of kindness I think will be missed by all of us. A true gentleman.

David, thank you for your service. Your passion to your people on the ground is self-evident to anyone who is watching. You love your people and you love this country.

Last but not least, my family. I have to apologise again, I told my little girl I'd get home. "*No more business on this Order Paper. Dad should be home by six.*" Out of all the nights, broken promise again. We all go through it because we enjoy public service, but it means that we wouldn't be able to do it without them. To my wife, Tiffany; son, Jackson; daughter, Savannah; dad loves you. Dad's going to try to continue to make you proud and I'll need every ounce of strength, love and affection to continue soldiering on for this wonderful country of ours.

Having travelled and seen so much in this term, there is still no place like the Cayman Islands. In many of those meetings with a number of other countries and you listen to some of their issues and problems, you wouldn't throw ours in a basket and take theirs; you'd

keep ours. We are a blessed gem of three Islands, perfectly positioned. [We'll] overcome challenges and lead to an incredible, even brighter future. What a term! Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Just toss a coin. Running out of people now.

*[Laughter]*

**An Hon. Member:** Might as well. I think you see the flow.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Mrs. Sabrina T. Turner:** Mr. Speaker, esteemed colleagues, fellow citizens and especially the constituents of Prospect. I rise for this final sitting of Parliament before the upcoming Elections on April 30th and I am filled with immense gratitude and determination. It has been an honour to serve as your elected Member of Parliament since 2021 and it is definitely not without the mercies of God and the consistent prayers of the unknown that have definitely gotten me through.

My journey over the past 3 years, 10 months approximately, has been deeply fulfilling, especially during my tenure as a Cabinet Minister for Health and Wellness and Home Affairs. In this capacity I have had the privilege of not only advocating for our community's health needs and the safety of our country with my responsibility for our uniformed services (with the exception of the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service and the Coast Guard which fall under the Premier), I also served as Parliament's HR Subcommittee Chair and I've had the pleasure to sit on the National Security Council. A Council, Mr. Speaker, if your memory serves you well, that you placed me on as a member of civil society back in 2017-2018. [You have my] immense gratitude; thank you for your trust in me and placing me at such an early age in such a noble role.

I am particularly grateful for the opportunity to have worked alongside my colleagues in Cabinet. That phase of my life has honestly moulded me into the person I've become today and I stand as a proud political figure to say it was an honour to serve with my colleagues where we collaborated on vital issues that shape the future of our community and by extension, our beloved Cayman Islands.

In the early months of my tenure as Minister of Health and Wellness, I faced the formidable challenge of guiding the safe reopening of the Cayman Islands. Being a newly elected first-time Member of Parliament and the Minister with the responsibility of Health and Wellness, this responsibility was not just a professional endeavour, it was deeply personal as I understood the impact our decisions would have on the lives of families and businesses throughout our community. By working collaboratively with my colleagues in Caucus and Cab-

inet, the civil servants, healthcare professionals, various government agencies and stakeholders, we successfully navigated a path to prioritise the wellbeing of our citizens while allowing our economy to begin its recovery.

Mr. Speaker, we often overlook that for the first year and a half this administration was buried completely in COVID regulations with absolutely no bandwidth to focus on anything else. Our people were hungry for normalcy. As a result, I will take the opportunity to stick out my neck and say that this administration must give ourselves some grace and look at what we have accomplished: essentially shackle-free in two years, not four years.

I want to emphasise that as an elected representative it is my duty to advocate for and serve everyone in our Islands; that, Mr. Speaker, remains unchanged. I may be in a different role now, being in Opposition, but my commitment to the people we represent is unwavering. I pledged in 2021 that I would be your voice, your hope, your choice and I will continue to be a strong voice for all, ensuring that their concerns and needs are heard and addressed. That's [only] possible by each voter for Prospect making me their choice again on April 30th.

This position is not just a 'when you wake up' decision to run, a bucket list [or] a 'check the box'-type thing. Serving is a role that must come from the heart and it must be organic, not a 'just because' decision. You can only fake for so long. Not all that glitters is gold and we can see what's happening to our north.

Like my colleagues, I will leave [out] some of the checklist of what I have been able to accomplish, but kudos go out to my dear friend and colleague, Minister Jay Ebanks from North Side. The cries of the people of Prospect going back two decades for the resurfacing of roads and where flooding issues are concerned—we have definitely been able to meet those needs. No hostility and work continues. I must say publicly, Minister Ebanks, thank you for keeping your promise. You know, I'm like a bee, I wouldn't ease up on you and that's the fight and vigour that will never die.

The constituency office of Prospect has been operational from 2021. It is manned by the dedicated loyalists of Ms. Bianca Miles Campbell, a little giant in her own creative and dynamic way; and the one, the only, Ms. Joyceanne Seymour. This Constituency Office has serviced persons from all over the Cayman Islands and we have even opened on some Saturdays when needed. I know that a dedicated Constituency Office is new for the people of Prospect—it's pretty much new, period—but I can attest that this office has been fully operational and has benefited hundreds island-wide. This will continue to be so, should the good people return me to office.

As a first-time politician, the experience I've gained over the last three-plus years has immensely prepared me for my next chapter of service. I have

learned the intricacies of governance and the importance of listening to constituents. Even when they feel I'm not hearing them; things get done. I've learned the value of collaboration even when you don't always agree on everything. These experiences have equipped me with the insight and dedication needed to tackle the challenges ahead. It has adequately equipped me so that when I return on April 30th, (thanks to your continued support and I hope you vote for me), I will be able to hit the pavement running with other elected colleagues with the support of the civil servants and no training would be required. I have been tested, tried and proven; so absolutely no need to fear, you will get a good return on your investment.

Now, as I said in the Opposition, one cannot say that I'm not experienced. In one term, I've acted as Premier; I've acted as Deputy Premier; acted as Minister of PAHITD [Planning, Agriculture, Housing, Infrastructure, and Transport & Development]; again, CBC *[sic]* [Border Control]; Ministry of Finance; Education; and I want to publicly thank the former and current Premier, along with my other ministerial colleagues who entrusted me to act on their behalf whenever they had to go on leave. This has offered me the opportunity to get first-hand experience of working in other ministries.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that throughout my time in office, I have been able to learn that key skill of listening to the people's concerns. I have advocated for their needs; the constituents and my colleagues know that I advocate and get things done and I've worked tirelessly to deliver on results. Thank you to my colleagues and my friends in the Government, the Official Opposition and this entire House for all we have been able to accomplish nationally and on the constituency level. Together, we have faced challenges and we have celebrated achievements. I've been constantly inspired by the resilience and commitment of the people of Prospect and it is their support that drives my desire to continue this important work.

As I seek their support for a second term, I remain committed to building on progress we've made. We must continue to enhance our local infrastructure; remain fully invested in our uniformed services and national security; improve healthcare access; and support education and job opportunities. Let's get the wellness part done. Let's bring a permanent and sustainable flooding solution, especially in Bedrock, and definitely island-wide. Your voices matter and together we can ensure that our community thrives for generations to come.

As we draw this Parliament session for this political term to close. I want to say it has indeed been an incredible journey we have shared. It has been a pleasure to work. It has been a pleasure to work with yourself, Mr. Speaker. Prior to you being a Speaker, we go back as far as 2014, 2015, working with you in the Red Bay and Prospect community. The Parliament staff are a lovely bunch of individuals, hardworking, dedicated

and always willing to make sure all of your needs are met. The Ministry staff and all whom I've had the pleasure to cross paths with, thank you for your service and support.

There are a few who are most deserving of special mention and I must publicly mention: Ms. Nellie Pouchie, Mr. Michael Ebanks and Mr. Julian Lewis. You all are so worthy to be publicly mentioned, given the nature of your roles and the close working relationship that a Minister has to have. Words cannot express my gratitude, as you were all my rocks as I served in the role as Minister of Health, Wellness and Home Affairs. To my personal assistants, Ms. Leni Tatum and Abigail Perez, thank you too for your unwavering support and thank you for your dedicated service during my tenure. This comes from the bottom of my heart and you have a heart of gold when it comes to serving your country.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many more hard-working and dedicated, genuine civil servants that I had the honour and pleasure to work with and each and every one of you, especially on that fifth floor, know who exactly I am talking about. Thank you. The laughter that fills that entire floor, the warmth and love shared every morning will resonate with me and it's something I am hungry and truly looking forward to.

To my family, this journey and life as an elected official—

*[Pause]*

**Mrs. Sabrina T. Turner:** —it's been a personal decision of mine, however, it is far reaching. As we navigate life, being in this elected role from day one of 2021, I have fought for who I am, preserving dignity and integrity. I would like to publicly thank each and every one of my immediate family for being my rock, for having my back and for adapting to a life that there's no blueprint [for], a life that is definitely not for the faint of heart by any stretch of the imagination. We've all braced up and we've supported each other and no matter what, I thank you for all you've done.

To my loyal friends and supporters and volunteers, those who are in the front and those who are in the shadows, to all my warriors who defend me in my presence and even when I'm not around, I thank you for your unwavering support. I trust that as we enter the second election campaign, people will see me for who I am and not what they create. My conscience is free knowing that I have poured my heart and my soul into serving our country and to the people, no matter where you're from, listening to their needs, championing their causes and working tirelessly to create a better quality of life and a better future for all.

April 30th is not just another election day, it is our opportunity to affirm our shared vision and together we have achieved so much thus far, but there is still much to be done. Your continued support will persist in advocating for these interests, fighting for our values

and ensuring that every voice is heard and respected, that dignity is shown no matter what part of the totem pole you stand. I stand before you not only as an incumbent candidate but as a committed partner, eager to further our progress and tackle the challenges ahead. I wholeheartedly believe in the strength of our community, the resilience of our citizens and I am inspired by the faith you have placed in me. I've been proven, tested and tried and no guessing is required.

Let us move forward. Loyalty is embedded in my DNA and everyone in here knows that. United in a purpose and hope, I am confident that with your support, you will return me to these hallowed halls of this elected office on April 30th, affording me the opportunity to continue the important work of making Prospect a place where all can thrive in peace and harmony. Your trust in me is a responsibility I don't take lightly and as I close, let us remember that together, there is no challenge we can't overcome. I ask for your trust and your support as we move forward, united in our purpose and vision. Together let's continue to make Prospect, and by extension the wider Cayman Islands, a place we are all proud to call our home. God bless and thank you.

*[Desk thumping]*

**The Speaker:** The honourable Member for Savannah.

**Hon. Heather D. Boddan, Deputy Speaker:** Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is with heartfelt gratitude that I rise to pay respect to all in this honourable House who I have had the privilege to work with. I would like to extend deep thanks and appreciation to you, Mr. Speaker, for the manner and position you have taken for being fair and just. Mr. Speaker, I too, wish you the best going forward.

I would also like to acknowledge the entire staff of Parliament for their kind and generous assistance during the past four years. Mr. Speaker, the staff in here have made our time most pleasant and enjoyable.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to thank the Honourable Minister of Tourism, now Deputy Premier, for the time I spent with him as his Parliamentary Secretary. I loved every moment of it. I also want to thank the former Minister, MP André Ebanks for my time as his Parliamentary Secretary in Social Development. Both gentlemen, I love and admire. They have done this country proud.

Madam Premier, thank you for everything.

I thank my family for always being there, whether it is checking on my safety or preparing a meal. They know my hours are long; they know it is a 24/7 job; Mr. Speaker, it is tireless but I would not want it any other way.

[To] my committee and my community of Savannah, heartfelt thanks to every one of them who

makes sure that every morning I receive an inspirational message. Mr. Speaker, I love my country and I love my community, especially the community of Savannah.

During this term, Mr. Speaker, I have accomplished much and I'm proud of our dynamic community office, which we are proud to say has been available and served residents island-wide. They find peace, calm and comfort in our office for some reason. I'd like to thank our dedicated, hardworking staff in this office who make sure they're there, whether it's five or seven days per week, from morning till sometimes night. Ms. Debbie Rankin, the PA for Mr. Panton and Ms. Leeann Christian, my PA, both go above and beyond the call of duty every day.

I'm also happy with the Savannah Beautification Committee where the aesthetic attractiveness of Savannah is safeguarded by ensuring the neighbourhoods are maintained to a standard of cleanliness and order. Other accomplishments include upgrades to the Savannah Newlands playground which now has proper lighting, playground equipment, a proper hard court, bathrooms and food stalls. [It's now a place] where children can play in a safe and secure environment and where events can be held. Much thanks to my colleague, Mr. Panton in this assistance.

Other accomplishments include liaising with the RCIPS to implement neighbourhood crime watch programmes for each street in Savannah and with the National Roads Authority (NRA) to ensure Savannah roads are in good condition, have proper drainage, speed bumps and proper access. Mr. Speaker, I pause to give thanks and praise to the NRA staff and Director. They worked tirelessly and I so appreciate them for their support.

Minister Jay, I take this opportunity to thank you for being the hard worker you are. No matter when I call about an issue in Savannah to do with roads or drainage or whatever, you respond and you act. Your director, Mr. Edward Howard is someone to be looked up to.

Having senior citizen events to provide socialisation for the elderly, Mr. Speaker; these are the elderly who love to get out and socialise, we provide so many events for them. Coming up next Friday, Valentine's Day, they will be treated.

We conduct senior home visits for wellness checks; work with those in need with Department of Financial Assistance, no matter the district; we provide counselling to the distressed; we provide services for passports, affidavits and deed polls (that's the enjoyment I get for being a JP); we provide immigration services; sourcing of housing, shelter, security; provide funds for food; at times, assisting with utilities as a matter of urgency; we provide scholarship application services, and sponsoring our youth in sports and educational programmes; all of this we carry out in this office; coordinating with CINICO, overseas physicians and hospitals to expedite transport and medical treatment

for clients. Mr. Speaker, name it and those services are carried out within our community office, but there is so much more to be done.

Mr. Speaker, as I stand before you, I want to emphasise that I was elected to serve. My people know me. They know what I have done and continue to do. I know my people; I have served them with dignity, integrity, accountability, transparency and passion for the leadership of my community and Island, as this is what has been ingrained in me from birth. I will also continue to move forward with hope, purpose and unwavering commitment to make these Islands the best they can be for everyone. For this, Mr. Speaker, I thank God every morning I rise and put my feet on the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I end this with today's inspirational message. I quote, **"No matter what happens in life, be good to people. Being good to people is a wonderful legacy to leave behind."** With that, I say thank you and God bless these beautiful Cayman Islands.

*[Desk thumping]*

**The Speaker:** The Honourable Member for Bodden Town East. The Minister from Gun Square.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** Mr. Speaker, I'm getting scared of you; you said 9 o'clock and I thought you were joking, but you had this all figured out and calculated right.

Thank you for allowing me, Mr. Speaker, to make some short but steady—

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** —contributions on the end of term. This definitely has been a term. The last sitting of 2021-2025 term. I want to note, Mr. Speaker, where we have here, the first Parliament, with three Speakers as noted, the first Premier of the Cayman Islands, who is the Honourable McKeever Bush; the first elected Premier, who is yourself, Sir Al; and the first female Premier, who is the only Premier to lead two lame-duck style Governments successfully throughout and she ought to be applauded.

*[Desk thumping]*

**The Speaker:** Honourable Minister, at great risk, I would suggest you use "minority" rather than "lame duck" in that context.

*[Crosstalk]*

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** Thank you, I will practice that.

I want to clarify what I said when I said the "first elected Premier". The Constitution changed in 2009. [In] May 2009, when I was first elected, the Honourable McKeever Bush was Leader of Government Business at the time having also been elected, and in November 2009 the Constitution changed, and the title changed to Premier. Then, you were the first elected Premier in 2013. Yeah, something I followed.

This term, Mr. Speaker, has been quite a learning one, albeit so confusing at the same time; but much can be a guide of what to do and what not to do. I've been on the Opposition side twice and I have also been on the Government side twice. It has always been about country for me. Some people say that and they take it lightly, *"Country for me! Country first!"* and when the time comes, we see what happens.

There have been many, many indications and highlights where I have shown that country is first. Mr. Speaker, I've shown my true commitment in everything I've done since being elected. I've done... Mr. Speaker, it's not easy when you come from where I come from. When you come into this honourable House as MPs—and now we see six MPs walking away from this profession—[know] it is a stressful one and sometimes an unthankful job and some need to know that it's not always glorious.

What many people don't know is that I've always been giving. I started working at about age eight at Buy Rite supermarket—and I met David there in the seventies and I called him my first boss and we've always had a relationship from then. It's always been in my nature [to give] from seeing my grandmother. I used to always ask her, *"Granny, why are you cooking so much food? It's only four of us in the house,"* and she would say, *"John, you never know when a stranger is going to walk up to the door and ask for something to eat,"* and it happened almost every day. A stranger came and she fed them, so I've seen this. That was my first sight of seeing acts of kindness, so it's from my grandmother. If you think I'm kind, it's my grandmother that started me off in this kindness and Sunday School and the teachings from that.

Mr. Speaker, Bodden Town East, I want to thank you for electing me and putting your trust in me. We need more people running for office who will always think about country first and its stability. They laughed at me during the pandemic, maybe some are in here who weren't elected yet, but they laughed at me for praying. *"Oh, why John-John don't stop praying."* I heard it and I prayed even harder. Mr. Speaker, who was Premier at the time, came to me and told me some of the comments he had heard and I said, Premier, I really don't care. I'm going to pray. In times when we don't know what's going on that's when we need to call on God.

Mr. Speaker, I had a rough six months and even after my accident—which, I believe someone tried to kill me. [I was] one inch from death and the gash was so long that you could actually climb down in my head.

I didn't mean to be so graphic, but I say that to say that four days after that I showed up in Cabinet—no one knew that I was coming—with a bandage on my head and bleeding and everyone was asking me, are you all right? I said I'm only coming for an hour, ended up staying seven hours; and that is commitment to country. I did it for country because I was needed. I was needed by the team, although the team wouldn't have wanted me there.

I thank all the Ministers and MPs and PSs who came to my house and visited me. I thank them all, but Mr. Speaker, what many may not know is that I can't go back home through the same route in the night because I'm scared. I actually saved myself that night, after the hit, I jumped out of the vehicle and rolled so that I didn't hit the light pole in the car because the car was smoking and I thought it was *gonna* blow up. I have six children...

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to be elected, but if you're getting more benefit from yourself being elected than the people are getting from you, then you're in the wrong business. I see many groups getting together. Most parties in Cayman have the same ideology, but different focuses in all groups. They talk about many things. I heard the MP for Bodden Town West mention about Cayman Brac, but what people don't know is that my family came from Cayman Brac, so anything I can do to defend Cayman Brac, I'm going to do because I hate bullying.

*[Desk thumping]*

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** I see them trying to bully Cayman Brac just because Cayman Brac is small in numbers, and I listen. I have always been an advocate against bullies; from high school, from middle school, from primary school, I've always been an advocate against bullies. I used to teach myself how to fight, just to beat up bullies. I'm proud of saying that, you know? That's where you get 10 nicknames because you never lose a fight. I'm not afraid of a fight. I'm quiet in demeanour, and trust me, I will give you my heart. I have a lot of love in my heart.

Many people know my story. They heard, they know who my father is, my mother is, but not many people know what it means to cry 10 years for your mother.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the PPM for giving me an opportunity like never before. You did something so skilful and called me out publicly; my constituents had me call a meeting and told me that there's no way that you're gonna get anything done unless you're around the table, you better take Sir Alden's deal. Boy, you don't know how much I hated you for that *[Laughter]* and I loved you at the same time.

The Member for Bodden Town West and I came and met with you all and we were holding strong as Independents, and oh man, Minister Bryan.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** Yeah, but we were holding strong.

Anyway, thank you PPM. Mr. Speaker, you have shown me a respect that many have never shown me, for a very, very unassuming person that you didn't really know. You heard of me, but we weren't friends, we weren't buddies, we weren't hanging out together or anything like that. Most people who don't know me, say things about me. Whether that's Cayman Marl Road (CMR) or whoever else—I don't even know her. I don't know why they call my name so much. It's like their show can't get any likes unless they call Dwayne Seymour's name.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** Look at it! When you call Dwayne Seymour's name you get 10,000 likes, and when you don't call it you get 1,000.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** I mean, I need to cash in on this stuff, you know?

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** I am forever grateful. David, Barbara, I remember you all telling me, "*You fight so hard you're like a PPM member.*" I felt like a PPM member. I believe in the party system. That's how I came into the business. The honourable McKeever Bush sent for me in 2006 after the 2005 election, saying that he wanted me to run in the next election and I said "*No way, no way! I am not interested in that.*" I said that all you do in politics is people hate you. That's what I thought, many people are going to hate me if I go into politics, so I said no. I said "no" twice. Then my good friend Mark Scotland lost the election in 2005 and he said he wouldn't run again unless he ran with me. Well, I said that means you're not going to run again!

As the years progressed, I recognised that we needed some different type of leadership in Bodden Town. Over the years, Bodden Town was really the place to be for politics in the seventies and eighties, and I recognise that the politicians were promising the same thing over and over again. "*We gonna build a boat ramp for you. Everybody gonna be able to go out there, we're gonna build a dock. We're gonna get more public beach, we're gonna get this and that*", you know? Little old John-John who grew up barefoot on Gun Square Road, came in and said, "*You know what, I'm going to ensure that people can't campaign on these things anymore.*" Whether they want to elect me after that or not, then that's fine, but at least they'll have a boat ramp and they'll have a dock.

I remember the party asking me if I wanted a dock and I said, *"No, I don't want to bite too big, I just want a boat ramp,"* and then in the next term I got a dock. The number of things that I've done in Bodden Town. The school hall, 40 years they've been asking for a new school hall, it was too small. We got a new one and this month we're going to cut the ribbon on that. I mean, there's so much that has been done; it's probably about five or six pieces of beach land; there's land where people can camp; there are all kinds of things, there's a new graveyard that's all purchased by [former] MP Scotland and me back in 2010. I don't like to brag or boast or whatever. Everyone says, *"look man, you should say more about what you're doing,"* and *"Oh man, we need to do this, we need to do that."* I say just one step at a time, you know? Let's just take it slow. God is seeing what I'm doing, no one else is seeing! I really believe that my rewards for everything that I do—People don't know half the things I do.

I quell wars, I quell robberies from happening, people don't understand the things that I do and how important it is for me to be here. A man that people see is like themselves, who they can connect with, who won't look down on them, who won't talk down to them, who won't be snide. These are important things.

Mr. Speaker, I see the time.

I am the voice of the voiceless. I'm also the face of the faceless and I'm the target of the mockers and the envious.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my family. I want to thank the Opposition Leader who's been my friend for 46 years now. I've known him for a very long time, we graduated together. I've always known him to be a fighter in all two regards.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** I like the way that the Opposition Leader goes down in "the Swamp" to play dominoes, goes down in, "Dog City" we call it, Watlers Road and the way he can communicate with his people, same way, without letting them feel like you're talking down to them or that you're throwing them a loaf of bread. I appreciate that about the Opposition Leader.

As alluded to earlier by the Member for Bodden Town West, in terms of the social conscience, many things have been said about the PPM that are not true, but the rumour is out there, the perception. I wonder what they are going to say now when some of the people whom they were talking about are not running now. It's a new party with some experienced people, a new infusion. I have always known them to care about the regular, common man. That was important to me.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ensure that I put my name forward for the next election. I think that is what people would want. I think many people would be upset if I got up here and announced tonight that I wasn't putting my name forward. I want to be a part of the Government who works on cost-of-living; who works on the

regulation of these banks; who works on these rapacious, greedy landlords—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** Homes for all is my desire, or for whoever desires them. I heard there were some 800 people on the waiting list, so we need to find a way to make that happen.

I have some ideas and some suggestions and some people have sent in some proposals, et cetera, but we've got to do what's best for the Government too and try to not spend too much money, be conservative.

I want to ensure that there's a mental health facility for our children. We don't need any more persons taking their lives in Cayman. We need to understand as politicians, how we rule, how we lead, to be inclusive for children also, rather than just thinking about persons over 18 years old. We need to be mindful that we need to include children in everything that we do. I know we got education locked and we are ensuring that every child can eat and be focused, free lunches and everything else, but there are some other things going on that our children are suffering from or being affected [by] and we need to understand what those are. Every one of our children, some are silent and some do some other things. That is my passion, to try to ensure that we find mechanisms or put things in place. Thanks to the foundations like the Alex Panton Foundation and so forth, which I have supported as Minister for Health for the full four years. I spoke at it a couple of times. Some of my family members have benefited. We need more of that.

We have the new mental health facility. We need to find a way to reincorporate and to find a place for children who just need a little reset. The business of mental health care now is not to house someone forever but to groom them back to being good contributing citizens.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** Mr. Speaker, I definitely want to—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** Yeah.

[I want] to take some of these things off the list, but definitely I want to mention East-West Arterial and a year-long beautification team. I talked about 25 people being hired for the entire year, just similar to what they do in Cayman Brac, et cetera, then we won't have all these concerns. We need manpower, we need people out there. There are people who want to do that, you know? Seniors and kids health insurance, I was working on that. It's a passion of mine. We've got seniors paying a \$1,000 for health insurance, it's not right! Then the companies, after they've worked with them for

30 years, just release them out in the wild for them to fend on their own. Then we've got children whose parents are afraid to take them to the doctor because they don't have any health insurance and then you'll have unhealthy children. There's a myriad of them.

As the honourable MP for West Bay South said, the bus wardens, for years they were suffering. No salary for 2.5 months, so you *gotta* run around to this one and that one, trying to help them with their expenses. No one saw that as a problem?

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my good friends. If I didn't have good friends, I don't know how I would get through this these political years. Mark Scotland, Peterkin Berry, Gary Berry, Rex Watler, Vincent Frederick, these are good friends who message me and check on me every day. I got some prayer warriors that send me prayers every morning. They start from 4 o'clock in the morning and if I don't answer by 7:00, they're calling me, asking me, "*John-John, you all right?*" There are people out there who love me.

I want to thank the civil servants for what they do, our Cabinet, our Parliament staff, the AG and DG; for all that you all do, sometimes people don't see it. I see what you all do. I know their value. AG, thank you for what you do. DG is not here, but Ms. Gloria is very capable. Thank you for what you do to, Acting [Deputy] Governor. My Ministry staff, my Chief Officers, my Deputy Chief Officers, policy officers; and all the directors of Workforce Opportunities & Residency Cayman (WORC) and Customs and Border Control (CBC); and Mr. Bruce Smith; Mr. Jeremy Scott; Mr. Gary Wong; Mr. Marlon Bodden; Mr. Kevin Walton—all doing a great job, all Caymanians. Who said Caymanians can't do things? They do it at the highest level.

Mr. Speaker, I know the time is... My good colleague here from East End—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** He told me that my paper was one page, but he said, last time you had one page and you still went an hour.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** I just want to say in closing that I want to thank my family, my wife and my children. People don't understand how it affects my children when Marl Road and Cayman News Service (CNS) says stuff. That's what's running everyone out of the business now, and they're going to create one conundrum. They don't understand what's going to happen when they can't find good people to run because they just tell pure lies. They have never said anything about me that was true yet. Never said anything about me that was true!

My daughter's got to call me from overseas while in university breaking down and stuff, and my wife has to hide, stay in the room. People don't understand what it does to your family. I've lost a family already because of politics.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** Well, I don't want to go on the rant that MP Saunders went on, but I think people know me. I'm serious for a reason.

I don't worry about many things because man disappoints, but God appoints.

**Some Hon. Members:** Amen.

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** In Psalms 118:6, "**The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?**" Imagine... What motivates me?

Mr. Speaker, I have had the good fortune of running with the PPM last election as my people gave me the mandate to do. I don't know why people are so surprised, because my people gave me the mandate to do that. In fact, this term I was supposed to be with PPM; I came over because the Government asked me to come over, saying they need some assistance. I went just to sit as a backbencher, that's all, to assist the team and became a Minister again. The Premier came in and said, "*We want you to be Minister,*" and I said, "*Listen, anything for the country.*"

Team spirit and loyalty; I appreciate the PPM so much for what they have done for my career, for the guidance they have given me. Sir Alden, I'll forever be grateful to you. You don't know how grateful I will be to you for what you've done. You don't even know what you've done for my life.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** No, Sir Alden, you could have chosen anyone else; you chose me and you gave me a Ministry. You said, "*Take what you want, but you gotta take the Ministry of Health.*"

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** You can get anything else you want, but you've got take the Ministry of Health. No one else wants it. I said, "*Okay, I'll do it.*" Oh boy. Thank you for that. No one wanted it, but you know, I was happy to have had it.

I'm saying to the people of Bodden Town East, I've never really had a full term of being a Minister without interruption. The pandemic came and we had 69 press conferences. Many people were more jealous about that, that they had many memes about me and Sir Alden, and I thank you for that. I went to Sir Alden and said, "*Sir Alden, I really don't want to come to press*

*conferences anymore. You and the Governor are saying a lot of what I'm supposed to say and then I'm trying to find things to say and then I'm speaking languages and doing all kinds of stuff."*

[Laughter]

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** [Mr. Speaker], you said, "Minister, I want to tell you something: I'm not doing this without you." You don't realise that that was a defining moment that said, this man really wants me on his team; [the] Premier really wants me on his team. I tried to get out of it, but thank you again for entrusting me with those Ministries.

I remember someone came to you and said, "Minister Seymour says that he don't like the admin building," and you called me in and I said, that's true. I said, I got elected in Bodden Town. I'm reminded by MP Saunders, the "MP" is more important, and I can do my job... The good thing about me is that I know what I want. Many people don't know what they want and that's why I get through quickly with my meetings and why I do things quickly. You tell me what it is and I'll research and I'll know what I want.

Mr. Speaker, for all those enemies out there, thank you. You drive me. I pray for you every morning. I pray for my enemies and I pray that God invokes love in your heart to care about your common fellow man. Stop spreading rumours. We are not going to move forward in the direction you think we should move as one Cayman, unless we all come and work together. If we are divided, we are going to fall, and you need to accept responsibility that you are a part of the problem.

[Inaudible interjection]

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** Thank you, [Member for] Savannah.

[Inaudible interjection]

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** No, I don't mind that, but listen, I come here for the right reason. *I nuh got no time to try to badmouth people or talk down to them.* Even when people do me things or they talk about me, I try to stay out of trouble because I'm not good in it—I win! I win in trouble, so I try to stay out of it. *Ress me. Ress me* is what the honourable McKeeva Bush would say.

[Inaudible interjection]

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** Our families are who suffer.

Thank you all for this term. Thank you, Bodden Town East. Thank you to all the people who were so kind to me and so encouraging.

Also, I could not sit down without thanking the Honourable Premier for the friendship. In fact, I'm going to be like fish out of water because I've never served in

a Cabinet without the Honourable Premier, Juliana O'Connor-Connolly. I've never served without you. You have been such an inspiration and guide. You and Sir Alden have stopped me from making so many mistakes that I would have made out of frustration, and I thank you all.

I was going to make one big mistake on the press conferences and Sir Alden said, "Minister, you don't look good. I need to see [your speech]." He had never asked to look at my speech, but he just caught on to something, like Minister, what's happening? He saw my speech and said, "Oh Christ, Minister! You can't say that."

[Laughter]

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** "Oh Christ, you can't say that! He took out about 10 pages. I was so upset, man! He said, "Oh man, please Minister, please. I beg you."

[Laughter]

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** Thank you for that. You saved me. The Governor said, "Are you all right?" I said, I'm fine.

[Laughter]

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** Thank you, Madam Premier. I am so sad that you've decided that you will not announce that you're running until last minute. I'm so sad about that.

**An Hon. Member:** Oh my God.

[Inaudible interjection]

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** People don't know that you're one of the best strategist in the Caribbean region. Even Sir Alden has been telling me this. He said, the way that you strategize with the strengths that you have, being a lawyer, being a teacher, being elected for so long, being a Speaker, a preacher, a woman of faith, these are the kind— If I find out you don't have faith, I'm not following you. You can't fool me with that.

Madam Premier, thank you for, sometimes just out of the blue, sending me [a message] saying "John-John, you all right?" because you know we're all human. Thank you for being a friend.

I remember slapping down my hand in 2012 and you know what that's about. I broke the table too.

[Inaudible interjection]

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** When people can't make a decision, you know?

Thank you, Madam Premier for your service to this country. We still need you to stay near to politics

and if you're not running, if you decide that on March 3rd, I will ask you to come to Bodden Town to help me.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for all that you do. I'm sorry that you're also not running; sorry, also, that Ms. Barbara, Mr. David, Moses and Mr. Bernie are not running; but we have Joey.

*[Laughter]*

*[Crosstalk]*

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** God bless you all. Thank you.

*[Desk thumping]*

**The Speaker:** Honourable Members, I have been trying to carry on until this was over. I'm afraid my prediction was wrong.

*[Laughter]*

**The Speaker:** We've got at least another 40 minutes. I shall have to take a short 10 minute suspension, otherwise it would not be good.

*[Laughter]*

**Proceedings suspended at 9:03pm**

**Proceedings resumed at 9:08pm**

**The Speaker:** Parliament has resumed. It's last lap time.

The Honourable Deputy Premier.

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

Mr. Speaker, I've done a very silly thing tonight; I waited till last to speak at a time where people are tired and probably don't want to hear my mouth, but there are some essential things that I need to say. I must say that I've gone through an emotional roller coaster in the last six hours listening to the stories of the journeys of many Members of this honourable House. I cried a couple of times, felt sympathy, reunited some care and compassion for some of those whom I had differences with, and the one thing that I remember the most out of all of it is the fraternity of this House. We all are trying to do the same thing which is to represent our people the best way that we think that we can, and all that is at play here is that we all think it's done in a different way.

Mr. Speaker, I tried to think about what I need to say. I heard all the stories about what other Members

said and I started to jot down notes and I realised I got about 17 different papers here in front of me—

**An Hon. Member:** Oh no.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier:** —so I might need more than two hours. I'm just kidding.

**The Speaker:** Or you might lose the quorum and then we can't possibly continue.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier:** I promise that I'll try to be as fast as I can. That, I'll give you.

I tried to think about what I said in my last closing remarks before the 2021 Election. I have no idea what I said, because I was trying to say to myself, you know, what's the premise of what you say in these times—other than thanks. I'm going to steal a little bit from everyone else, but I first want to start off by saying, thank you heavenly Father for everything that you've done for me in the last eight years. To give me this opportunity to serve the great people of the Cayman Islands, it has truly been the best part of my life, so first, thank you God.

Before I go into all the chaos of the politics, I wanted to say thanks to my family because it's been rough. It's been rough. I'm a young father with two of the most beautiful, amazing young girls I've ever met in my life. Sometimes I wonder if they're mine, like wow! How did you become so amazing? They're so much better than me and I love them so much. To my daughters, Renee and Sienna Bryan, thank you for understanding because I know I've missed a lot of time away from you—see, not even three minutes in and tears coming already, anyway. Thank you for allowing daddy to do probably the noblest job in the world, and it's to be there for your home and your people. Thank you to my wife for being a father and a mother, and most times being alone because I'm here doing what I think is best for the future of us all and our grandchildren and our children that are growing up too.

I want to say a special thanks to my mom, because quite like other Members, I think my mom and my wife and my kids take it the hardest when people don't always agree with what you do. My mother is a very passionate person and she's getting older and I don't want her to feel the pain. I'm young enough, I can take it, but my mom takes it hard. She stood by me all the time, so mummy, I love you. Thank you so much for being there with me. My father—and for those out there who are not sure, I am a McField. My father's name is Vernon McAlister McField, but because I am a Bryan, [some people] don't know. At least the George Town Central people know where I'm from, but just in case those other ones are not familiar.

Mr. Speaker, next up on my list is to my constituency office staff, my right hand Edlin Moore. *He old but he definitely nuh cold.* He's been a political mentor for me for a while, rough around the edges but keeps me in line as much as I need to be. Also, to two of my office staff: Lavania McLaughlin who's been there with me from 2016. She's become like my sister and she knows my constituents in and out. Then my cousin, Shanna Myles who recently came on in this last administration and who's helped tremendously in dealing with matters from my constituency. Without my constituency office working, particularly [when] becoming a Minister, I think everyone would think that I've left them all, so they take up a lot of the bulk of the pressure.

It's different when you're a Government Minister. I pay so much respect to those who were Ministers before because you don't get as much time as you do in Opposition. I thought it was going to be easy, but it definitely hasn't [been].

Also to my constituency committee members, I'm not going to call out their names because politics can get really nasty and I don't want them to deal with any backlash because of differences in the community regarding me, but you know who you are. We meet in the committee, at the office, Subway every Tuesday or what else do we order? Is it always Subway? Amira—I know everyone knows Amira is in my camp, but Amira said the other night, *“Kenneth Bryan, I sick and tired of Subway. You need to bring some other kind of food.”* [Laughter] All my other committee members, I thank you so much for having my back all through this chaos because it's been a roller coaster of a four years.

I'm certain, Mr. Speaker that you've gone through some rough times in Government, but I don't think you went through anything rough like this one. One of the things that makes me feel all right to continue is that there's no way in the world I can get in the next Government and it be as rocky as the last one. It can't get any worse. I mean worse as in the turbulence. Not because we were all bad, but the turbulence. I feel like I'm seasick, man.

I am looking forward to coming back, so I don't think there should be any surprise with people thinking that I'm not going to run again or something like that. I have no intentions of throwing in the towel. I still have a lot of energy and commitment and love for my constituency and my country.

To be honest with you, Mr. Speaker, I got my first job as a fireman after leaving the Bonaventure Boys' Home, that lasted two years, fuddling around like an idiot and ended up resigning. I got into entertainment, thinking I was a hot boy, went away, won Mr. Cayman, got into a little acting here and there, travelled for a bit, came back home, [did some] jobs in the tourism industry, believe it or not, then got into media after going to university and getting my degree—but I never did know what it was I wanted to do.

I'll tell you this, I love representing my people. I don't know if I want to do anything else. Maybe starting

a business or something like that, where I can run my own show. As *stressful* as it can be, because boy it gets rough, but boy I love representing my people. I love it when I can make a kid smile. I love it when I can make a grandmother feel good because I got their children a job or help them to even pay a light bill when things get hard. That's purpose. I feel like I'm doing something. I feel like I'm valuable.

I think I'm happy to continue on if the good people of George Town Central and the greater Cayman Islands allow me to continue this most noble role that I play. No matter what side I'm on or whoever I'm with, I'm going to give it 1,000 per cent as long as the good Lord gives me breath in my body, because I know nothing different. Mr. Speaker, to my committee members I say, I love you. I thank you so much for standing by me and I hope you're ready for this ride because we're going at it again.

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn my attention now to my team that I've been working with for the last four years in the Ministry. I remember when I first came in, many people said stuff like, *“Oh, you got to be careful with that one.”* I don't wanna expose the team in any way, but there are allegations about how *“oh, they're too much for the PPM. You gotta change them out.”* I said, listen to me man, I don't *wanna* hear that. Members would remember me talking about this and I said, You imagine, I must try to force a change of Chief Officer because of people's feelings about who they like a little bit more than the other in a time when there was no tourism at all, the country was closed. I must try to, in some way, shape or form, force the hands which I have no constitutional power over to try to change them from that position to get a different Chief Officer, someone who won't know the history of tourism the way the Chief Officer that I have now [does].

I trusted my gut and I said as a new Minister, I'm not falling for that trap. Plus he's a Cayman Bracker, so it made it special for me. I've gotten to know someone who I can happily say is my friend today. I want to say thanks to [Chokes up] my Chief Officer because sometimes I look a lot better than I should. Yeah, I think that's the right way to say it. He made me look good. He did. He was such a truly professional civil servant. Even when I was green around the edges—oh, I had my history from a political perspective in this Parliament, but it's a totally different world being in charge of a Ministry and working with other staff.

I remember for the first six months I was scoping him out, you know? What are you up to? Whose side is he on? Is he really PPM supporting me? All kind of nonsense going through my head, and that's when I learned to respect the true value of the civil service that serves this country. Anyone who gets into this *“Oh, they're on one side or the other”*, don't get them caught up into that. Sometimes they need a little push, yeah, but don't expose them to that. In every civil servant there is a hardworking person and if you build a strong

relationship with them, they'll give you everything they got.

I want to say a special thanks also to my PA. I had two, but one went on to better pastures and got a policy officer job; then Ms. McField, who has been dealing with the chaos of dealing with me, but she is a McField so she knows how to keep me in line. She'll say, "*Listen, I don't want to hear none your nonsense today, you know? Get these emails approved.*" [Laughter] I appreciate that she doesn't take any nonsense from me and she's a George Towner, so I respect everything about her.

My public relations (PR) manager, Ms. Gina Matthews, what a wonderful human being and [the most] awesome woman that I have ever met. Ms. Gloria, I'm just letting you know now I intend to win my seat, I intend to be with a group of people and be a part of this Government and anyone who tries to go for her it's going to be a problem. I'm coming back and she would be a part of whatever team I'm a part of.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say thank you to my Deputy Chief Officers and all the other staff within my Ministry who take up the slack when I'm not on the ball. To my accounts team, my policy officers who helped develop the policy, my Department of Tourism—obviously, everyone knows how amazing our Director of Tourism is, but the thing is, Mr. Speaker, it's not only her. We have such a strong team in the Department of Tourism that supports the Director—just like me and the Ministry of Tourism which supports me—and that makes her shine. She has to be away a lot and there's hardworking staff on the inside that don't get enough attention, who do all the heavy lifting, and I want every single one of those staff in there to know how much I appreciate you. Everything that you do helps this country's tourism industry to be as vibrant as it is, particularly coming out of COVID.

It was no easy task. You heard some other Members speak about coming out of COVID and reopening this country safely. I remember the fights the former Minister of Health and I used to have. I say open, she say close, I say open, she say close; and we did that for a long enough time until everyone got to a safe place, a comfortable place that we all could agree that we have to now reopen the country. They helped transition that to let the rest of the world know that we are open for business. Financial services was able to operate from the computer, but in the service business you actually have to serve. I thank them, particularly all the stakeholders out there, for the hard working team that helped us to reopen.

Mr. Speaker, I want to now turn to my colleagues, to all Members from the very start, including the former Premier Wayne Panton. I don't mind fighting over policies and stuff, but we still did an amazing job opening the country safely. I think that's something that the PACT administration could be surely proud of. We took our time; we did it; we were diligent. I'm happy to say that there was no loss of life directly after opening

the gates [to let] cruises and stayovers and flights in. There was criticism about how it's easy to shut it down, but it's harder to open; I don't know how hard it was to close, so I'm not going to compare it, but I knew it was hard to open. I think the former Government and this Government should be proud of themselves for how we safely took our country through a time in our history which will never be forgotten. I'm proud of us for that.

I want to say thanks to the Honourable former Premier, again. I guess I can't say that you didn't have to give me the post because I think we were all there together, choosing who is who. It wasn't like your party and there was a selection, I think we all agreed together, but I thank you for being willing to work with me and all my other colleagues who are no longer a part of this administration.

I want to say a special thanks though to the ever so sweet, ever so amazing Ms. Heather Bodden. Oh, like a godmother, I think she needs some angel wings, because she is the mother hen, the one that keeps you warm and will make you smile. The one who will show up with cake for everyone's birthday, no matter whose birthday it is. No birthday will be missed [sic] without Ms. Heather bringing some cake. For keeping us cool and keeping us calm; for your beautification efforts.

[Inaudible interjection]

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier:** The wings come out when she gets home. Your positivity kept this country at a level when sometimes it got out of control, so I love you for that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn now to the rest of my colleagues, that is, that I'm still working with. By all means I had a great relationship with the other ones, had our political differences and this is about recognising the fraternity, but I *gotta* give a real serious special thanks to the Honourable Premier who stands beside me now. [When the] transition happened there was a new Premier, then there was a new Deputy. I was supporting her as Minister. Unfortunately, we lost four more Members and she gave me the opportunity to be the Deputy Premier; but not only just gave me the opportunity but *really* gave me the opportunity. She put me in positions where I was able to speak at major opportunity Chamber functions, and press conferences, go out and speak on behalf of the Government. Any elected Member always thinks about, oh one day, could I be leader? It passes through every one of our minds. I know everyone thinks about it or have thought about it once. You never know how or what to do with it, till you get the opportunity to feel it. [For] that chance to expose my potential leadership skills, I thank you because I don't think I would have gotten it otherwise. I appreciate that, and my mom said to say thank you for taking care of her son.

Mr. Speaker, I think I may be taking a little bit of advice from the former Minister Moses where he

said, when you asked him if he wanted to take over as leader, thanks but no thanks. I think the closer you get to leadership, the less likely that you want it because it is a lot of work. Just to clear people's minds, I have two beautiful daughters, 14 and 15 and I can't give... I think any leader needs to give the country the *whole of themselves* and I can't give 150,000 per cent because I need to make sure that they get through college. Once they're done, then I'll shoot for the top, so to speak.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about my other colleagues, particularly the one who resigned from the Government first, under some difficult circumstances, honourable Christopher Saunders. We came into this administration together with a special bond—he, Bernie and I—because we were already elected before. Chris and I are like brothers. I know even after his departure, some Members were mad at me for having a relationship with him. I think most people knew I didn't care, so knowing me and how strong-minded I am, didn't even bother to say anything. I'm glad for that because I don't think politics should get in the way of bonds like friendships. My brother, thank you for riding with me. We will see each other again after the election and with the Lord's will, I think we will be on the same side.

I want to say thanks to my other colleagues. Jay, the action man from North Side. It used to be the action man from East End, but I think they switch it now. We call him "Suge Knight"—not because of his appearance, but when he asks you to do something, he's so big and rough you're afraid not to get it done. I think that's why he gets so many things done, you know, because people afraid of him.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier:** I want to say thank you to him for all the hard work that he's done and never been unwilling to help my constituents wherever he can. Also, to thank his team for helping with how far we are now with the Central Scranton Community Park and I'm happy to say that things are developing very well. I hope people can visualise it better by April 30th because sometimes it's hard to sell people conceptual plans until they start to see it.

My good friend, Mr. Rankine. For those in East End, I want you to know something: you have a Caymanian that is committed to making sure that when he's in Government, to keep Cayman, Cayman. I think his history behind the cultural foundation he came from, allowed him to display such input into discussions about prioritising what we need to feel like, look like, and sound like as Caymanians. You have a strong Member there.

Oh, the good Member for Bodden Town East, now that's a character; but I tell you what, I have no questions about his commitment to Cayman. As he's expressed, if he feels it's in the best interest of his country, he doesn't care who likes it, and I think that that is

an element of commitment to the country. We don't always agree on everything but I know he's committed. To the good people of Bodden Town East—

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** Uh-uh.

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier:** The good people of Bodden Town East, yeah!

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier:** It don't sound too good?

**Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour:** I said it sounds too good. I didn't know it was me.

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier:** Yeah, I'm talking about you.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier:** The good people of Bodden Town East, you have a strong representative. Don't let him go.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also highlight some of the things that I've accomplished because it's important that people know that I wasn't just fuddling about. I know that sometimes it's easy for people to forget the things that were done over a four-year period. People don't remember what it was like when the country was closed, with the [COVID] testing, the lockdowns and all that stuff and the stress and pressure to get businesses back open. [The] stipends, then transitioning from stipends back into business and slowly getting things going. I hope that today's contributions would remind some people of those things, not only mine but some of the others.

I'll quickly just run through some of the things that I was able to accomplish. It just came to my mind tonight. I'm almost certain that I missed out loads, but I'll just say them. For the first time we have scholarships specifically for pilots. I introduced that Mr. Speaker. As I was saying before, I helped reopen our country's borders because I knew how important it was for our tourism product. Under my watch, I introduced new flights, expanded the airline services now to Panama, to Los Angeles and of course, we had flights directly to Barbados and we'll have some more coming up in this year all because of our vision together of expansion. I know many people love the Bahamas flight for their shopping purposes.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier:** Sorry. Panama. Why am I saying Bahamas, my apologies. Apologies, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to Bahamas on Sunday for

work so it must be in my head. The Panama flight. It's opened up many trade opportunities but also leisure.

We've also redeveloped the long-term plans for the airport and the runway for extension of the car park and the extension of the runway. I must say this Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be asking the board to take a very, very close look at the runway extension and have even closer consultation with the people from the Tropical Gardens area, because it will have an effect on them. Though, I know that there are plans to address the waterway access, so it's not like they won't be able to have their boats come to the properties that are on the edge of the water. That won't be an issue at all. As a matter of fact, it would be better because it would have to have a stronger canal available for them and the runway would also protect them from any major storm surge. From an insurance perspective, their properties would be much better, but I think there may need to be some consideration for compensation because their view will be diminished to some degree. If they're going to be the main affected party by it, I'm going to ask the board to consider and sit with those who are directly affected visually by it, because it's not like the sound is going to get any louder or anything like that, but the main thing is the visual component and their property values.

Also, Mr. Speaker, while as Minister I helped with the creation and the passing of the legislation for the brand new National Attractions Authority. Also, through my tenure, the revenue for tourism was the highest that has ever been collected in any one term from stayover. Under my tenure, I also created the craft market that is now behind us, after the longstanding location that used to be at the top of Boilers Road was no longer available to us because the property owners were planning to develop the site.

Mr. Speaker, you heard me talk about the delivery of the Central Scranton Park which I have been committed to and I want to thank all my colleagues for their commitment to helping me deliver that. Never have they ever said you can't get help to do it. They saw the plan and they believed in it, so I thank them all for their support and we're now starting to see the structures come up. I think that the people will be very, very happy after it's completed.

Mr. Speaker, we also secured the waterfront property at Whitehall Bay, just above Lobster Pot, so we can secure more of our natural view of our waterfront for years to come. It will also be the new home for the Seafarer's Park. Mr. Speaker, I know it was your vision to have the Seafarer's Park behind the Parliament and I hope that you would embrace this new location as even more improved because it'd be right there on the water. I think you'll be proud as you see the designs in the future, as the seafarers have agreed to the concept and the Public Works project managers have been helping with it.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier:** Nightly?

**An Hon. Member:** Just do it.

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier:** Oh! I like it. Just do it.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to highlight the fact that I never quit, no matter what. No matter how hard it got. I know there were differences of views, but I believe in commitment. The time for change is at elections. There will be fights, there will be arguments and I'm certain that you had loads of them in there, but you had a mature, experienced group to be able to handle that internally. We weren't so lucky, but I know that you have to continue on.

Mr. Speaker, I had countless, countless clean-ups in George Town Central. You'll see on my Instagram and Facebook pages, me and my bees out in the yellow getting things going. I kept communications up via the radio. I was always committed to being on the radio and sending out WhatsApp communications with my constituents, whether it was Christmas, hurricane season, Easter, or just updates and job advertisements; whatever it was. I tried to use my technology and my phone to my best advantage because I know, being a Minister, I wasn't able to be out like when I was a Member of the Opposition.

I really hope, Mr. Speaker, that the good people of George Town Central understand and appreciate the difficulty to also manage being a Minister and being out how I used to be when I was in Opposition. I know that they wanted me to be on the Government side and I know they wanted me to be a Minister within Government. I just want them to recognise that's the reason why you may not have seen me as much as you used to. It may have dropped about 30 per cent compared to what it was like when I was in Opposition because I was out on the road all the time, all the time. With a higher responsibility, there was more time that I had to commit to keeping the country afloat, keeping the economy going and democracy on its feet, but I never waned from my love and commitment to you, George Town Central.

I also visited people in my community or made sure I did phone calls or was at my constituency office clinics every Friday. I ensured, Mr. Speaker, the salary and the benefits for the Cayman Airways employees were increased to be more in line with the civil servants benefits, as per the Public Authorities Act requirement. Mr. Speaker, as Minister and with the Government's support, I was able to buy a new plane to improve the connections between Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

Mr. Speaker, you heard me say earlier today in a statement [about] the creation of another water sports zone in Bodden Town, because there was a vision to develop more water sports events, we opened three new zones so young people can be in the art of water sports and potentially have tourism events. I launched

a \$50,000 grant for new small and medium-sized tourism products and businesses to diversify the industry. Mr. Speaker, I was the Chairman of the Tourism Organisation for two years, the first and only Chairperson from the Cayman Islands. To be the leader of the region's tourism future was an absolute delight and I think that exposure gave me much experience on regional matters which allowed me to represent the Cayman Islands even better.

I was also delighted to accept the recognition of being the Minister of The Year for 2023. I was so delighted to do that and get the recognition on behalf of the good people of the Cayman Islands; because it's not about me. Getting recognised as the Minister of the Year is because of the hard work, not only of me, but of my Government Members, the Department, the civil servants and the monies that we allocate and the way our stakeholders work to make just the post-holder, the minister, look good. It wasn't about Kenneth directly himself, but the product that was behind the minister, so it was an honour to do that on behalf of the Cayman Islands.

Mr. Speaker, I helped [to] back school programmes yearly, church programmes yearly, Christmas programmes yearly, unemployment clinic programmes, senior programmes, community clean-ups, sporting programmes, [overseas] sporting events for kids going away, youth programmes in the summer camps, rehabilitation programmes—all of this, every year, for four years.

Mr. Speaker, we've had the most international music events in the Cayman Islands of the last 20 years in this four years under this administration. Rather than having one major event, we decided to take the money and spread it across other promoters. For the first time, we had four major, big international artists in the Cayman Islands events, from Capella to Out of This World, to some of the other reggae concerts and other concerts that aren't coming to mind right now. Even those who are young enough and still go out and enjoy themselves were really happy to see that there was more entertainment happening in the Cayman Islands. That's because of our commitment to making sure that the tourism industry and local entertainment had better offerings.

Mr. Speaker, for the first time, I created a film rebate programme that allows rebates to persons who want to do films in the Cayman Islands, to allow an increase in filmmaking activity here.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know it's getting late, so I'm not going to—wow, that's 40 minutes already. I'm not going to go on on those things that I've done because we could be here all night.

Mr. Speaker, my journey started in 2017 when I was in Opposition learning the hard way, sometimes even by myself in the corner; many times learning from long-serving Members like Arden and Mr. Anthony Eden and Mr. Ezzard Miller; and also working closely with friends and partners like MP Christopher Saunders

and Alva Suckoo; to now in 2021-2025 as Minister of Tourism and now the Deputy Premier. I've learned so much in the last four years and now I understand both sides of the House, Opposition and Government; how to hold Members accountable and also how to be held accountable.

However, as I start to think about coming back to this honourable House, there are some things that, like other Members have said, need to be done and shall be a major priority. At least the top three issues would definitely be immigration reform, National Development Plan and healthcare reform. If you were to look at the very issues that are affecting people, you can tie it back, in some way, shape or form to one of those three. Whether it's the cost of living, employment, your pension, traffic, all of the things that we're thinking about can fall in those three buckets in one way, shape or form. Those are three things that I will endeavour to put my full focus on in the next four years and I hope to be a part of a team that will bring that as a matter of priority.

Mr. Speaker, I know there are a number of people out there who are seeking to become Members of this Parliament and it's a noble thing to want to do. However, I want everyone who seeks the hallowed halls of this building to remember that this is a special fraternity and your journey to this House needs to be won in a positive way. If you have to go through slander and fighting and all the negativity that comes with the politics, I'm not sure that when you get here you're going to be in the right frame of mind to do things in the most democratic way, or carry out the conventions of this fraternity of this honourable House. We may have our squabbles, but many times people don't see when we go have lunch in the back, so don't be mistaken from what you see on the forefront. There's still respect for each other. I don't want any further divide in our country, because we don't need it. I am committed to just keep it to policy. If I have to fight against someone and bring someone down to be here, then I don't think it's worth it, because I'm damaging the thing I want to heal. I beg all of you, incumbents as well as those who wish to be here, let's stay positive. Remember, the kids are going to be watching us and they learn from our behaviours.

Mr. Speaker, I want to address something the Honourable Leader of the Opposition said. Mr. Speaker, you've seen my growth. I think the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has also seen my growth and with that growth is my understanding and respect for what I was once a part of and what the Progressives offered the Cayman Islands. Now that I'm in Government, I'm understanding what you had to go through and what you had to experience and I am so elated to hear from the Leader of the Opposition, in his kind words to me, offering me an opportunity to be a part of the Progressives. I thank him, because it takes a level of respect for one another to publicly say that without even knowing whether I would accept. He's put himself

out there on a limb to ask to be a partner with the Progressives. I thank him, because it tells me what he values about me and where I've come to.

I just want to say that I will definitely be speaking to my people about that, because I am no fool. The country wants stability. They don't want to go through a lot of the chaos that happened the last time. They're going to want to see surety of where you're going to be standing, who you're going to be standing with, whether you're going to have a group or not. I have many conversations to have with the good people of George Town Central. I want to recognise that it didn't go over my head. I was quite... I didn't know how to hold it, how to handle it when he did that, so I appreciate that. I respect the request.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I wrap up, I want to talk about the people who I represent, all the voters of George Town Central and the greater Cayman Islands. I'm going to speak about something that was talked about in the good Member for West Bay West's motion, about compassion and the diversity of our population. I want to say thank you to all my constituents, all of my Caymanians, those who are generational Caymanians, the Jamaican-Caymanians, the *Honduran*-Caymanians, the Bajan-Caymanians, the American-Caymanians, British-Caymanians, the Filipinos, the Dominicans, Nicaraguans, and the many others who are now part of George Town Central who are Caymanian. I want to say thank you for allowing me to serve and be your representative. It's the best honour of my life and I hope to continue to do that for you.

Mr. Speaker, I've lost many constituents over the last four years, unfortunately, to passings, and I hope as they are in Heaven they are happy with the service that I've provided, because when you give that 'X', you give that 'X' for the full four years and I don't want to let them down.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say thanks to those persons who helped me throughout the way, because I don't have a pile of money. Thank God for the salary that we get. There are so many people in need in Cayman and that's why we were not afraid to increase the seamen's benefits and poor persons relief or give grants and duty waivers, or what have you here and there, because unfortunately, we don't even have a strong financing political system where we can help our communities. I need to start a non-profit myself so I can go out and beg more.

It takes people who would go and say, here are a couple of food cards, or some Caribbean Utilities Company (CUC) vouchers, or some Water Authority certificates, because Mr. Speaker, the number of people who come to you in need. I want to apologise to you, Mr. Speaker, for something. Remember when I was your personal assistant and the office was on Crewe Road and I was dealing with all the calls coming in? People were coming in, coming in, coming in and I said, *"All these people coming in, Alden you need to*

*help, man! You need to help."* I can understand the juggling effort that you had to go through because you just don't have it all. I mean, unless you're like my good friend from Newlands who has a retirement package or a bundle. By all means, that's not a bad thing. I'm happy for a Caymanian who has it, but I don't have it!

I'm so grateful for people who help us. There are many of us who depend on people in the community. Woody Foster, just to give an example, because everyone knows he helps. There are some people who don't want to be known, but they help us because our salary isn't enough to help in the community. For those who have helped me over the last four years, I thank you. I thank you, because you've helped many, many families. Many, many families have food on their table, could keep their lights on, and were able to get their kids' school supplies. While we take the glory, it's because of your help. I will say to you, on behalf of all of those who get help from those various people out there who are silent angels—thank you. We have to do a better job of our social security support. Either that or ensure that Caymanians get better help so they can help themselves, because we're not doing that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Ms. Wellington who has been ever so kind to me; she allowed me to have that sign there for years. I always promised her I would keep it positive. It's all about uplifting: Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and prepare yourself for hurricane season. She's always treated me well, so I thank her so much. I wish her best healings, unfortunately, she had a fall recently and I ask everyone to pray for good healing. What a wonderful woman.

Also, Ms. Morrison at the corner of the airport by the round-about. I know everyone is familiar with my signs. I committed to that cost because the number one thing you need to do as a representative is to keep in communication and I know I had to do that because I was going to get busier as a Minister. I suffered the cost because it's not cheap! It's not cheap to print like that, but I thought it was important.

Mr. Speaker, in wrapping up I want to speak to those persons who have announced that they're no longer going to run for office. Barbara, I really wish you were still going. Honest to God with my whole heart. George Town South, you are going to miss probably one of the most amazing human beings that I know. I can say to you, in the public and behind any closed doors, she fought and fought and fought. I've seen her rough-up Sir Alden McLaughlin about her people, and not many people are bold enough to do that.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier:** That's the truth. MP, Ms. Barbara Conolly, I want to say also, I'm sorry that you had to go through so much of the crap that you went through over these four years. You didn't deserve it. Your family didn't deserve it and it kills me to know that that could potentially be the reason why

you're not running today. It kills me! We're allowed to talk about and disagree about policy, but we have a fraternity of this honourable House that we can't go too far.

Let me tell you something, wait till you're no longer elected. Wait till after you're no longer elected, because we treat those who leave this honourable House like nothing, while in other jurisdictions they are respected. Even if it's just for one term!

**An Hon. Member:** Held in high esteem!

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier:** For those who are coming, who want to be a part of this House, you may not understand it now but trust me, if you ever get the chance of being here, you will understand. You sacrifice!

You see how small this island is? *Everybody knows everybody and they don't want to touch you with a 50,000 foot pole, much less a 10 foot one, once you get into Government.* The lucky ones like the honourable Marco Archer got lucky to get back in the government. Chucky got lucky to get back in government. I know, Sir Alden McLaughlin, I'm not going to make any assertions, but I know that it was your support that also got them there. Let me tell you something, when you leave this business, they leave you to suffer. Hang you out to dry! Unfortunately, I don't have a pile of money that I can go say, okay, I'm done.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier:** Selling fish on the side of the road. That's one of the best administrators that this country has ever seen who had to leave after [not] being re-elected, [left with] nothing and ended up selling fish on the side of the road after sitting in this honourable House. We've got to do better on how we treat each other, man. We've got to do better on how we protect each other. We have to do better about the communications of information in this country, because not only is it good and humanly right, but the disinformation and cloudiness of our people about facts and information is so distorted, they're not going to believe anyone, even if you're being honest.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier:** The world is already complicated as it is with technology and its advancement, where you can get information instantaneously. Before that, people did it in a structured way. You waited for a reputable news network and you listened and said, *"Okay, this has gotta be factual,"* because there were principles that went along with it. There were morals. The information wasn't so easily distorted. Once you have a society that's distorted that badly, it's going to get crazy. That's why right now you have a group going, *"I wanna know exactly what the*

*project is to the cent! I wanna know exactly where it is to its measurement! Exactly! Because we don't trust none of unna coming in the House."* There's a lack of trust.

I mean if you're going to get some government, you have to give a little bit of leeway. The reason why I supported the referendum is because we just need to know whether the country wants to accept this thing or not and then let the next Government decide. If we keep on doing this, we're are not going to do anything.

Anyway Mr. Speaker, I went off on a little tangent there. Let me just make sure that I've covered all my points because I would hate to know that I didn't say all the things I needed to say. Oh, let me continue on. I was saying about—

**The Speaker:** I will say Honourable Member that we are not going to have a quorum. It's after 10 o'clock.

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier:** Yes, sir. I just want to finish off giving thanks to those Members who served. The honourable Moses Kirkconnell; the good Member, David from George Town West, another Member who I wish didn't decide to stop running... *[Heavy sigh]*

I tell you if we have too drastic of a change in here, it's going to be chaotic. I agree 100 per cent with what you said last night, Mr. Speaker. I want to just say also to the honourable Bernie Bush, thank you for your service, because you also represent me. I am also a voter, so thank you for your many years of service. I thank your family for the sacrifice that you made and I hope that the country also recognises the sacrifices you made.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you'll notice that I left out yourself and the Honourable Premier thus far, because I'm going to wrap up on that point. Mr. Speaker, boy, we've had a rough ride. We had a long, long drawn out [ride], but I would have to agree with the good Member for Bodden Town West that I learned a lot from you, directly and indirectly. You can learn by watching and I'm so glad I had the opportunity to sit over there and watch, because if I didn't get to see you in action and how you handle your Government—

**Mr. Christopher S. Saunders:** Masterclass!

**Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Premier:** Master-class! I wouldn't have been able to handle much of it here. Many of the newer Members go "Well, how do you handle this?" I said, *"Boy, I remember how I saw Alden doing this, I saw Alden doing that,"* so I appreciate it. I appreciate the way that we have now moved past all of that and you even offer information of mentoring. I appreciate that. It means a lot.

The Honourable Premier, I know you are a woman of prayer. I would like to think that I'm a man of prayer too and I honestly, with all of my heart, am going to pray as hard as I possibly can between now and

March 3rd that you change your mind and that the Lord gives you... I'm telling you this country needs it! We can't afford that much change. The wisdom and experience of this House: you, the Honourable Sir Alden McLaughlin, the honourable Moses Kirkconnell—there's much experience going out the door and we didn't do a great job of succession planning. I thank you for the exposure, because that's what I'm talking about. If you choose and the Lord does not change your mind, I want to say thank you.

I want to say to the people of Cayman Brac, you guys better honour her up there, because she gave you all her life and she didn't do it as a man. She did it as a woman in a different world. She had to fight against many things. You mightn't like the policies, but she fought through UDP, fought through PPM, fought through PACT. There's got to be something valuable in that if you just sit and think about that. She rose through the midst of it all! I'm definitely going to steal many of the ways that I've seen you've been able to manoeuvre. That's another person that you can learn much from politically. Mr. Speaker, I think I've said enough there.

Again, lastly to my good people of George Town Central, I look forward to a campaign and I promise that I will continue to serve you as hard as I've ever done. Don't let anyone else sell you different stories. You have a good representative who's here for you and will continue to fight with you and for you.

God bless you all. Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity for these remarks.

*[Desk thumping]*

**The Speaker:** I believe we have one Member left, even though I think we're going to lose the quorum. Honourable Member for Newlands.

**Hon. G. Wayne Panton:** Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I know we are late into the evening and I am standing between people getting home to their families and I don't want to belabour this very much.

**The Speaker:** Honourable Member, this is a very technical point, but this is the last sitting of this House for this term and I cannot adjourn the House properly without a quorum. We'll just have to walk out of here and leave the House still in session. We just have a bare quorum: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. I'm not sure how much longer people are going to be patient.

**Mr. Christopher S. Saunders:** *The AG nuh speak yet.*

**The Speaker:** The AG is not running for election.

*[Laughter]*

**Hon. G. Wayne Panton:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly many of us have sat here and given our respect and time to those Members who spoke, so I appreciate

the time which Members take to remain here for a few minutes, just until we can complete this last Meeting, and as you say, sir, be able to adjourn properly.

Mr. Speaker, I want to start by saying that I thank God for giving me the strength and the health. If I had known it was going to be as hard mid-term as it was, I probably would have asked for much more strength and much more health at the beginning.

Mr. Speaker, I have certainly had the privilege of representing my constituency and representing this country. I want to say what an honour and what an absolute privilege it has been for me to represent my beautiful constituency of Newlands. I will certainly be contesting the upcoming election on April 30th because I would love to be in a position to continue to represent my constituency of Newlands and to be a part of moving the Cayman Islands forward and addressing all of the significant issues that remain to be addressed in this country, sir.

We all know what the challenges are: housing, inflation, cost of living. Those are some of the primary things. People are really concerned about cost of living and that is something that we have to find the strategies to address. Of course, we have many ideas and those will be articulated during the campaign.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say thank you to my family, to my wife and to my son Cody. As has been noted before we can't do this job without their support. I know that in another life in the private sector, I invested much of time away from family building a career. This role is something that's extra special, but it requires all of the time commitment which Members have referred to earlier. The added benefits are that you are really contributing to the betterment of your community and the country. That is something sir, that all of us are dedicated to achieving for our various constituencies.

Mr. Speaker, the work that remains to be done, including things like immigration reform that our people are quite concerned about, these are all things that we have to be committed to and as I said, I'm sure many of us will be articulating perspectives on those.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the staff of Parliament. I want to thank you, Sir, for the work that you have done as Speaker. I certainly want to thank the work that was done previously by my colleague Katherine Ebanks-Wilks when she was Speaker. I know it's a difficult job. It's a test of endurance as we've seen on so many occasions, but it's a really important job. The hardworking staff of the Parliament deserves our thanks, deserves all of the accolades we can give them.

Mr. Speaker, having been in two Governments and being able to interact with the various teams in the civil service has been a wonderful experience as well. The political arm working with the civil service arm is what is necessary to move things forward in this country. Too often I have heard comments along the lines of, you know... which would suggest that perhaps there are distinctions between the political arm and the civil

service arm and perhaps, they may have different allegiances.

Mr. Speaker, I believe very strongly that you have to trust the people you work with, otherwise you are not going to be able to work together, which you must do in order to achieve the best for the people of the country. I would encourage particularly those Members who haven't been here before and are interested, anyone who might succeed, don't come in with that kind of perspective. Civil servants are hardworking, committed people and they try to do the best to implement policies [and] the initiatives of the people who get elected and come in as a Government.

Mr. Speaker, I think that I have achieved much in terms of improving my constituency, making it a more beautiful place, making it a more liveable community, one in which people feel respected and feel that they have their issues addressed but we have challenges. Some of these challenges are things that have to be addressed, not just because it's relevant to my constituency of Newlands, but because it's also relevant to others and that relates to issues around stormwater management, in particular. Low lying communities are suffering from climate change issues and these have to be addressed.

If it's going to impact some of us, the impact will be across all of us. We already have an issue with housing in this country. If we have areas where we are losing, where people can't live, then that is a major issue for all of us. Mr. Speaker, I think my community has more well developed parks now, equipped parks, than probably just about any other similar community and I think they're all very proud of that. The families there enjoy utilising that equipment. They enjoy being a part of the community and that is a large part of what we have to be seeking to do. To make lives of people better, to make the country better, to make the communities stronger. That is what builds country. The Caymanian Community Party (TCCP) feels very strongly that this is the way forward to help our people, to develop our communities, and to strengthen our country.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say in relation to my colleagues who are here that there are sometimes references to people quitting and people leaving, but you know, one of the hardest things to do is to stand on your principles and the values that you feel are important to you. It is really hard and it takes much courage to take the action of separating and moving away because you feel that your principles and values are significant or sacrosanct and they're in danger. I have watched these individuals and we've seen some of the discussions in here over the last few days. I know that there were many tears, there were probably many fears and concerns, but they did the courageous thing and they acted on the basis of their principles and values. I am happy to be aligned with them. I am happy to be a part of the party and no, I am not the leader in the back.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. G. Wayne Panton:** Well, if you don't want me to look at you I'll... I don't want—you have a problem, sir?

**An Hon. Member:** I didn't say that, sir.

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. G. Wayne Panton:** The leader is the Member for West Bay South.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to campaign just like everyone else. We've been watching this courtship of certain people go on for quite a while over the past week, and that's fine. We are all here because we care about this country together. We are here to try to serve our people.

Those who have decided that they are no longer going to run, I agree that they are going to be missed. They're absolutely going to be missed. There's a tremendous amount of experience that will be departing. People ask me if this one and that one, do I think they're going to run or not? I said wait till the day after nomination day, I'll tell you then. We'll know for sure.

Mr. Speaker, being a member of the PPM in the past, I know how hard people like Ms. Barbara work and how much she has pushed and how much time she has invested. Someone said earlier that you yourself might have been challenged by Ms. Barbara, just like how she challenges everyone else to do better. That's probably true and I know I've seen it. There's a certain expression that she has used, which I can't repeat in here. I don't know if it's unparliamentary, but it begins with a very fast version of something that sounds like "good" and it ends with "M-T", and she used that when she was frustrated. She has been an excellent—

*[Inaudible interjection]*

**Hon. G. Wayne Panton:** Yeah, but if you know, you know, right? They all know.

I wish all of those who have decided not to run the absolute best. I, too, am disappointed with the decisions of all of them, but that is the decision they have taken. You as well, Mr. Speaker, I know I have never heard you say you weren't running before, so when I heard that you said you weren't running, I was absolutely sure that that was the case. You're a man of your word.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the teams of people who I have worked with in the government building. I want to thank the Honourable Attorney General, the Honourable Deputy Governor. Ms. Gloria, absolutely. As the current Acting Deputy Governor, they have done a phenomenal job and I hope that that continues for a long time. I know everyone gets to a point where they can't continue on a long-term basis, so I think we have to recognise that and accept that change occurs, but we thank them for the dedication, the integrity, the

value and the strength of their perspective and opinion, and the effort that they have brought to their offices.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all of the civil servants really, but in particular, the senior management team that I've certainly had the privilege of working with directly in the past. I also want to take the opportunity to thank the staff in our joint community office of Savannah and Newlands. Ms. Debbie is from Cayman Brac. I heard someone else using the term earlier about the Rock of Gibraltar, well we've got one big rock right off the edge of the northeast corner of the Bluff that they call Little Cayman Brac and I think she is as tough as that. That gets battered a lot [by] nor'westers and nor'easters and it has survived. It looks just as strong today as it did 20 years ago, and I think, that is reflective of people who we have working with us. People who are committed to serving our constituents. We're very proud of them.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my family for all that they have allowed me to do, apologising for all the times that I've not been there for them, but I know that they understand the nature of this role.

Mr. Speaker, again, I would close by thanking my constituents, the good people of Newlands who I will be seeking to represent going forward again after the next election. This has been the honour of my life. Being successful in private practice really is not comparable to the privilege that you feel in representing the people of your constituency and the people of our wonderful country. Being able to make a difference and add value to their lives is an immense opportunity and an immensely gratifying experience. It is something that I will certainly never forget and I will seek to continue to do as long as I have strength, sir.

With that Mr. Speaker, I know there are perhaps one or two others who may want to speak, but I'm going to thank you very much and thank Members for sticking in until we have completed this process this evening. Thank you.

*[Desk thumping]*

**The Speaker:** Honourable AG and Honourable Deputy Governor, before I ask the Premier to move the adjournment would you wish to say anything?

**The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am reluctant for a number of reasons; not because I don't have anything to say, but I am conscious that it is very late and there seems to be a bit of austerity as it comes on to other things. May I just take a minute to say to those who are leaving: I want to wish them very well. I thank them for their service. There's a saying, "**Don't cry because it's over; smile because it happened,**" so that is how I suggest they weigh their contributions. They have served well, it is a noble call and they have every reason to be proud.

For those who are offering themselves for re-elections, I extend my best wishes. I thank you, sir.

*[Desk thumping]*

**The Speaker:** Acting DG.

**Hon. Gloria M. McField-Nixon, Acting Deputy Governor:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I will begin by saying that given the significant contributions of the Members of this honourable Chamber I had written what I thought was a very fitting and gushing remark—six pages long! As the hour progressed I put it through AI and said could you give me a 10:30 p.m. version, and it is that half page that I now offer.

Mr. Speaker, as the Acting Head of the Civil Service on behalf of the Honourable Franz Manderson who cannot be here with us, but who I know would want to leave words of acknowledgement and thanks to the Members of this honourable House, I would like to express our appreciation and our best wishes to the dedicated Members of this honourable House. Your service and your sacrifices have greatly benefited our country. The Cayman Islands has been blessed with exceptional leadership, especially during challenging times. Whether facing global recessions, rebuilding after hurricanes or responding to COVID-19, our leaders have consistently prioritised the wellbeing of our people.

I want to acknowledge the contributions of the five honourable women MPs, the largest cohort of women ever elected to represent these Islands.

*[Desk thumping]*

**Hon. Gloria M. McField-Nixon, Acting Deputy Governor:** The Premier, Honourable Juliana O'Connor-Conolly; and honourable MPs, Katherine Ebanks-Wilks, Barbara Conolly, Sabrina Turner and Heather Bodden. You are role models for women of all ages.

The Honourable Julianna O'Connor-Conolly has exemplified public service in various roles, always providing guidance and support. Her nurturing approach combined with her commitment to protocol and dignity have paved the way for other passionate women leaders.

Mr. Speaker, I also pay homage to you Sir Alden, for your pivotal role in addressing crises and challenging the status quo. Your leadership during the pandemic, particularly during the operation "Bring 'Em Home", showcased your ability to inspire and trust the Civil Service.

On behalf of the Civil Service I want to say it has been a privilege to serve with all of you. Our annual employee engagement survey in November 2024 showed that 90% of our workforce is proud to be a civil servant. This is a testament to the enduring values of our political leaders. Thank you to all who have served

faithfully in this hallowed Hall and to those who continue to answer the call to serve the people of these blessed Islands.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*[Desk thumping]*

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Acting Deputy Governor.

Colleagues, Members, you know I delivered quite an extensive speech last night under the impression that we were at the end, so thankfully you won't have to listen to me again tonight. I just want to conclude by thanking my constituents, my family, all of my colleagues over the many years for the opportunity to serve and to thank all of you who have said such kind and sometimes I think extravagantly generous things about me. I treasure all of them.

I'm not one given to tears very much and so I've shed none over my decision to leave. I'm the furthest thing from impulsive that you could find. I decided to leave almost eight years ago, it's taken me that long, and so there was never any question in my mind about me running again. It's not often that you're able to do this as a politician, but I've been able to leave the way that I like to live my life, which is on my terms, to leave while people are cheering me to come back in, to continue and not to the jeers of them ushering me out of the door. That's how I've always wanted to live my life.

Just remember this, I wanted to make sure I remembered it properly: in public life, those who cheer at your inauguration will also applaud at your hanging. That's the nature of public life; hero today, villain tomorrow. Sometimes it's just the circumstances that exist that cause you to lose the confidence of the people; it's not always that you haven't performed well. This is a very difficult business and, as I said earlier and others have said, it is a fraternity and it's only a very small percentage of people in any country that get the honour and privilege to serve as elected Members. Always regard it as that, a privilege.

I listened to the Honourable Deputy Premier today and remembered when I felt just like him—couldn't wait to get back in that race, to get back in there and do good things for my people. That's how I know most that elected political representation is no longer for me, because I just don't have it in me anymore to fight those fights. Public service is in my genes and as long as I can draw breath I will always want to do whatever I can to help my country, but I think 24 and a half years is enough as an elected representative.

Thus, I leave with a great sense of satisfaction at what I've been able to help contribute and I will always value the opportunity, the friendships and the fraternity that is representational politics. Not just here in the Cayman Islands, but I've had the fortune to travel to many parliaments in many parts of the world and to build friendships and relationships with parliamentarians in many places that I will forever cherish.

Thank you all.

## ADJOURNMENT

**The Speaker:** Honourable Premier, would you move the adjournment of this House for this term for the final time.

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

Before so moving Mr. Speaker, I just wish for the records to reflect that in December last, I gave my expressions of gratitude and my farewell. With your kind indulgence I would just like to leave these words for the purposes of the record:

*"If I carry the gospel  
to the lost near and far  
I won't stand emptyhanded  
at God's judgment bar;  
But I dare not relax until I've  
done all He's asked,  
Lest I should leave behind  
an unfinished task.*

*If I have wronged a brother,  
if I have wounded a friend,  
Give me the strength precious Saviour  
to [always] make amends,  
And when I come to change my worlds  
and reach glory at last,  
Then I won't leave behind  
an unfinished task.*

*When I come to the crossing,  
I'll be leaving behind  
All my earthly possessions,  
but this I won't mind.  
It would make my heart glad when  
I leave all I've had,  
If I don't leave behind  
an unfinished task*

*'Oh, you have run the race,  
you have kept the faith'  
These words I long to hear  
my saviour say.  
And when my life on earth is past,  
There's just one thing Lord I ask,  
Don't let me leave behind  
an unfinished task."*

It is my distinct pleasure to make the Motion for adjournment for the final time, for this House to be adjourned sine die. I thank you.

**The Speaker:** The question is that this Parliament do now adjourn sine die. All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

**AYES.**

**The Speaker:** The Ayes have it.

The Parliament of the Cayman Islands stands  
adjourned sine die.

**At 10:44pm the House stood adjourned sine die.**