



PARLIAMENT
OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS



OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

THIRD MEETING OF THE 2025-2026 SESSION
Seventh Sitting

Friday
12th December, 2025
(Pages 1-81)

Hon. D. Ezzard Miller
Speaker

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PRESENT WERE:

Hon. D. Ezzard Miller
Speaker

MINISTERS OF THE CABINET

Hon. André M. Ebanks, MP	<i>Premier</i> , Minister of Financial Services & Commerce
Hon. Gary B. Ruttly, MP	<i>Deputy Premier</i> , Minister of Tourism & Trade Development
Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, MP	Minister of Health, Environment & Sustainability
Hon. Rolston M. Anglin, JP, MP	Minister of Finance & Economic Development <i>and</i> Education & Training
Hon. Johany S. Ebanks, MP	Minister of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing & Infrastructure
Hon. Isaac D. Rankine, JP, MP	Minister of Social Development & Innovation <i>and</i> Youth, Sports, Culture & Heritage
Hon. Nickolas T. A. DaCosta, JP, MP	Minister of District Administration & Home Affairs
Hon. Michael S. Myles, MP	Minister of Caymanian Employment & Immigration

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

Hon. Eric Bush, 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. G. Wayne Panton, JP, MP	Elected Member for Newlands
Ms. Heather D. Bodden, OCI, Cert. Hon., JP, MP	Elected Member for Savannah
Mrs. Julie J. T. Hunter, JP, MP	Elected Member for West Bay West

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, MP	<i>Leader of the Opposition</i> , Elected Member for George Town North
Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, JP, MP	<i>Deputy Leader of the Opposition</i> , Elected Member for George Town Central
Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly, JP, MP	Elected Member for Cayman Brac East
Mr. Roy M. McTaggart, JP, MP	Elected Member for George Town East

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour, CCI, JP, MP	Elected Member for Bodden Town East
Mr. Christopher S. Saunders, MP	Elected Member for Bodden Town West

APOLOGIES

Hon. Pearlina L. McGaw-Lumsden, MP	<i>Deputy Speaker</i> , Elected Member for George Town West
Mr. A. Roy Tatum, Cert. Hon., MP	Elected Member for Red Bay

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
THIRD MEETING OF THE 2025-2026 SESSION
FRIDAY
12 DECEMBER, 2025
11:11AM
Seventh Sitting

[Hon. D. Ezzard Miller, Speaker, presiding]

The Speaker: Good morning. I invite the Minister of District Administration and Home Affairs to read prayers.

Hon. Nickolas T. A. DaCosta, Minister of District Administration & Home Affairs, Elected Member for Cayman Brac West and Little Cayman: 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 Parliament, the Leader of Opposition, Ministers of the Cabinet, ex officio Members and 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 all say the Lord's Prayer together: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

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

Amen.

The Speaker: I have apologies from the Member for Red Bay and the Member for George Town West to be absent from Parliament today; and an apology from the Member for West Bay West for a late arrival.

**ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS
OR AFFIRMATIONS**

The Speaker: None.

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

The Speaker: Yes, I have invited some people. As you can see, they are sitting in the gallery.

I was privileged last Saturday to attend a concert put on by the Starlight Programme at the John Gray High School and I was so impressed by the students' performance that I invited the teachers here this morning so we can show them some gratitude and respect for all the hard work they put in with these children.

The Starlight Programme has been gradually built up over the past 12 years. The aim of the Programme is to provide instrumental tuition for musically gifted students who would not otherwise have the opportunity to learn. Students are recommended by school music teachers. The majority of the students are from government primary and high schools, but they do have a few private school students whose names have been forwarded.

The Starlight Programme is supported by Cayman Arts Festival, recently rebranded as CayMusicA, and is a registered, non-profit, organisation. The Saturday Programme includes classes in violin, viola, cello, flute, clarinet, saxophone, brass percussion, guitar, steel band, junior swing band, junior orchestra, speech, musical theatre.

The Starlight Programme operates on a budget of about \$8,000 a year and most of the money is from private donors through CayMusicA. Students in the programme pay \$30 a year to become a Member of Starlight. This gives them access to any of the Starlight classes with the exception of the piano club. It also gives students use of instruments which the Starlight Programme owns, through affiliation with CayMusicA.

The teachers I've invited here today are as follows — if you would please stand when I call your name, so you can get properly recognised:

- Fran McConvey, who is Director of the Programme, musical teacher in Cayman since 1984 — strings and piano;

- Jonelle Ebanks, former student of John Gray High School, Head of Music at John Gray High School — flute and woodwind.

Special mention for her because you all will know Cayman's famous, number one guitar player from North Side, Jonathan Ebanks. She's his daughter.

- Chambria DalHouse, former student at John Gray High School and music teacher at John Gray — saxophones and steel band;
- Cameron Gibson, former student at John Gray High School, teaching assistant at John Gray — trumpet and keyboards;
- Daniel Augustine, former student of John Gray High School, employed by the Ministry of Sport — percussion;
- Justine Ebanks, former student of John Gray High School and teacher at my alma mater, Edna Moyle Primary School — clarinet; also the daughter of the famous guitarist Jonathan Ebanks;
- Zachary Allen, former student of Clifton Hunter High School, studying education at UCCI, teaching cello;
- Dequan Smith, former student of John Gray High School studying cello;
- Mike Galvin, retired musical teacher — woodwind, brass, and swing band.

Some of the teachers probably couldn't make it as this was organised at rather short notice because of the times when Parliament would meet.

- Kayla David, former student at John Gray High School, working at KPMG, cello and musical theatre;
- Charlotte Gothar, student at CFS. Granddaughter of Katie Moore, assistant flute teacher;
- Marcus Galvin, former student of Cayman Prep working for Red Sail — assistant guitar teacher;
- Thian Bodden, former student John Gray High School, currently taking A Levels at St. Ignatius — assistant string teacher;
- Bethany Mitchell, former student of Savannah Primary School at St. Ignatius (?) High School — assistant cello teacher;
- Beneil Miller, former student, John Gray High School, freelance musician, pop and jazz band;
- Jason Gilbert, former John Gray High School student — music producer, pop band and music production;
- Katie Moore, retired teacher, assists with admin for our Saturday programme.

Other teachers are Susie Robinson, speech performance and administration; Yoan Garcia, Music Ministry at Pedro Baptist Church — violin; Sarah

Newman, Music teacher, Savannah Primary School, violin; Will Murray, guitar teacher, working with Nathan Herrera — Guitar; Marlon Cortes student at UCCI — piano and woodwind.

[Applause and desk thumping]

The Speaker: Probably the most impressive thing about this is the number of former students who have remained in the programme and are paying it forward; it is a wonderful programme and —

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Something that shocked me is that they have 20 students studying cello, right, and they have a little guy, I forget his name. He is probably... I don't think he's any more than six or seven [years old]. He's, he's only ye high *[indicating]*, but he played a song on the piano that was absolutely impressive. What I found *[amazing]* was the way his little fingers danced over the keys, you know.

It's a good programme. I want us to give them the kind of recognition they deserve. I want the public to thank them very much — and you know, I also have to look out for my alma mater, so I'm going to appeal to the Minister of Education and the Minister for Culture that we get this at Clifton Hunter starting in September.

Minister of Education, I'm sure you would like to say something.

[Laughter]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin, Minister of Finance & Economic Development and Education & Training, Elected Member for West Bay North: Mr. Speaker, since you called on me to deliver for September, I think it would be remiss of me not to say something.

The Speaker: You know.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: On behalf of the Parliament, I want to thank all who participate in what is an invaluable programme. Sports and music create discipline, which is critically important to student success, and there's a direct correlation between student success and high performers in sports and music, but today we are concentrating on music, so I want to thank all of you for all your time, all the effort that you pour into our young people.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many good things happening in Cayman. There are so many good things happening as it relates to our students. We tend to focus on the negative and those things that float around social media versus really honouring and paying close attention to the good, and today is a celebration of those good things and for those who con-

tinue to give back to your alma mater, to give back to students, we say thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, this ongoing celebration that you have created in Parliament is something that is critically invaluable to us as a community. We must continue to celebrate those who do good and acknowledge, formally, those who contribute greatly to our society.

This is indeed an initiative that needs to be celebrated. I heard you make a call for it to be enhanced. I would suspect that organisers might just be minded to write to the Minister of Education and Finance, because he might consider favourably an expansion of the programme to ensure that we cover and give as much access as possible, because we do know there are children in our communities, in our society, for whom funding can be an inhibiting factor when it ought not to be. That's when government should, ought and must stand in the gap and ensure that it does not become an inhibiting factor to them getting access because all that we do is about our students and about creating a positive impact and I applaud all of you for the positive impact you are creating for all our children.

With that, I thank you on behalf of the Parliament.

[Applause and desk thumping]

The Speaker: Minister of Culture.

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine, Minister of Social Development & Innovation and Youth, Sports, Culture & Heritage, Elected Member for East End: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to endorse what my colleague, the Minister of Education, has said wholeheartedly, but I also want to let you know that we have been working assiduously on developing, for example, a young folk singing group, getting people from the schools. We have also been working with Mr. Jason Gilbert in a Songs After School Programme where he also teaches the students to play various instruments, and it's a programme that we are seeing much benefit from. Some of the students he has been teaching played with the folk singers in their annual concert last month and they did fabulous — and I must say that because they did a rendition of my grandfather's song South East by South and it gave me goose bumps to listen to what those kids had performed on stage and how much they worked to get to that point.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable colleagues, we have also supported Jubilate Programme, which is a programme they put on for some of the kids, especially from the Eastern districts. They've been doing that for the last 10 years. We support that programme from the Ministry, and we will continue to support programmes like these, especially anything that has to do with our culture and heritage from the Ministry, so

thank you so much. Thank you to all the people up there, to Mr. Jason Gilbert and all those who continue to teach our children.

Thank you.

The Speaker: On that note, you mentioned Jubilate. I have a special invitation from Mrs. Carol Kirkconnell for all members to attend this year's concert —

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: It passed? Oh. My apologies.

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. I know the Honourable Minister spoke on behalf of the Parliament, but I also wanted to speak on behalf of the Opposition to say you know that we are in this Parliament because we understand that education is not preparation for life but life itself and in today's world, education isn't confined to classrooms, but is a much wider range of learning and adapting to this new world.

Music is certainly a big part of that so here in the Opposition, we want to commit to you that in this Honourable House, we never play politics with education. My colleague, the Member for Bodden Town West, consistently reminds us that even though we are in the House of Politics, there are certain things that we never play politics with and one of those is education. We all want to thank you so much and you know that you have 100 percent support from this honourable House.

Thank you.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour, Elected Member for Bodden Town East: Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I felt the need to get up as a former Minister of Culture and given the involvement I've had with some of the persons in the room.

I endorse what the Honourable Minister of Education and Culture has said, but I first want to thank you for your genius of inclusion and the way that you organise these ways in trying to appreciate persons outside of Parliament. I thank you very much for that; I think most Members in the House would appreciate this new approach.

I recognise some of the persons in the gallery. I think that's Daniel there; and Justine, Janelle, JG, I actually supported a programme heavily at Clifton Hunter while I was the Minister of Culture. JG was in charge of that programme and it was amazing to see how by the end of the programme, they actually were

writing songs from start to finish and, you know, creating all kinds of beats and everything else. I've been doing this for about 40 years in terms of music. I also know Ms. McConvey; I think I took my daughter to your house once to prepare for an exam. I have this thing about my children that none of them should come out of school not knowing how to play an instrument. My father, I'm told by my aunt Lucille, played almost every instrument. I don't play any but I hire them. In saying that, I think it is so important that children get the opportunity to play music because it tantalises the brain and lets them excel so much more — I read that some time ago.

I thank you all for all the work that you are doing. Thank you for choosing to go into this career because not many people choose this route. I know how much passion Jonelle has for what she's doing, and I thank you all so much. God bless you all.

The Speaker: Member for George Town Central, you wanted to wish someone a special happy birthday yesterday, and you missed the opportunity so I want to give it to you now.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Elected Member for George Town Central: Good morning, Mr. Speaker, colleagues, and good morning to our audience in the gallery.

Before doing that, I want to also pay tribute to them. Thank you again, Mr. Speaker, as you continue to highlight our amazing citizens, and congratulations to every single one of you. Many of you I know, particularly Jason — so proud of [him]. I think we forgot to mention the fact he's a Grammy Award winner. We have so many special people on the island; sometimes we forget. Keep up the good work. We'll create our own Rihanna very soon.

With that being said, yesterday, one of the matriarchs in our community, Ms. Vernice Myles, celebrated her birthday. I dare not say her age; she would kill me, but I want to say that she enjoyed her birthday — got an amazing bouquet of flowers from her representative (that would be me), so I know she had a wonderful day even though I was in here fighting with you guys. Special happy birthday to her. She's such an amazing lady and I hope that she lives to see many, many more.

Thank you.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

The Speaker: None.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The Speaker: None.

URGENT QUESTIONS

The Speaker: None.

QUESTIONS TO MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT

The Speaker: None.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT

The Speaker: I have received a request from the Minister of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure to make three statements.

Honourable Minister of Planning.

Honourable Minister of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing & Infrastructure

National Community Enhancement (NiCE) Programme – Supplementary Expenditure for 2025

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks, Minister of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing & Infrastructure, Elected Member for North Side: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

I rise under section 11(5) of the Public Management and Finance Act to report an exceptional circumstance requiring supplementary expenditure for the 2025 NiCE Programme, which provides short-term employment for Caymanians and supports essential maintenance of public spaces.

To deliver the programme from the 1st to 12th December, 2025, Cabinet has approved CI\$350,000 in supplementary funding. This will be achieved by:

1. Reducing PAH 28 – Cadastral Surveying, Planning and Resource Management by CI\$350,000; and
2. Increasing PAH 10 – Management of Government Properties by the same amount.

This adjustment is required immediately due to the timing of the programme and the operational need to have resources in place now. The circumstances therefore meet the definition of an “exceptional circumstance” under the Act.

Reallocation of Funds to Repair and Remediate the Stacy Watler Pavilion

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Mr. Speaker, I rise in accordance with sections 11(5) and 11(6) of the Public Management and Finance Act (2020 Revision) to inform this honourable House of an “exceptional circumstance” reallocation approved by Cabinet in respect of the Stacy Watler Pavilion.

On 10th December, 2025, Cabinet approved the re-appropriation of funds as follows:

- A decrease of CI\$300,000 from TP 76 – Assistance for Infrastructure and Development; and
- A corresponding increase of CI\$300,000 to NGS 84 – Cayman Islands Agricultural Society, for the purpose of funding the urgent repair and remediation of the Stacy Watler Pavilion.

Mr. Speaker, the Stacy Watler Pavilion is a key national facility supporting agriculture, community events, and food-security initiatives. Recent assessments confirmed structural and environmental issues that must be addressed immediately to ensure safety, prevent further deterioration, and maintain the Pavilion's ability to host major events central to the Agricultural Society's mandate.

Mr. Speaker, that was so that we can have the work done at the Pavilion just before the Agriculture Show.

Exceptional Circumstance Transaction in relation to the national response to Avian Influenza

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Mr. Speaker, I rise in accordance with sections 11(5) and 11(6) of the Public Management and Finance Act (2020 Revision) to report an exceptional circumstance transaction approved by Cabinet in relation to the national response to Avian Influenza.

On 10th December, 2025, Cabinet approved the creation of a new Operating Expenditure, OE 154 – Avian Influenza Pilot Culling Programme and Standstill Order Extension, and an increase to OE 154 in the amount of CI\$500,000. This funding supports urgent disease-control measures, including a pilot culling programme for feral chickens and the continued enforcement of movement restrictions around the affected area.

Mr. Speaker, this action follows the confirmation of Avian Influenza on a local farm and is designed to reduce the risk of spread to other holdings, protect public health, and safeguard our domestic poultry and wider food-security interests. The pilot culling programme will focus on feral chickens within a 500-metre zone of the affected farm, alongside targeted surveillance and testing on selected farms.

The Speaker: I also received a request and approved a statement by the Minister of Health.

Hon. Minister of Health Establishment of the HSA Foundation

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, Minister of Health, Environment & Sustainability, Elected

Member for West Bay Central: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to provide an exciting update relating to the Health Services Authority that will certainly, over time, improve its financial position. We all in this honourable House have discussed on frequent occasions, typically around Finance Committee, how the government has had to allocate a substantial amount of our budget toward health care services, so we've frequently spoken about health care costs.

Many hospitals around the world have established NPOs [non-profit organisations] that are specific for donations towards the operations of their relevant facilities. By providing alternative funding, they are able to enhance stability, foster community support, and create networks of opportunities for their hospitals. This model will now be a part of our public health regime in short order as we are now going to establish a foundation for the Health Services Authority. The governing legislation of the Health Services Authority provides for the establishment of a Foundation, and, just this morning, in accordance with section 6A of the Health Services Authority Act (2018 Revision), the Cabinet has approved the establishment of the HSA Foundation.

While the Cabinet approval is just the start, my Ministry, in partnership with the Health Services Authority, will now begin the works to develop a detailed proposal on the Foundation's operation including timelines, cost and personnel requirements to be submitted to Cabinet for further review once completed. The purpose of the Foundation will be to raise and manage funds to support health care facilities and programmes, as well as to contribute to the operational funding requirements of the HSA.

While the legal framework exists from as far back as 2010 — Mr. Speaker, I know you're familiar with this; the key operational steps such as appointing the committee and identifying a head office had not previously been taken. With the Cabinet approval, these steps will now proceed, allowing the Foundation to begin fulfilling its role. The operation of the Foundation will require dedicated personnel including a secretary and funding specialist, and initial funding to support start-up activities, but we have already received requests from the HSA, from philanthropists who are just waiting for this foundation to be established.

Mr. Speaker, the Government is committed to ensuring that the Foundation operates with transparency, accountability, and measurable impact. Residents' concerns have been heard and this initiative reflects the Government's approach to listening and taking action to strengthen public trust and support for health care.

Mr. Speaker, I Table this statement for the information of this honourable House and for the people of the Cayman Islands. I am pleased to be moving this

forward; another step towards advancing healthcare services in our country.

Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

The Speaker: None.

OBITUARY AND OTHER CEREMONIAL SPEECHES

The Speaker: None.

RAISING OF MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE

The Speaker: None.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

BILLS

SECOND READING

IMMIGRATION (TRANSITION) (AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION) BILL, 2025 *(Continuation of debate)*

The Speaker: Honourable Premier, I think you were on your feet when we took the adjournment.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks, Minister of Financial Services & Commerce, Elected Member for West Bay South: Good morning, Mr. Speaker and good morning to all in attendance. I rise, as I promised last night, to make a brief contribution to the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2025.

Mr. Speaker, the Lord continues to work in amazing and mysterious ways.

[Desk thumping]

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: I asked the leave of this House if we could depart around quarter to eight because a number of us had functions last night. The Member for West Bay Central and I had a Christmas function, and I think the Member for East End had a function.

Upon arriving at the function, I could rip up my speech because I got all the feedback in the world I needed from West Bay on this Bill. There were West Bayers there who live in other districts and vote in other districts, and there were [people from] other districts there last night. After capturing all this feedback—we had a senior section, a toy section, an activity section, we had a dance section, and a food sta-

tion. After all was said and done, I went back to capture some quotes on my phone, that on their own from our people, is how they see the Bill.

The message was clear, loud, and consistent, Mr. Speaker. *Talking about the Bill coming during the holiday season? Premier, that's nonsense. We're at your party and we're listening to it on our phones now. With these devices and these apps, they think we can't keep up? You explained before you left, that a number of you had overseas business and you all would come back to the House and debate it starting on the 9th December, so what are we waiting for? The country has been past all this. They had the White Paper. There's been consultation. Go to January to do what? Get done with it!*

Minister Myles got praise. They said he carefully laid everything out. The ladies Parliamentary Secretaries were said to have had good speeches — this is real-time feedback from our people. People loved... I'm going to use first names because these are direct quotes, Mr. Speaker, to depart from parliamentary language. *Kathy and Isaac raised the other areas that are connected that need to be worked on to get this to work because we know this won't fix everything, but we gotta look at it holistically, they covered that. Direct quote: The nice little one from Little Cayman—*

[Laughter]

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Just saying... *He was right. Nobody has to speak on this all day long; this is obvious. Just go in there and get it done. The one, Mr. Peanut, he always has us in stitches with his speeches and he did it again and he knows he just got to hurry up and get this done. The big guy from North Side who wants the road for the people up that way, he was strong and he knew you got to get it done. We know you all are not going to be able to fix everything and get it 100 per cent correct, but "Rollie" is right, if you gotta go back down there and fix it, you all getting paid the big bucks, just go down there and fix it.*

Now, this has caught on, so you really got to be careful what you say in the House: *The Bodden Town Twins sound like they got it—*

[Laughter]

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Which I interpreted to mean the Members for Bodden Town West and Bodden Town East. *The one who like the languages and the animals, he sounded good.* These are direct quotes.

It gets touchy here, but I have to give a complete report. *The one from Central, he was a little confusing. He went back, forth, upside down and around and we didn't know where he was, sounded like he was arguing with himself—* just giving the feedback—

but at the end of the day it sounds like he goin' say "yes"; and actually, once the Speaker said that you all filed whatever you needed to file on time, we tuned the rest out.

I was asking each one of them at all of these stations: Are you telling me that my team has a mandate to go in on Friday morning and finish the Bill? *Yes, Mr. Premier. Go in there and finish it. We need to take a sensible step forward after 15 years.*

[Desk thumping]

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Now, let me get back to the part that was going to be my speech, [which] was to address this thing about tone.

I don't think any of our Members addressed and mentioned their relationship with immigrants and expatriates to succumb to some sort of pressure. I think it was valid and clear recognition of people who have come to Cayman and assimilated with us—nothing more. I got two phone calls on tone and these were from senior business leaders whom I called. I initiated the phone call because consultations had already gone out. What is it you do not like about the Bill? *Well, actually, there's nothing wrong with any of the provisions, but I don't like the tone.* Just two phone calls. What about the tone you don't like? *Well, it's a little too strong in certain areas.* All right, so you are telling me that the private sector, which is always asking government to be data-driven and analyse the facts, is saying that on a technical reading of the Bill, you don't have a problem. Your problem is an emotional tone? Fine. Let me go check with a few friends of mine who were in your same industries and ask them.

I made two categories of calls. The first category was those whom we would call first generation Caymanians who have come forward to become Caymanian. *André don't listen to that; that's probably coming mainly from the folks who are not doing what they supposed to do and are flouting the law in the first place.* I only got one ask out of this Bill and the processes that follow. I'm going to come back to the ask, because it's the same ask that I called multigenerational Caymanians who have climbed the corporate ladder, who are my contemporaries. Called them as the next category.

The first one, and this is for people who know me really, really well for a long time, [they] call me Dré. *Dré, you know good hell and well you don't gotta call to ask me that. A number of these people needed to hear straight talk because you and I have been in the hallway consoling a Caymanian crying because somebody told them, "to make it, you gotta shape up your accent". [They] came into your country to tell you, you gotta shape up your accent and [when] their response was, I don't have an accent in Cayman, you do; that person was sidelined. Some of these folks needed to hear some direct straight talk of how our*

people have felt for years in order to get this thing right.

[Desk thumping]

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: If that was not enough, as the Lord would have it, hand on a Bible, I had breakfast this morning with an individual who wants to establish a management company here because the opportunity that he sees is the next iteration of Cayman—and this will speak to the Member for Bodden Town West. Now that you have these economic substance rules, now that you have transactions that are actually happening here, you don't want it to flow through anymore; you want the substance to be here; you want the Caymanians to now grow up in industries that are coming to Cayman, that weren't coming, to come up through the ranks.

He had the exact ask as the first-generation persons who are the leaders of firms, and the multi-generational Caymanians who are the leaders of firms. *What I want to know is that for all of us who have businesses that are 70, 75, 85 per cent Caymanian, when I say I need a work permit, it comes back in expedited fashion because I'm a good corporate citizen.* That is the challenge for the Department of WORC to meet. For all of those who are flouting the rules, it should be slow; it should take time until you have shown the country that you have come to assimilate.

The multigenerational Caymanian partners and managers that I called said they don't need any more inspiration. They're already inspired by living in paradise. The good ones who've assimilated us have recognised that principle, Mr. Speaker, and have said, *I am going to bring young ones along.* A number of us who have worked in firms know that there have been really good people and their file is probably this thick from Caymanians who voluntarily wrote in that this person should get status. On the other hand, you have some not-so-good ones with files showing that Caymanians wrote in [to state] that they should not get it.

Who we are looking for are those who are naturally inspired by what the country has to offer to come and bring success to the grassroots. The gentleman at breakfast today said, *that is a square deal. I am not concerned about that rhetoric. It's up to my company to lean in and be able to participate in that fashion.*

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say a few words to compliment Minister Myles. He could have come along, seen a White Paper, and given the analysis by the Ministry that it's 80 per cent there decided, *I'll rip it up. I want to do it my way.* He should at least be given the recognition that he accepted what was there, did not try to reinvent the wheel, and took it a bit further. In addition to that, the staff has performed marvellously.

[Desk thumping]

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Those of us who have been in civil service know how disheartening it is to work on something for years that is going to better the life of Caymanians only for it to die on the vine. This one is for you all in the Ministry of Caymanian Employment and Immigration — meaning while we styled it that way is that Caymanian employment comes first. There's a recognition that you will need labour, so immigration comes next. Thank you for delivering, over successive terms, a responsible step forward to have a Caymanian reset.

[Desk thumping]

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you to the Caucus. Those were long conversations every time Minister Myles and his team came in with Excel spreadsheets going through it clause by clause, line by line.

Also, Minister Myles, I shouldn't forget that when you were ready to go, or at least you thought you were ready to go in August, it was me who asked you to do additional focus groups— some of which the DP [Deputy Premier] and I sat in personally. To watch him take intelligent business people in the community through what he was trying to achieve with some modest modifications, I think this is a body of work that the country holistically, among Caymanians and non-Caymanians, can be proud of.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I commend, for my part on behalf of the Government, that this Bill should be passed by all of us today and get to work on all the other connected pieces to bring about a more harmonious society.

God bless.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? *[Pause]* Does any other Member wish to speak? *[Pause]* Does any other Member wish to speak? *[Pause]* If not, I will ask the Mover of the Bill if he would like to exercise his right of reply.

Minister of Caymanian Employment and Immigration.

Hon. Michael S. Myles, Minister of Caymanian Employment & Immigration, Elected Member for Prospect: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, colleagues, Members of the Opposition, my team, my beautiful wife, and friends, good morning.

When I rose on Wednesday to present this Immigration Reform Bill, I laid it before this honourable House not just as long-overdue amendments, but a vision. Mr. Speaker, a vision grounded in data, shaped by consultation—and as the Premier said,

much consultation has gone into this—and driven by an unwavering commitment to the people of our country. I outlined in my last speech the harsh realities we face today: unsustainable population growth, a citizenship pathway that has been exploited, systems strained to the breaking point, and Caymanians increasingly marginalised in our own country. All of these, Mr. Speaker, I've been saying for 35 years. This Bill isn't going to change anything that happened 35 years ago, but we can make significant improvements to where we're going today.

I also outlined what success looks like: a Cayman where people are given a fair opportunity, where businesses thrive with clarity and efficiency, and where our identity and our future are protected. I am grateful for the logical and full support of my colleagues in the National Coalition for Caymanians (NCFC), and for the two independents who, I believe, solidified that they will be voting for the Bill.

Minister Anglin said yesterday that this is not just my Bill, and he's right. I would not have reached this far without all of these people who are sitting here because I've gone back to Caucus multiple times with my team. I have met with the Premier consistently. I've met with other folks outside of this. I've met with several professionals. I have made myself available to every business owner who wanted to talk to me or my team, so this is not Michael Myles' Bill; this is for the Cayman Islands. Minister Anglin rectified that yesterday by saying I could not have been here without us voting on this, so I want to make that clear.

Reform starts with us in this House; it starts with us changing our attitudes towards it—and it's painful. Much of what has been said in this House has been painful for many people to hear because it culminates in much failure, but we've learned; we're smarter now and I want to be part of an engine that learns from the past. If we stand united today to resolve all the inaction that has happened over the last 15 years, we're actually going to be better off but if we fight based on parliamentary procedure and indignation, or like or dislike, we're going to be stuck fighting the next 25 to 30 years because politics is quite often divisive.

Mr. Speaker, I have listened carefully to all the contributions. There were times when I delayed going to the restroom because I didn't want to miss anyone's contribution. I've listened to all the Opposition contributions [and] I've listened with an open mind. There were harsh criticisms, certainly on me personally, as if it is my personal Bill [or] I wrote all of it, and I accepted it because it is what leaders do. What I heard was the independent Members for Bodden Town West and East being open and honest and reasonable with their contributions. I heard [about] one or two areas that we need to go back and fact-check with our legal drafters and we will do so; but disproportionately, I also heard many unfounded allegations, scaremongering, and

political rhetoric. Members of the Opposition bench continue to play politics with our people's lives.

I want the record to show, Mr. Speaker, that the Government extended multiple courtesies to ensure that the Opposition had every opportunity to understand, question, and contribute to the Bill. On October 27th and 31st, my Ministry team and I [met] with the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Hew, and several members of his team including MP Bryan, MP McGaw-Lumsden, MP Tatum, and MP McTaggart in this committee room in Parliament. We guided them through proposed changes one by one in detail and actively invited their feedback.

The first meeting, Mr. Speaker, on October 27th, I sat in on the meeting for at least an hour because I wanted to be available for them. I didn't have to; I wanted to because I want to show the respect they deserve. We chose to do it because the NCFC believes in collaboration, in transparency and in extending the olive branch even when we know that it may hurt us politically, and it will not be reciprocated.

In total, the Ministry spent eight hours on two different days with the Official Opposition. As a reminder, one Member of the Opposition is a lawyer who is familiar with immigration matters, and [when] she picked it up she instantly knew all the changes. She understood where we were going so much [so] that on Wednesday, she declared a conflict, which I admire and respect. I am hoping that we have won her over as a person who, if she could vote, would vote and support the Bill in the future.

On November 6th, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition approached me personally, right in the parking lot of Parliament, to request a meeting. Without hesitation, I agreed to meet that very day after the conclusion of Parliament and I attended the meeting with the Hon. Wayne Panton, who is my Parliamentary Secretary, and is very familiar with immigration reform.

The Speaker: Honourable Minister, please identify the Members of Parliament by their constituency.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: The MP for Newlands. Sorry, my apologies.

Present were the Deputy Leader and the Member for Red Bay. Their stated objective was to ensure a united front in support of the Bill between the Government and the Opposition, which I endorsed and admired. We agreed that the Opposition would compile its Members' concerns and send them to us so our technical team could respond comprehensively. To date, Mr. Speaker, we have not received any list of questions or concerns and have received no further inquiries from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition or his team. Furthermore, the Premier himself extended an additional invitation to the Leader of the Opposition, not once but twice, to meet on December 9th and again on December 10th in the morning for a final re-

view of the Committee Stage Amendments. Neither invitation was taken up.

We also provided, at the Deputy Leader's request, a document comparing the proposed Bill to the White Paper produced under the previous administration's Cabinet, a Cabinet in which two members of the current Opposition sat. Again, we did not have to do this. I requested from my team that we cooperate because we are transparent. I have nothing to hide with this Bill— as I've said repeatedly, 80 per cent came from them. We did it to foster cooperation, good faith, and a shared understanding of the legislation. Yet, after declining multiple briefings and opportunities for clarification, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition stood in this honourable House on Wednesday and complained that he did not have time to review the amendments, that the material was too extensive. I was actually shocked because I thought he was talking about something else. I looked at all the amendments again and they are basic administrative amendments.

What he also failed to mention is that my team also provided not only the Committee Stage Amendments, but another document I asked them to prepare in plain language to summarise the entire Bill, saving his members days of work to ensure full cooperation and comprehension of the Bill. We hid nothing. We avoided no questions. We extended every courtesy possible; and let us remember, Mr. Speaker, as I said, 80 per cent of the Bill came from the White Paper and was tabled in this House on January 31st, 2025. I stated earlier, the Deputy Speaker and the Member of the Opposition from Cayman Brac East are lawyers. I assumed they had a team that was deep enough that could interpret this Bill because I also believe that the amendments to this Bill are very administrative and I'm going to read just a few things in a second to let you know how administrative the amendments are.

Since my appointment as Minister, I've been schooled in parliamentary procedure. It's been overwhelming. It's been one roller coaster after another—and I've enjoyed it; I'm not here to complain about it. From sitting with my team to trying to catch up on where the Immigration Bill is, to sitting through long meetings about the minimum wage; to labour reform, to pension reform, to employment; and also trying to understand what my expectation is walking in the doors of this honourable House. It has been a journey that I've enjoyed. I've listened and I've learnt so much.

Mr. Speaker, political grand-standing is nothing new here. I was never political. I don't even consider myself a politician because I'm not here to lie. I'm not here to deceive. I'm not here to tell stories that are not true. I'm here to make sure... I'm here to serve. That's what I've done for over 30 years of my career. What I witnessed on Wednesday was the Leader of the Opposition who launched substantive critiques. The debate wasn't meaningful, [and with] the

familiar tactic of delay, wanted the Bill to be delayed more; and then the fearmongering started.

When a Member of the Opposition cannot find legitimate faults in a Bill—and this is what I've seen over the last 25 years of politics—here's what happens. They resort to procedural complaints, so they tie it up in parliamentary procedure. Oh, you're breaking this law, you're breaking that law, and you can't say this and you can't say that. When they cannot argue the merits, they argue about the timing. *Let's delay*, is what I hear. I have found this disturbing for a very long time because I'm a former civil servant. When we don't want to do something, let's tie it up in red tape and bureaucracy. Let's ensure that we kill it because it makes us uncomfortable. This kind of politics stalls progress and contributes little to the lives of Caymanians.

The Leader of the Opposition went so far as to suggest that the Government intentionally scheduled this debate near Christmas to distract the public. That one shocked me most. I was a little surprised about that. The accusation is not only baseless; it's problematic in my view because, as the Premier said, our people are very, very intelligent people. I want to ensure that we protect people. I'm not here to schedule something around Christmas because I know people are Black Friday shopping and not going to tune in. Every worker in the Cayman Islands is expected to give their best throughout the holiday season. December does not give anyone a pass to tune out.

Each Member of Parliament is collecting a very generous pay check that is paid by the people of this country. The expectation is that the government is open. We are working; we are working through Christmas season, Easter season, hurricane season, mango season—thank you, Nick—we're working for the people who elected us. To work at any other pace to delay progress is not acceptable. I made it clear when I first got into Parliament that I'm here to work. I don't have time to waste. I'm here to work. I'm in the office every day by at least 8 o'clock because I'm here to work and my team can tell you that.

The other implication by the Leader is that our people will be distracted and not be able to engage during the holiday season. As the Premier rightfully said, my phone lit up as I brought this Bill on Wednesday. I have almost 200 text messages, countless emails—I get at least 100 emails a day. I get countless phone calls that it takes me sometimes weeks to return. People want to talk. They want to engage. In contrast, we know that our citizens are informed, they're involved and invested in the issue of shaping government.

Perhaps the Leader's approach is why we're having this debate today — because they've dragged this on for years. For too long, the contents of this Bill have been available, and for far too long, the people have wanted changes and no changes have come. All

of a sudden, we are now thinking it is overwhelming, and it's not. Our NCFC Government has the responsibility to move this country forward despite such tactics, and this is exactly what we intend to do.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition said a number of things and I wanted to respond. He brought up an issue where in section 26(1) of the Act *[sic]* it says “where applicable...”. He had an issue with “where applicable”. The section states that persons who have the right to be Caymanian can be revoked where applicable. Mr. Speaker, this section cannot be taken in review without consideration of section 29 of the Act which states that persons who were considered Caymanian at birth or are considered Caymanian as of right cannot have their status revoked. For this reason, Mr. Speaker, the phrase “where applicable” has been added to the end of the current section 26(1) to make absolutely clear that the existing and new loss provisions do not apply to the category of Caymanians. That's why we put it there. We did not want the Board or the Director confusing or reversing in any way Caymanians by birth. Again, the Leader of the Opposition had some issues with that.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition highlighted a critical part of the law reform—PR by independent means. This is not a new law, it's been in existence for well over a decade if not more. When he further left out that he and his PPM [People's Progressive Movement] colleagues have kept this in legislation for their eight-year administration. The act is silent in the law. *[sic]* Most people glaze over this. This provides people five years and then they become Cayman citizens. Five years, Mr. Speaker, the category of persons can become a Caymanian.

As stated, several Members of the Official Opposition were in power during their eight-year reign. We are proposing to double this to 10 years to be Caymanian. Why would I expect an individual to fly in on a Lear jet because they have \$2 million or \$100 million, stay in the country for five years, apply for Caymanian citizenship, and then we grant it not only to them but to their families. I didn't create this, I didn't create the legislation. What we are doing as a government is pushing it back some more. It should never have been that way.

Lack of consultation, he said. As I stated in my contribution on Wednesday, my Ministry has undertaken an extensive and meaningful consultation process on immigration reform. We held three public Town Hall meetings and conducted eight stakeholder meetings with well over 80 companies and their representatives. We got a substantial amount of feedback, not just for this particular reform but the reform that we plan to take up in the second phase of it.

Our team has been diligently reviewing this feedback over the past weeks, and it has directly informed improvements to the Bill that we are bringing before this House. Yet, the Leader of the Opposition

continues to claim that we need more consultation. I'm not sure how much more we need, but there was nothing in his summation that said, *well, you should have done eight public consultations*. If there is a standard, let me know, and when I go to do the labour reform and the pension reform, I'll make sure that I do as many as they want me to do, but this Bill has been in circulation since January. My team has been working on this for a very long time; certainly before me. His only report is, *let's delay it*. This is more political posturing.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, the Immigration White Paper was laid in this House on the 31st of January, 2025—314 days ago. This is longer than it takes to bring a child into this world. The consultation draft of the Bill was gazetted on October 17th, 2025—54 days ago or one month and 23 days.

Immigration is understandably sensitive and sometimes divisive, but the Government believes firmly that the Bill before us strengthens protections for Caymanians, guest workers, and businesses. We have engaged deeply. I believe in the Bill. I would not be here [if I didn't]. I am honourable enough that when I have a conviction, when I don't believe in something, I will not represent it if it doesn't stand up to the true test of our people. This is a deep conviction that my mother has given me from birth. If I do not believe that anything will benefit the Caymanian people, it will not end up in this House. I do not believe in that. I have kept my ego checked for years.

This has nothing to do with winning because there's nothing to win. The Cayman Islands people pay me generously to do a fair day's work and I give them all of me, not just some. I sacrificed and I have done this for 30 years. This Bill encompasses everyone in this room, including the Attorney General, the Deputy Governor, and the Governor. We have done extensive work to ensure that everyone had a piece to say in forming this Bill.

Misinformation on new work permit application fees. Mr. Speaker, the existing work permit fees have been in place since 2007. During Finance Committee, I corrected what the administration increases would be. Like the Member for George Town Central who likes to refer to the Hansards, go back to the Hansards and look. Yet, the Leader of the Opposition chose to quote the *Compass* who reported an incorrect \$500 flat work permit application fee when, as I said, I, as the Minister, corrected that here during Finance Committee. Once again, I would like to go through what the administration fee increases are.

The application fee is \$150 for work permits that have an annual grant fee that's under \$2,100. The administration fee or application fee is \$250 for work permits that have an annual grant fee between \$2,101 and \$10,400. The application/administration fee of \$500 is for work permits that have an annual grant fee between \$10,401 and \$32,400.

Minimum wage also came up in the Leader of the Opposition's speech. Mr. Speaker, failure to adjust the minimum wage of \$6, which was set by the Progressives Cabinet on February 9th, 2016, is 10 years overdue. There was no adjustment period in the minimum wage law when it was set. The magnitude of this adjustment is required because the minimum wage has not been adjusted incrementally to keep pace with inflation and the cost of living, as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition rightfully said, has increased. Each administration has contributed to our country's inflation. I'm sure we will in some way too. We want the best for our country, but the minimum wage needed to be increased; now this Government is being called out for it.

Information sharing. The Leader of the Opposition went down a rabbit hole saying that he's concerned about sharing of information. Let me say it again: my team will not be asking HSA for anyone's X-ray. It's about enforcement. Our responsibility is to protect this country. Currently, the Caymanian graduates from TVET programmes from local and international tertiary institutions are not able to take advantage of the opportunities for employment because information held by government agencies such as [the] Scholarship Secretariat is not being shared with immigration boards and other decision-making bodies, to the detriment of Caymanians.

I have visited all of our immigration boards; they have no clue who's overseas so when work permits flow in, they have no clue how to proceed. Should they defer based on a young person who is in a particular programme [who could] get that particular job? Information sharing is critical to our success. The silos are huge in government; we have grown. Government is vast, and not just government but our SAGCs [Statutory Authorities and Government Companies]. If we do not have information sharing, we are not going to do well — no government is going to do well so in the next couple of years, if another government comes in, what are they going to do when they don't have data? How do I know that the Director needs more staff if I don't have the data to prove it? When we come into this honourable House, people are asking, *is this data-driven*, but they're tying my hands to say, *well, I'm concerned that you might get information*. As I said, I don't need a person's X-ray. What we need is to know if people are skirting the law.

Mr. Speaker, sharing information doesn't just end at enforcement. As I said, we have to understand who is overseas. How do we enforce? If a person commits a crime with the police department, how does the Director of WORC know? The folks at Customs and Border Control need to know if people are violating their terms of employment with immigration. If someone in the customs department sees things, they need to be able to say to the Director of WORC, here's what's happening with this particular person. If we don't have that, how do we protect the country?

Now, I have no issues with the Leader of the Opposition or any of the Opposition Members coming to me and saying, *Michael, how is this going to work?* We don't need to discuss it in Parliament; this is elementary. You could have called me and said, *hey, how is this going to work?* We've already spoken with the Attorney General. He's not going to just approve anything that's going to violate any sort of data policies or laws.

Cost of living increase. Mr. Speaker, I must respectfully reject the Leader of the Opposition's assertion that immigration reform is the driver of the cost of living. The reality is that the Cayman Islands has very little control at times over the cost of living because we import everything — the Deputy Leader of the Opposition mentioned this in his summation. Global supply chains, international fuel prices, and external market volatility have far more influence over the cost of living than any domestic immigration policy.

Let me give some facts. According to the Economics and Statistics Office (ESO), from 2013 to 2024, the overall cost of living in the Cayman Islands increased 34.6 per cent, and I wasn't in government; I wasn't a Minister. That is the tide of global pressures, not the immigration framework. When we examine the data more, the picture becomes even clearer. Between 2013 and 2016, inflation rose 3.4 per cent; between 2017 and 2020, it rose 12 per cent; and between 2021 and 2024, it rose 19.2 per cent. These increases occurred under various governments and policy environments, which only reinforces the fact that inflation is largely driven by international factors.

Immigration reform is not a contributor to inflation. On the contrary, it is designed to strengthen our workforce, protect Caymanian opportunities and create a fair and transparent, sustainable labour market. Mr. Speaker, the largest inflation increases were:

- In 2019 at 6 per cent for the year — when the Leader of the Opposition was a Cabinet Minister; and
- In 2022 at 9.5 per cent — when the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was a Cabinet Minister.

I find it refreshing then, when the Government is now being lectured on the cost of living with immigration. Our responsibility is to pursue a reform that supports stability, productivity, and long-term economic security for Caymanians.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about something that's near and dear to my heart. I sat through my first Finance Committee as a Minister because, as a civil servant, most finance committees I sat through, I was normally in the gallery. As I was sitting here, I was telling my colleague Pilar that I had an out-of-body experience while listening to Minister Anglin, because when I was a civil servant in education, he was the Minister and I sat here for hours on end while politicians bantered back and forth. I sat in the seat and I

said to myself, *I will never have that job. I will never apply to be a politician, it is a complete waste of time.* Yet here I am, but in my out of body experience, I started saying to myself as I went through my first Finance Committee—and I thought we had a great Bill; I still think we do... As we got to Finance Committee, it was piled on. I heard all of these asks, but I didn't hear how we are going to pay for it.

The Leader of the Opposition spent an hour leading us down a rabbit hole—and I love this one about basketball courts. We spent an hour, I timed it, discussing basketball courts because he had a very emotional experience whereby his son went to the Kirk Market courts and they were dominated by non-nationals; so he said to my colleague, [the Minister] of Sports, “we need more basketball courts. I think we should pave all of that land right next to the one that's at Cox's courts”. I sat here and thought, *where is this money going to come from? Who's going to pay for this? Where is it going to fit in?*

We would come back and ask for section 12 and 11(5) [approvals], and they're saying, *well, you see what I tell you, the government is asking for more money. You guys can't manage unna finances.* I sat in this room and heard people ask for more and more. Throughout Finance Committee, I listened carefully to the Members of the Opposition demand more of everything — *more police officers*, they said when the Chief of Police was giving his submission. You need almost 600 police officers, and they're saying that may not be enough. *Are you sure that's enough, Mr. Walton?* More after-school programmes, more healthcare services, more insurance coverage for seniors and children, more roads, more infrastructure, more efficiency in government systems.

Mr. Speaker, they asked for more. Not once did I hear the phrase, how are we going to pay for this? Yet, when we put a tag line in there that we're going to have to borrow, they got bent out of shape, they went on the attack, *the government is not going to make it.* How does the Opposition expect the country to pay for all of “more”? They cannot demand discipline from us while promoting unchecked expenditure; they cannot preach responsibility while abandoning practicality. The government is focused on sustainable solutions, not political soundbites, and that's what I heard in here for the last two days and until the Opposition can present coherent financial ground proposals, the calls for more, more, more remain nothing more than political posturing and empty rhetoric.

I want to talk about the opportunities that we lose when we're asking for more. Mr. Speaker, I stated earlier that my team has been engaging with the Members of the Opposition time and time again. We have extended the olive branch far beyond what is required, I believe; and the wonderful Premier has consistently had us extend more and I have no problems with that because I have nothing to hide. It is democracy. This is what troubles me, Mr. Speaker, in

every interaction their priority has never been about Caymanian advancement. Instead, the Opposition continues to champion ideas that do nothing to strengthen job security or long-term prospects for people. I have never been asked. I remember the day in the Cabinet Office, when the Leaders of the Opposition came in to present what they felt should be part of our Bill. I sat patiently waiting for someone from their team to say to me, *how are we going to put Caymanians back to work? What's the plan, Michael?* They never asked; missed opportunity.

During my first debate in Parliament, it was the NiCE programme. We spent a long time talking about the NiCE programme. Opposition Members spoke passionately, almost theatrically at times, about the NiCE programme. A programme which every one of them knows offers no full-time employment, no health care, no pension, no training, no pathway to promotion. Minister Ebanks just asked for another \$350,000 for a two-week programme. It's now \$650,000; the public should know that. They pushed hard for a programme that would cost taxpayers millions to run it all year long, yet none of them asked about a debate on job security. Not one of them asked me if we were going to do any skills programmes in tourism, finance. One of them asked about wage protections, the labour law — are we going to improve them? Pension, are we going to improve it?

Mr. Speaker, my fellow Caymanians, I urge you to pay attention. This is what the debate has become. Evaluate the message the Opposition is sending you not through their slogans, not through their speeches, but through their priorities. When given every chance to stand up for Caymanian workers, they instead stood up for a temporary programme with no future. Given the chance to advocate for Caymanian advancement, instead they advocated for more expenditure that would oftentimes lead to no benefit. The Government's position is clear: we will fight for real jobs, real protections, real training and real opportunities for Caymanians. The Opposition must now answer why they are not doing the same.

Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in his summation yesterday chose to centre much of his remarks around his disappointment — maybe it's in me, I don't know; but if it is, I'd like to discuss it — that he did not receive the information that he felt was owed to him. At this point, he and I can agree to disagree on what information he should receive, but since the Deputy Leader has opened the door on the discussion about disappointment, I'd like to express mine.

I wish to take this opportunity to speak plainly about my disappointment which does not spawn a single Bill or debate or parliamentary sitting, but stretches for the last 25 years. Unlike the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I did not have the luxury of throwing a tantrum when told “no”. I spent my entire life serving this country—four separate times in the

civil service and public service. I began my career in 1991 at 17.5 years old as a young social work intern. My last stint in government was between 2010 and 2017, under the now Minister of Education, working directly with at-risk children and their families. I have seen first-hand the consequences of political decisions made far from the lived realities of people — our people.

Mr. Speaker, over these three decades, I have experienced profound disappointment; disappointment caused by career politicians, including those who sit on the next side. I've been disappointed by politicians who commission reports after reports instead of investing the same funds into real solutions that impact our people; disappointment of politicians who prioritise building roads just before an election instead of creating affordable housing. I'm disappointed by politicians who spent hundreds of thousands flying around the world to stroke their egos while infrastructure is crumbling at home. I'm also disappointed by politicians who poured millions into welfare systems that sustain dependency rather than empowering Caymanians to become independent, skilled, and self-sufficient.

Mr. Speaker for 30 years, I've been disappointed by the process of politics, by politicians who stand in this honourable House and speak eloquently about respect and integrity only to tear down colleagues and citizens alike while they hide behind their parliamentary privilege. I've been disappointed by politicians who justified substantial salary increases for themselves, while average Caymanians struggled to pay utility bills or their rent or mortgages.

I'm further disappointed by politicians who lowered educational standards not to uplift students, but to manufacture the illusion of improved outcomes; so, Mr. Speaker, when I hear the Deputy Leader of the Opposition lecture me about disappointment, about parliamentary procedure, only to then disregard and violate those very same procedures when it suits his convenience, I'm disappointed.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Would you quote the Point of Order? The section of the Standing Orders.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, unparliamentary messaging by the Member who just asserted that I have been circumventing the Parliament's Standing Orders. Mr. Speaker, you are the Presiding Officer over this Parliament and if you see that I have violated any Standing Orders, it's your job to do that.

Now, if the Member wants to highlight a part that he's suggesting that I violated, maybe he should say it for the record.

The Speaker: Member for George Town Central, I don't think he identified you as the person.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Yes, he did, sir.

The Speaker: I think he was talking about politicians in general.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: No, sir.

The Speaker: I thought he was talking about politicians in general.

Mr. Minister, just to make sure that you were not speaking of the Member for George Town Central, can you confirm that you were speaking about politicians in general.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Like everything else, Mr. Speaker, he doesn't listen. Yes, I was speaking in a general term.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, I'll ask for the Hansards to be presented to this honourable House. He said the honourable Deputy Leader of Opposition. There is no other Member of this Parliament who is the Deputy Leader of Opposition.

The Speaker: I think I gave you quite a bit of liberty yesterday and I think you opened this door in your debate and I let you do it; so I think the Member has to have some reasonable leeway to respond to the debate yesterday. At this point in time, I don't think it's a Point of Order, so I'm inviting the Minister to continue.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the Deputy Leader of the Opposition raised the issue of disappointment because the political grandstanding he is so eagerly entrenched in does not inspire collaboration. It does not build trust; it certainly does not move the country forward. The Government is focused on substance—

The Speaker: Minister, I think it's better if you move on to a different topic.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Speaker, fine.

Notice of Committee Stage Amendments. Mr. Speaker, I note that the Notice of Committee Stage Amendments filed on Wednesday by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition proposed a new clause 10A in the Notice of Committee Stage Amendments I filed, which seeks to validate the acknowledgement of continuations after the age of 18 that have historically been issued by the Chief Immigration Officer, and most recently, the Director of WORC.

The Leader of the Opposition is arguing parliamentary procedure; that the amendment was inserted into the Bill after the Bill was gazetted. Mr. Speaker, my team and I are moving towards efficiency and better clarification of the immigration laws. I will not allow more bureaucracy and red tape to prevent us from modernising immigration legislation. Under section 29 of the current law, the Director can grant the Right to be Caymanian to certain categories of persons.

Mr. Speaker, section 26 of the existing Immigration (Transition) Act provides that a person who is eligible to apply for the right to be Caymanian under 26(1)(d) can apply to the Director of WORC under 26(3) for the acknowledgement that they have the right to be Caymanian by entitlement. When persons who are approaching 18 or are over 18 write to the Director for continuation of the Right to be Caymanian under 26(3), his Office has been applying this consideration to the details of the case verifying that the person has not lost the right to be Caymanian under the loss of provisions set out in section 33(2), and as such, the Director has been acknowledging that they continue to possess the right to be Caymanian.

In the current law and regulations, there is no clear provision for these continuation decisions by the Director, and although there is a prescribed fee for continuations processed by the Director or the Board, currently, virtually all application continuations are considered by the Director. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, having discovered this lack of clarity in the existing legislation during the consultation process, the proposed Committee Stage Amendment seeks to validate those decisions and fees historically charged and sets out clearly in the Law that the Director can process these continuation applications.

Cayman Status & Permanent Residency [Permit] Board 2022 and 2023 delays. Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to have the support of my colleague for Bodden Town East. He and I share quite a few realities because he and the Member for Bodden Town West are former Ministers of Immigration. I'm confident that with his support, we can steer a new immigration era into force, but I wanted to clarify a few things.

The Member for Bodden Town East lauded the appointment of the Cayman Status & Permanent Residency [Permit] Board for granting fewer rights to be Caymanian. I respect his position. He believed that he had to do what he needed to do in that moment. The problem is, Mr. Speaker, you can't take away something that you've already given, and he is right to an extent. Delays happened; we kicked the can down the road, but those grants still happened, and no court was going to withdraw those Permanent Residency and Caymanian Status Grants from those folks.

The Board refused to grant the applications in those years but the persons and their applications did not go away. Those applications had to be dealt with

by the next board, and we could not refuse them; we delayed them, [but] we were legally bound to grant them. This meant that in 2024 the number of Cayman Status [Grants] jumped to 1,567, quoted by the Member. This underscores why this immigration reform is important. It is urgent; the longer we wait to make the changes to it, the more obligated we are going to be to grant this citizenship.

Why not extend the revocation process instead of extending the qualifying period? Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked why not extend the revocation process instead of extending the qualifying period? Extending the qualifying period for Cayman Status through marriage from 7 to 15 years is designed to reduce sham marriages, as he rightfully said, by lengthening the PR period and making them less attractive, harder to sustain; and, along with the annual declarations, more likely to be detected, reducing exploitation of Caymanians and improving public confidence in [the] integrity of our immigration and status systems.

Likely annual declarations for marriages. Mr. Speaker, sections 33 and 34 of the existing Immigration Act set out a loss provision for persons who were granted the Right to be Caymanian, including those by marriage. It is therefore logical and prudent that an annual declaration will require a declaration which seeks to determine that none of these breaches have occurred, particularly with a \$10,000 penalty and/or one-year imprisonment and revocation for providing false information.

Mr. Speaker, as I end, I wish to acknowledge and thank the dedicated staff of the Ministry of Caymanian Employment and Immigration, Workforce Opportunities and Residency Cayman (WORC), and the Department of Labour & Pensions, as well as our partners in the private sector, NGOs and education institutions, who have all been helpful in moving this forward. Their continued professionalism and commitment to improving the process for the betterment of Caymanians makes progress like this possible.

I wish to also thank the hard-working and brilliant members of the legislative drafting team who have worked tirelessly on the Bill and the amendments. I wish to thank the Members of the Opposition for their contribution to this discussion; and I also want to give heartfelt thanks to my NCFC Government. We are unifiers, we're bringing Caymanians together; we're modernisers and innovators determined to work together, maintaining a stable government and working with the community to prepare our people and the country for a brighter future.

Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: The question is that a Bill shortly entitled Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2025 be given a second reading.

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, I rise to move a motion under Standing Order 43(k) about exemptions from notice. As 43(k) says:

“Unless these Standing Orders otherwise provide, notice shall be given of any motion which it is proposed to make, with the exception of the following —

(k) a motion arising out of any item of business made immediately after that item is disposed of and before the next item is entered upon.”

Mr. Speaker, I propose that the Government or the Minister provide—

The Speaker: Hold on a minute, hold on a minute.

You're moving a motion under 43(k) on the assumption that the item of business has been completed. The item of business in my view has not been completed until its Third Reading on the Order Paper.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders, Elected Member for Bodden Town West: Mr. Speaker, sir, can we get a division for the vote, please?

The Speaker: Let me deal with this first, okay.

I think the item of business, in this case the Bill, will not be dispensed with on the Order Paper until the Third Reading. At that time you could move that Motion.

Member for Bodden Town West.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: A Division on the vote, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I didn't hear any “Noes”. Are you questioning the interpretation of the Speaker?

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: No; I'm not questioning. I just want a division.

The Speaker: Madam Clerk, could we get a division, please.

Division No. 3 of 2025-2026

AYES: 16

NOES: 0

Hon. André M. Ebanks

Hon. Gary B. Rutty

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine
 Hon. Nickolas T. A. DaCosta
 Hon. G. Wayne Panton
 Ms. Heather D. Bodden
 Mrs. Julie J. T. Hunter
 Hon. Michael S. Myles
 Hon. Joseph X. Hew
 Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan
 Mr. Roy M. McTaggart
 Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour
 Mr. Christopher S. Saunders

ABSTENTIONS: 1

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly

ABSENT: 2

Hon. Pearlina L. McGaw-Lumsden
 Mr. A. Roy Tatum

The Speaker: The results of the division are as follows: 16 Ayes, 1 Abstention, 2 Absentees.

The Bill entitled Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2025 was given a second reading.

Agreed: Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2025 was given a second reading.

The Speaker: The House will now go into Committee Stage.

House in Committee at 12:58pm

COMMITTEE ON BILLS

The Chairman: Please be seated.

The House is now in Committee. With the leave of the House may I assume that, as usual, we should authorise the Honourable Attorney General to correct minor errors and suchlike in these Bills?

The Clerk will now read the clauses for the first Bill which is the Submarine Cable (Telecommunications Resilience) Bill, 2025.

SUBMARINE CABLE (TELECOMMUNICATIONS RESILIENCE) BILL, 2025

The Clerk:

Clause 1	Short title
Clause 2	Interpretation
Clause 3	Power to enter into agreement regarding construction and operation of a submarine cable connection
Clause 4	Selection of commercial partner
Clause 5	Obligations relating to certain telecommunications cable infrastructure
Clause 6	Government to pay fixed sum to commercial partner in tranches

The Chairman: Are there any questions on clauses 1 to 6 of the Bill? *[Pause]* If not, I will put the question.

All those in favour of clauses 1 through 6 standing part of the Bill, say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clauses 1 through 6 passed.

The Clerk: A Bill for an act to empower the Cayman Islands Government to enter into an agreement with a commercial partner for the purposes of constructing and operating a submarine cable connection to enhance the national resilience of the critical ICT infrastructure of the Islands; to secure the Islands' telecommunications and connectivity; and for incidental and connected purposes.

The Chairman: The question is that the Title do stand part of the Bill.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Title passed.

The Chairman: The next Bill is the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2025.

**IMMIGRATION (TRANSITION)
 (AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION) BILL, 2025**

The Clerk:

Clause 1	Short title and commencement
Clause 2	Amendment of section 1 of the Immigration (Transition) Act (2022 Revision) - short title

The Chairman: The question is that clauses 1 and 2 stand part of the Bill.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 3	Amendment of section 2 - interpretation
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The Chairman: We have notice of an amendment to be moved by the Honourable Minister.

Amendment to clause 3

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chairman, in accordance with Standing Order 70, I beg to move a motion for the Bill to be amended in clause 3(b)(v) as follows —

- (a) by inserting after the definition of the words “**Department of Financial Assistance**”, the following definition —

“**Department of Labour and Pensions**” means the Department of Labour and Pensions established under section 79 of the *National Pensions Act (2024 Revision)*; and

- (b) by inserting after the definition of the words “**developed real estate**”, the following definition —

“**General Registry Department**” means the department of Government with responsibility for the administration, regulation and maintenance of statutory registers, including the registers of companies, partnerships, trusts, non-profit organisations, co-operatives, trade unions, friendly societies, building societies, public records and vital events such as births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships;”.

The Chairman: The Amendment has been moved. Does the Minister wish to speak to the Amendment?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: No, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Does any other Member wish to speak to the Amendment?

Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Honourable Minister and his team for taking the recommendation to make this Amendment. I think it's fair to say this was one of those recommendations I suggested that will help us resolve the problem of persons being identified from birth that they are Caymanian so we can stop that growing number of what you call Caymanians who don't have identification from the start to say that they are Caymanian.

Hopefully, one day in the future, we'll have every single Caymanian having a document without

having to produce anything that suggests that they're Caymanian. I want to thank the Minister and the administrative team for making this Amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Does any other Member wish to speak? *[Pause]* If not, the question is that the amendment to the clause be accepted.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Amendment to clause 3 passed.

The Chairman: The question is that the clause as amended stand part of the Bill.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 3, as amended, passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 4 Insertion of section 8A - sharing of information with WORC or a Board

The Chairman: I have notice of an amendment to clause 4.

Honourable Minister.

Amendment to clause 4

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chairman, in accordance with Standing Order 70, I beg to move a motion for the Bill to be amended in clause 4 in the proposed new section 8A(2) as follows —

- (a) in paragraph (k), by deleting the word “and” appearing at the end of the paragraph;
- (b) in paragraph (l), by deleting the full stop and substituting a semi-colon; and
- (c) by inserting after paragraph (l) the following paragraphs —

“(m) the Department of Labour and Pensions; and

(n) the General Registry Department.”.

The Chairman: The amendment has been moved. Does the Minister wish to speak to the Amendment?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Yes, thank you.

Mr. Chairman, this Motion seeks to expand the number of agencies that share information with

WORC by adding the Department of Labour and Pensions and the General Registry Department to the list of agencies that, on request, are required to supply the Director of WORC or the relevant Board with information necessary for the exercise of the functions as listed.

The Chairman: Does any other Member wish to speak?

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Yes, Mr. Chair.

The Chairman: Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is a procedural matter. Mr. Chairman, when going through the amendments to the Bill itself, can the Minister refer to what number in the list of the 17 amendments? For example, that amendment to the fourth clause in the Bill isn't the fourth amendment in the [list of] 17. For us to follow along—

The Chairman: If you follow the document before you with the amendments, we're going right down. We are doing the clauses in order. I don't understand what you want.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Not to this, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: No, but we're following the amendments. We're following this and where there is an amendment to a clause, we'll do that amendment to that clause numerically as we go right down, so they are being identified. This amendment is to clause 4 of the amending Bill.

[Pause]

The Chairman: Oh, you want him to say this is number two on the amendment page? What number are you asking for?

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Correct. What number is this on the amended clause [sic]?

The Chairman: Well, you have the amendments before you. We're going in order, so 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, we'll go right down the list. We're not going to jump around.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: What number is it now?

The Chairman: Two; [page] one on the amendment sheet.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Got you. Thank you.

The Chairman: Honourable Member for Cayman Brac East.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly, Elected Member for Cayman Brac East: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to ask the Honourable Minister if he could perhaps enlighten this honourable Committee with some further information when he refers to, in paragraph 8A, “**with information necessary for the exercise of the functions**” to convince me that it's not too wide.

Thank you.

The Chairman: Honourable Minister.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The information we're currently asking for is processing applications for work permits, grants for Caymanian status, permanent residents and any other category of residents; exercising functions relating to the revocation of work permits, grants of Caymanian status, permanent residents and any other category of residents; and promoting and facilitating employment of Caymanians and other prescribed persons in the Islands through the use of various facilities and services. That's what we're sticking within. This is actually in the existing law of 8A, what we're doing is just adding the agencies that participate in this.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Perhaps, Mr. Chair, I might get a little bit better understanding. Will this be further encapsulated or expounded on in the regulations whenever they see the light of day?

The Chairman: Honourable Minister.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, through you. The regulations will not have any further demands; they will be in respect of data protection so we're not going to be asking for anything that's already protected by data protection [laws].

The Chairman: Any other questions?
Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think I get what the Minister is suggesting. I think it's the sentence structure in 8A(1) that makes it seem there are some things outside of what is being listed. It says, *with information that is necessary*, rather than saying, *with information that is listed in the existing Act*, so, so and so. If you say, *if necessary*, it is a subjective proposition, discretionary. I think that's where the concern lies, but obviously the department and the Minister and the government have the authori-

ty. I would suggest for the purposes of clarity and certainty, so the public as well as those who apply can be certain of what exactly would be required of them by law and by regulation, if we say specifically, “the information listed further in the law” that he just [read], as opposed to saying, *that is necessary*.

[Pause]

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Through you, Mr. Chair. In the current Law, in terms of sharing of information with WORC or a Board, all we're doing is adding these additional entities. I've just read three different areas that are in the current Law. It's not like we're putting more things in the Law. I've just read those A, B, and C. This is the information that WORC is going to be requesting information through.

In addition to this, what my staff and certainly my colleagues' teams will be doing is also establishing memoranda of understanding to ensure that we do not go outside of the law. These things in 8A currently stick to data protection. I can't say enough or differently that for the last 10 years that these things have been in force, this is all that WORC has been asking for. All I'm doing is adding more departments.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chair.

The Chairman: Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I'm not going to belabour this point any further. I'm only going to recommend yet again, that though it may be in practise from before the time of the Minister, which I recognise, and you're only adding further departments to do what is already in play, our job as legislators, if we find something that we think needs to be fixed, is to catch it now; to say that the guard rails are too wide and the subjectivity that could potentially be brought forward [from] “that is necessary” without it being listed. There's nothing wrong with us trying to rectify it now. A memorandum of understanding saying that you would not break the law would certainly not suffice if you're allowed to break the law if there's an interpretation that “if necessary” can bring into scope something totally different than what is listed. That is my humble opinion. I recommend that we change the wording, but if the Government chooses not to, it's up to them.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: We're moving on.

The Chairman: The question is that the amendment as read for clause 4 will be approved.

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

AYES and one audible No [by Hon. Juliana O'Connor-Connolly].

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Amendment to clause 4 passed.

The Chairman: The question is that clause 4 as amended form part of the Bill.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 4, as amended, passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 5	Amendment of section 11 – Cayman Brac and Little Cayman Immigration Board
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Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: I have a question on clause 5, Mr. Chair.

The Chairman: Member for Cayman Brac East.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you very much. Just to get assurance from the Honourable Minister that the requisite training will be done for the Cayman Brac and Little Cayman Immigration Board for these complex amendments seeing that it is a relatively newly appointed board for the most part.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Through you Mr. Chair, yes. All of the boards and the department staff are going to be trained on this. It's the reason why we will not be putting in any of these amendments until a minimum of March 1st to ensure that all the training— as a matter of fact, the Director insisted on all of that, that none of these amendments start on January 1st.

The Chairman: Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

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

Mr. Chairman, in my debate, and I may have missed it, but I could not [find] this reference:

- “(b) by inserting after subsection (1) the following subsection —
“(1A) The right to be Caymanian granted by the Director under section 29(3)...” I could not find a 29(3) in either the 2022 or the proposed Bill.

The Chairman: We're still on clause 5, right?

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition: Yes.

I realised that the Honourable Minister missed that in his response.

The Chairman: Is that a typo, Attorney General, or something you can...

[Crosstalk]

The Chairman: That's why I asked if you were sure you were on clause 5. Okay, all right.

Any other questions on clause 5?

[Pause]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chairman, can the Minister say whether they have had any responses to concerns in respect of this new proposal from the consultation with the public; and if so, what were they?

The Chairman: I don't think we can raise the general merits of the Bill in Committee Stage.

The Clerk:

Clause 6	Amendment of section 13 - functions of Boards; Head of Work Permits, Cayman Status and Permanent Residence
Clause 7	Amendment of section 20 - appeals from decisions of an officer
Clause 8	Amendment of section 21 - appeals from decisions of Boards and Director of WORC

The Chairman: All those in favour of clauses 5, 6, 7 and 8 standing part of the Bill, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clauses 5 through 8 passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 9	Amendment of section 26 - categories of Caymanians
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The Chairman: We have notice of an amendment to clause 9.

Honourable Minister.

Amendment to clause 9

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chairman, in accordance with Standing Order 70, I beg to move a motion for the

Bill to be amended in clause 9 by deleting paragraph (a) and substituting the following paragraphs —

“(a) in subsection (1), as follows —

(i) by inserting after paragraph (c) the following paragraph —

“(ca) the person is Caymanian by grant of the Director under section 29;” and

(ii) by inserting after the words “under section 33”, the words “where applicable”;

(aa) in subsection (2), by deleting the words “subsection (1)” and substituting the words “subsection (1)(a), (c), (ca), (d) or (e);”.

The Chairman: The amendment to clause 9 has been moved. Does the Minister wish to speak to it?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Yes, thank you.

Mr. Chairman, this Motion is being made to allow the Director of WORC to process applications from persons seeking to continue their right to be Caymanian after age 18. This Motion is to clarify the sections of the Act that allow the Director to deal with these applications. Therefore, the list of persons under section 26(1) of the Act who have been deemed to possess the right to be Caymanian has been revised to include persons who are granted the right by the Director under section 29(3). The current Act authorises the Director to grant the right to be Caymanian for a child under 18; and the Motion will allow the Director to also grant the continuation after 18.

The Chairman: Does any other Member wish to speak? *[Pause]* If not, the [question] is that clause 9 be amended?

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Amendment to clause 9 passed.

The Chairman: The question is that clause 9 as amended do stand part of the Bill.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 9, as amended, passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 10 Amendment of section 28 - acquisition of the right to be Caymanian by grant of the Board

The Chairman: We have notice of an amendment to clause 10.

Honourable Minister.

Amendment to clause 10

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chairman, thank you.

In accordance with Standing Order 70, I beg to move a motion for the Bill to be amended in clause 10 as follows —

- (a) in paragraph (f), by deleting the word “and” appearing at the end of the paragraph;
- (b) by deleting paragraph (g) and substituting the following paragraphs —
 - “(g) by repealing subsection (10);
 - (h) in subsection (11), by deleting the words “In relation to”, and substituting the words “Except where otherwise provided, in relation to”; and
 - (i) by inserting after subsection (13) the following subsection —
“(13A) An application by a person referred to in subsection (13) shall be made to the Director of WORC in accordance with section 29(2).”.

The Chairman: The amendment has been moved. Does the Minister wish to speak to the amendment?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

This Motion is connected to one we just dealt with. The Motion seeks to improve on efficiencies at the Department of WORC to allow applications for the continuation of the right to be Caymanian for the age of 18 to be processed by the Director of WORC and not by the Board. Therefore, clause 10's amendment to section 28(13) seeks to clarify that the only persons who are entitled to apply for the right to be Caymanian are persons who are applying for the right to be Caymanian by entitlement in accordance with section 29(2).

The Chairman: Does any other Member wish to speak? If not, the question is that the amendment proposed to clause 10 be approved.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Amendment to clause 10 passed.

The Chairman: Okay, we have notice of a second amendment to the same clause.

Motion to amend clause 10

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In accordance with Standing Order 70(1) and (2) of the Parliament Standing Orders, 2025, I, the Honourable Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Elected Member for George Town Central, give notice to move the following amendments to the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2025 —

1. That the Bill be amended in clause 10 (c) (ii) by deleting the following:

“(iii) out of the seven years immediately preceding the application, where the civil partnership took place prior to the date of commencement of section 10(c) of the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2025; or

(iv) out of the fifteen years immediately preceding the application, where the marriage or civil partnership took place on or after the date of commencement of section 10(c) of the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2025;”.

The Chairman: The Amendment has been moved. Does the Member moving the amendment wish to speak to it?

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, the honourable members of this Committee would recall in my contributions, my concerns about the extension or the removal of the opportunity for persons married to Caymanians to be able to apply for status at year seven. This change ultimately stops that and now forces the partners of Caymanians in civil partnerships or marriages not to be able to get status until year 15, as I understand it. Therefore, I suggest that we remove it; the Government hasn't spoken to it, but this amendment is seeking that result.

The Chairman: Does any Member wish to speak? *[Pause]* The question is that the amendment to clause 10 as outlined by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition be approved.

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

AYES and NOES.

The Chairman: Can I have a division? Oh, I can't call for a division.

[Crosstalk]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, can I have a division, please?

The Chairman: Madam Clerk, would you call a division, please?

Division No. 4 of 2025-2026**AYES: 5**

Hon. Joseph X. Hew
Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan
Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly
Mr. Roy M. McTaggart
Mr. Christopher S. Saunders

NOES: 10

Hon. André M. Ebanks
Hon. Gary B. Rutty
Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks
Hon. Rolston M. Anglin
Hon. Johany S. Ebanks

Hon. Nickolas T. A. DaCosta
Hon. G. Wayne Panton
Ms. Heather D. Bodden
Mrs. Julie J. T. Hunter
Hon. Michael S. Myles

ABSENT: 4

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine
Hon. Pearlina L. McGaw-Lumsden
Mr. A. Roy Tatum
Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour

The Chairman: The division is as follows: 5 Ayes, 10 Noes, 4 Absentees. The Motion to amend clause 10 is not approved.

Agreed: Motion by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to amend clause 10 failed.

The Chairman: Members, I know that we are normally supposed to ring the bell but because no one had gotten up and left the room I didn't ring the bell. In a case where we vote, unless someone leaves the room who I need to call back, I'm not going to prolong the proceedings by calling for the bell and waiting the three minutes or five minutes, okay?

The question is that clause 10 as amended form part of the Bill.

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

AYES and NOES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chairman, can I call for a division, please?

The Chairman: Madam Clerk, would you call a division, please?

Division No. 5 of 2025-2026**AYES: 10**

Hon. André M. Ebanks
Hon. Gary B. Rutty
Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks
Hon. Rolston M. Anglin
Hon. Johany S. Ebanks

Hon. Nickolas T. A. DaCosta
Hon. G. Wayne Panton
Ms. Heather D. Bodden
Mrs. Julie J. T. Hunter
Hon. Michael S. Myles

NOES: 5

Hon. Joseph X. Hew
Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan
Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly
Mr. Roy M. McTaggart
Mr. Christopher S. Saunders

ABSENT: 4

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine
Hon. Pearlina L. McGaw-Lumsden
Mr. A. Roy Tatum
Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour

The Chairman: The results of the division are as follows: 10 Ayes, 5 Noes, 4 Absentees. The clause as amended stands part of the Bill.

Agreed: Clause 10, as amended, passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 11 Amendment of section 33 - revocation of right to be Caymanian

The Chairman: Mr. Minister, we have an amendment to clause 11.

Amendment to clause 11

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In accordance with Standing Order 70, I beg to move a motion for the Bill to be amended in clause 11, by deleting paragraph (b) and substituting the following paragraph —

“(b) by inserting after subsection (1) the following subsection —

“(1A) The right to be Caymanian granted by the Director under section 29(3) may be revoked —

(a) where the holder has supplied false or misleading information in a material particular, to the Director; or

- (b) where the holder has ordinarily resided outside the Islands for a period of five years and can no longer be said to be settled in the Islands.”.

The Chairman: The amendment to clause 11 has been moved. Does the Minister wish to speak to the Amendment?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: No, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Chairman: Does any other Member wish to speak?

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just want to ask the Minister if this applies to Caymanians who got the right to be Caymanian by way of marriage; and if it applies if both partners are off island for longer than the five year period.

The Chairman: Mr. Minister.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I actually had a summary prepared so hopefully I can answer the member's question.

The first change that is occurring in clause 11 is the deletion of subclause 11(b). A point that was highlighted a number of times during the consultation period of the Bill, Subclause 11(b) referred to persons who are Caymanian by entitlement. However, the intention of the sub-clause was to apply to persons who had already reached the age of 18, which therefore no longer makes them fall under the category of “by entitlement”.

The second amendment to clause 11, Mr. Chairman, inserts a new revocation provision relating to applications made to the Director to continue the right to be Caymanian after the age of 18. Section 33(1)(b) of the existing legislation as a provision for any right to be Caymanian granted by the Board can be revoked if the holder has ordinarily resided outside the Islands for a period of five years and can no longer be said to be settled in the Islands. This amendment seeks to apply the same conditions to the right to be Caymanian continuation, which is granted by the Director after the age of 18.

To answer the member's question, it doesn't apply to people through marriage.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chairman, if the Minister would allow, can you say if there is any other provision that is com-

ing that will address the ones for marriage? I think this one is right by continuation. Is there any other section... Maybe you can consult with the technocrats as to the question of whether a partner of a Caymanian would be revoked if both the partner and the Caymanian are living outside of the Islands for five years.

[Pause]

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Through you, Mr. Chairman. Member, can you repeat the question, please?

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Minister. Through you, Mr. Chairman. The question is are there any other changes that would allow for revocation of a status given to a person married to a Caymanian. If both the Caymanian and the spouse were to move outside of the Islands for a period of five years, would the person who was given the status meet the criteria of being able to be revoked due to residency, even if both the partner and Caymanian were outside of the Islands.

Does that make sense?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Through you, Mr. Chair. What the current law has is that a non-Caymanian or a person attaining Caymanian citizenship by marriage can move outside the Islands for a period of five years, and throughout that time they can move based on education, health, business as well, and as long as they are returning to the Island within that time they will not lose their citizenship.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Minister. I'm assuming that you are saying then if they're out just because they want to move away from the Cayman Islands, they would be revoked because they're outside of the Islands for five years even though they're married to a Caymanian and the marriage is intact.

[Pause]

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Through you, Mr. Chairman. Once again, what is explained in the Law, which is in the current Law, as long as the person is outside the country, it has to be for education, health, or business. Our department will not revoke their facility under five years. Over five years, they still have to prove that they are doing one or three of those things: health, education or business; and that comes from them providing the relevant Board or the Director that they're still meeting one of those areas over five years.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chair, through you. I just want to say thank you to the Honourable Minister; fully under-

stood. I take it that means that yes, a person can be revoked if they're outside of those provisions.

I'd like to take this opportunity to ask you as Minister to consider with your Government possibly making further amendments in the future to that because I don't think it would be something that would be reflected by particular persons granted status through marriage. Ultimately, what that would mean is that a person married to a Caymanian who got status cannot leave this country outside of five years; otherwise, their partner would lose their status. I don't think that's the spirit... maybe it was something overlooked and maybe something you could bring to your Caucus to consider but I think it should be proposed as an amendment.

The Chairman: The question is that the amendment to clause 11 be approved.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Amendment to clause 11 passed.

The Chairman: The [question] is that clause 11 as amended form part of the Bill.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 11, as amended, passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 12 Amendment of section 36 - categories of permanent residence

The Chairman: The question is that clause 12 stand part of the Bill.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 12 passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 13 Amendment of section 37 - persons legally and ordinarily resident in the Islands for at least eight years

The Chairman: We have notice of an amendment to clause 13.

Honourable Minister.

Amendment to clause 13

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In accordance with Standing Order 70, I beg to move a motion for the Bill to be amended in clause 13 by deleting paragraph (d) and substituting the following paragraph —

“(d) by repealing subsection (12) and substituting the following subsections —

“(12) The holder of a Certificate issued under subsection (5) or section 41 or 42 shall provide annually a declaration containing prescribed particulars in respect of the holder and the holder's dependants, which shall be accompanied by the prescribed fee for the filing of the declaration.

(12A) The failure of the holder of a Certificate issued under subsection (5) or section 41 or 42 to provide the declaration under subsection (12) is an offence and a ground for revocation of the Certificate.”.

The Chairman: The amendment has been moved. Does the Minister wish to speak to the amendment?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, this amendment seeks to require the payment of a prescribed fee at the time of filing an annual declaration by amending section 37(12). The Act currently states that the following facilities have to file an annual declaration: persons legally and ordinarily resident in the Islands for at least eight years, Residency Certificate for Persons of Independent Means and Certificate of Permanent Residence for Persons of Independent Means.

The Chairman: Does any other Member wish to speak? *[Pause]* If not, the question is that the proposed amendment to clause 13 be approved.

All those in favour—

[Pause]

The Chairman: Oh, I understand that some words might have been left out. Mr. Minister, you need to make an amendment to the amendment by reading the words into this amendment.

[Pause]

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chairman, can I reread this, please?

“(d) by repealing subsection (12) and substituting the following subsections —

“(12) The holder of a Certificate issued under subsection (5) or section 41 or 42 shall provide annually a declaration containing prescribed particulars in respect of the holder and the holder’s dependants on the anniversary of the date of issue of the Residency and Employment Rights Certificate or the date that the Board or the Director of WORC may specify which shall be accompanied by the prescribed fee for the filing of the declaration.

(12A) The failure of the holder of a Certificate issued under subsection (5) or section 41 or 42 to provide the declaration under subsection (12) is an offence and a ground for revocation of the Certificate.”;

The Chairman: There are quite a few words so what I’m going to suggest is that we take the lunch break now and give you an opportunity to rewrite the two clauses and bring them back in their entirety.

Before we leave the Chamber for lunch, I think the Minister of Culture has a little entertainment for us. We’ll suspend after that.

Over to you Mr. Minister.

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

Yes, as has been customary over the last few Christmases, the East End Primary School Choir is here to bring some singing.

The Chairman: Just a minute. As the former Governor used to tell us, just to put belts and braces around it, the Committee is suspended until 2:45.

Now you can bring them in.

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

Committee suspended at 1:56pm

Committee resumed at 2:59pm

The Chairman: The Committee is called back to order. I think the Minister has circulated a new draft for the amendment to clause 13. Everyone has it?

Basically what he has done is added the words that the Attorney General (AG) said, so maybe

you just want to read it back into the record again, Honourable Minister, please.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In accordance with Standing Order 70(1) and (2) of the Parliament Standing Orders, 2025, I, the Honourable Michael S. Myles, Minister for Caymanian Employment and Immigration, give notice to move the following amendment to the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2025 —

1. That the Bill be amended in clause 13, by deleting paragraph (d) and substituting the following paragraph —

“(d) by repealing subsection (12) and substituting the following subsections —

“(12) The holder of a Certificate issued under subsection (5) or section 41 or 42 shall provide annually a declaration containing prescribed particulars in respect of the holder and the holder’s dependants —

(a) on the anniversary of the date of issue of the Residency and Employment Rights Certificate; or

(b) on the date that the Board or the Director of WORC may specify, and the declaration shall be accompanied by the prescribed fee for the filing of the declaration.

(12A) The failure of the holder of a Certificate issued under subsection (5) or section 41 or 42 to provide the declaration under subsection (12) is an offence and a ground for revocation of the Certificate.”;

The Chairman: The Amendment has been moved.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Amendment to clause 13 passed.

Hon. Juliana Y. O’Connor-Connolly: Mr. Chair.

The Chairman: Sorry, ma’am.

Hon. Juliana Y. O’Connor-Connolly: Sorry, I just have a (hopefully) quick question on the same clause but not the amendment.

The Chairman: Okay.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you.

May I ask the Honourable Minister if he could further elucidate on 13: **“(b) in the case of a non-Caymanian civil servant, until the non-Caymanian civil servant re-qualifies under the criteria contained in this section having taken the break in stay required under section 66B (1).”** Exactly what is that intended to mean? How is it going to work in practice, please?

Thank you.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Member. It's recognising that foreign civil servants now have term limits and they need to take the term limit break.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Mr. Chairman, the current civil servants, is this term limit also applicable to them or does the time start to run at the commencement of this legislation if and when passed by Parliament? That's what I was unsure about.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chairman, all existing civil servants start at term limit zero when this particular regulation starts.

The Chairman: You're saying that when the Bill comes into effect, all civil servants currently employed will be at year zero. Their time clock starts then and the rollover period is what, eight years, nine years?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: It is currently nine years.

[Pause]

The Chairman: I understand they would do their time; they would take a two-year break, they could come back if they wanted, and the clock would start at zero again, right? Just like in the private sector.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Mr. Chairman, perhaps the Honourable Minister and the AG in his capacity could help me understand. Are there still going to be a number of exemptions for this to actually work in practise? For example, the teachers. There's no way, no matter how much miraculous work my good friend from education does, to have 1,200 teachers rolling over in seven years.

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: What is contemplated, Honourable Member is that there will be carve outs in the Public Service Management Regulations which will allow the relevant appointed officers to do these exemptions. For police, medicine, I think, teachers and judges and some others, yeah; but there will be specific carve outs for that.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: In fairness and to try to negate some of the potential apprehension

that could ensue from this proposed legislation: The term limit is not a blanket term limit for the non-Caymanian civil servants, but they are going to be reasonable and practical exemptions, taking into consideration the protection that is given by section 55 of the Constitution.

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: Honourable Member, I can't improve upon that articulation. That's very good.

The Chairman: The question is that clause 13 as amended stands part of the Bill.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 13, as amended, passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 14 Amendment of section 38 - Residency and Employment Rights Certificate for spouse or civil partner of a Caymanian

The Chairman: Honourable Minister, you have an amendment to clause 14.

Amendment to clause 14

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chairman, in accordance with Standing Order 70, I beg to move a motion for the Bill to be amended in clause 14(h), in proposed subsection (10), by deleting paragraph (b) and substituting the following —

“(b) on the date that the Board or the Director of WORC may specify, and the declaration shall be accompanied by the prescribed fee for the filing of the declaration.”.

The Chairman: The amendment has been moved. Does the Minister wish to speak to the amendment?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, this amendment seeks to require the payment of a prescribed fee at the time of filing an annual declaration on behalf of a person holding a Residency and Employment Rights Certificate as a spouse or civil partner of a Caymanian.

The Chairman: Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister say what the fee is?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: One second, Mr. Chairman.

[Pause]

The Chairman: Honourable Minister.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chairman, the fee is in the regulations that haven't been approved by Cabinet yet. Once it's approved by Caucus and Cabinet, we'll be able to let the Member know.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chairman, through you. Can the Minister not give an indication of what they expect the fee to be?

The Chairman: I think there's a legal requirement that it would be approved in Cabinet first, so I would ask you to leave it there and he will let you know as soon as possible when it's approved.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chairman, I do understand the particulars as to this process, and by all means I know that it will not become legal until it's approved, but I don't think it's unreasonable information for the public and this Committee to know what they intend the fee to be. It's not a state secret in my opinion, so there's nothing preventing the Government from saying the amount. If the Government chooses not to answer, that's fine, but to let us know what the fee is going to be doesn't stop them in any way, in my humble opinion, unless you can correct me, from some legality stopping them.

The Chairman: I would hazard a guess that the risk would be if they give you a number and once they actually do the time and motion studies as to what the fee should be, it has to change and the number has been made public. I would think that would be the risk they would run, and it's not a risk I would recommend they take.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chairman, can I ask you one favour, please, sir?

The Chairman: Sure.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Can you let the Government defend themselves, please?

The Chairman: I think I have a responsibility to keep it within the confines of the clause that we're dealing with, you know. I'm not going to defend him or you.

Are there any other questions on the amendment to clause 14? [Pause] If not, the question is that the amendment be approved.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Amendment to clause 14 passed.

The Chairman: The question is that clause 14 as amended stand part of the Bill.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 14, as amended, passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 15 Amendment is section 40 - loss of Residency and Employment Rights Certificate

The Chairman: We have an amendment, Honourable Minister, to clause 15.

Amendment to clause 15

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In accordance with Standing Order 70, I beg to move a motion for the Bill to be amended in clause 15(a), in the proposed subsection (1)(iii), by deleting the words "at least seven years but".

The Chairman: The amendment has been moved. Does the Honourable Minister wish to speak to the amendment?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

The Ministry received legal advice that the Director of WORC should have the discretion to determine whether someone can maintain their Residency and Employment Rights Certificate (RERC) after their marriage has been dissolved or annulled. As such, clause 15(a) has been amended to give the Director of WORC discretion for the 15-year time frame that persons must remain married before being eligible to apply for naturalisation. This replaces the current provision which specifies that the facility shall be revoked.

The Chairman: Does any other Member wish to speak?

Member for George Town Central?

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm trying to fully understand the context of the whole thing in practical terms. Giving an example of a person, can the Member explain how this would work in a day-to-day circumstance?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Through you, Mr. Chairman. Member, what this means is that, if a foreign national married to a Caymanian is in an abusive relationship and obviously needs to get out of that relationship and files for divorce, we are not holding the person accountable by simply shipping them off the island. The Director of WORC has the discretion based on the circumstances to make this a grant of continuation for RERC.

The Chairman: Questions? *[Pause]* The question is that the amendment to clause 15 be approved.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Amendment to clause 15 passed.

The Chairman: The question is that clause 15 as amended stands part of the Bill.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 15, as amended, passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 16 Amendment of section 42 - Certificate of Permanent Residency for Persons of Independent Means.

The Chairman: The question is that clause 16 stand part of the Bill.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 16 passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 17 Amendment of section 47 - Certificate of Direct Investment

The Chairman: Honourable Minister, you have an amendment to clause 17.

Amendment to clause 17

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In accordance with Standing Order 70, I beg to move a motion for the Bill to be [amended in] clause 17, in proposed subsection (12), by deleting paragraph (b) and substituting the following —

(b) on the date that the Board or the Director of WORC may specify, and the declaration shall be accompanied by the prescribed fee for the filing of the declaration.

The Chairman: The amendment has been moved. Does the Minister wish to speak to it?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. This amendment seeks to require the payment of a prescribed fee at the time of filing an annual declaration on behalf of the persons holding a Certificate of Direct Investment.

The Chairman: Member for Cayman Brac East.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Do I have a wrong copy? Mine says, on the amendments to the Committee, "**on the date that the Director of WORC may specify,**" which is what the original amendment said; but when he read it, he inserted "the Board or". Maybe I got an old copy or I'm not hearing well.

[Pause]

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chairman, I thank the Member.

Yes, on my sheet that I put together for myself, I inserted "Board" so can I just read it over, please? Thanks.

That the Bill be amended in clause 17, in the proposed subsection (12), by deleting paragraph (b) and substituting the following —

(b) on the date that the Director of WORC may specify,

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chairperson, unfortunately, that's exactly what is in the amendment.

The Chairman: He said that he inserted the word "Board", so he is rereading it now leaving out the word "Board".

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: I understand that, sir, but what is actually in the Bill is exactly what he just read. He's proposing an amendment to the Bill which has exactly what he already said.

The Chairman: You'll read the rest of the sentence too, on the next page of the amendment.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: He didn't read that part out.

The Chairman: He did it the first time. Read the whole amendment.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: That the Bill be amended in clause 17, in proposed subsection (12) by deleting paragraph (b) and substituting the following —

“(b) on the date that the Director of WORC may specify, and the declaration shall be accompanied by the prescribed fee for the filing of the declaration.”

The Chairman: There are no questions? The question is that the amendment proposed by the Minister to clause 17 be approved.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Amendment to clause 17 passed.

The Chairman: The motion is that clause 17 as amended do stand part of the Bill.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 17, as amended, passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 18 Amendment of section 49 - Certificate for Specialist Caregivers

Clause 19 Insertion of section 49A - Certificate for Commercial Farmhands

The Chairman: The question is that clause 18 and clause 19 stand part of the Bill.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clauses 18 and 19 passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 20 Amendment of section 50 - Residency Certificate (Substantial Business Presence)

The Chairman: We have notice of an amendment by the Minister to clause 20.

Honourable Minister, can you move the amendment?

Amendment to clause 20

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In accordance with Standing Order 70, I beg to move a motion for the Bill to be amended in clause 20, in proposed subsection (10), by deleting paragraph (c) and substituting the following —

“(c) any other particulars as may be prescribed in respect of the holder and the holder's dependants, and the declaration shall be accompanied by the prescribed fee for the filing of the declaration.”.

The Chairman: The amendment to clause 20 has been moved. Does the Honourable Minister wish to speak to it?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

This amendment seeks to require the payment of a prescribed fee at the time of filing an annual declaration on behalf of persons holding a Residency Certificate of Substantial Business Presence.

The Chairman: Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Can the Minister say what the amount of the fee would be?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Through you, Mr. Chairman. This is also part of the new regulations that are coming out. I promise that once we have it, I will share it. If you can just give us the opportunity, I will share it.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Minister.

Mr. Chairman, sorry if that seemed repetitive; I guess the same principle applies that all of these fees will have to be approved by Cabinet first. I don't want you to give me the figure because you don't have the figure, fine. Has there been any estimation on the list of these fees in all of these areas which will have to be done annually, and estimates of monies raised? At least, has there been any assessment of that which the Minister can speak to?

The Chairman: Minister, I don't think you need to answer that. We've gone through that in an earlier clause and the same ruling will apply.

The question is that the Amendment to clause 20 be approved?

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Amendment to clause 20 passed.

The Chairman: The question is that clause 20 as amended stand part of the Bill.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 20, as amended, passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 21 Amendment of section 51 - general provisions relating to loss of permanent residency

Clause 22 Amendment of section 52A - mandatory vaccinations for persons specified under Part 6

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Mr. Chair.

The Chairman: Member for Cayman Brac East.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can the Honourable Minister give us some more information as it relates to this mandatory vaccination section, please?

[Pause]

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Through you, Mr. Chairman. What I'm made to understand is that all categories of foreign nationals have a vaccination. This is a new category, so we are ensuring that this category has the same level of vaccinations that all the other categories of foreign nationals have.

The Chairman: Under the Public Health Law, probably.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: In addition, Mr. Chairman, what was just explained to me is that Public Health currently doesn't have any required vaccinations.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chairman, I'm a bit confused about what the Minister said; the last part. I was kind of following along in the first part, I think they recommend like measles, mumps and stuff like that, and then he went into something else there just now. Maybe he can elaborate so I can make sure I didn't miss something.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: I'm made to understand, Mr. Chairman, that this was inserted for COVID vaccinations in the event there is ever another outbreak. This particular order would protect our country through all categories, including this new category.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Just out of an abundance of caution and curiosity, are there any exemptions to the mandatory vaccinations — religious reasons or otherwise?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Through you, Mr. Chairman. As I've been advised, all the exemptions actually come from Public Health, so in the event of religious reasons, Public Health would waive those particular vaccinations, not Immigration.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Mr. Chair, I just want to make sure that in short order, we're not having to visit another validation Bill for immigration—I still call it immigration—asking for vaccinations that they're intimating that Public Health does not mandate. It's an invitation to equalise whatever one department asks for is backed up by the next one.

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: My understanding is that it's an enabling provision being inserted. In the event that the farmhands and the caregivers require vaccination, this is an enabling provision to allow for that to be put in place and to make sure that if it's a notifiable disease, then there is a provision to say you need to have these vaccinations going forward.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: I guess just for clarity, Mr. Chair, and I'll stop at that, once it's fully understood—and I agree with what the AG said—that it is an enabling provision, not a mandatory immediate requirement provision. That's a mouthful, but I think you understand what I'm saying.

The Clerk:

Clause 23 Insertion of section 52C - references to "special circumstances" in certain sections

Clause 24 Amendment of section 53 - persons exempted

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Clause 24, Mr. Chair. I think I have some concept under 24(a)(i) subsets (A), (B), and (C), but (D)... Could I get further explanation as to the justifications for persons employed by the Parliament Management Commission?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chairman, what I'm made to understand is that the folks who work in Parliament are not considered civil servants, so this law carves them out of that and provides them an exemption from work permits and term limits.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Before everyone gets defensive, I ask questions for a particular reason. If I could be allowed to expound, Mr. Chair. I am happy to see that this statutory provision is actually added in to bring Parliament up to the same level as the Judiciary and the Executive, and that there's a modern-day recognition of a level playing field and equality of separation of powers.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chairman, I concur fully. I know you don't want me to go any further with this, but something just came to the forefront; I apologise. The Parliament, rightfully so, should be on the same level playing field, but I'm concerned that the staffing of our COAAs [Constituency Office Administrative Assistants], which are employed by the Parliament Management Commission could...

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: I say no more.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Mr. Chairman, I think he wanted to say that all COAAs should be like the Deputy Governor, Caymanian.

[Crosstalk]

The Chairman: As long as they're contracted with the Parliament Management Act, they will be covered by this provision.

[Crosstalk]

[Pause]

The Clerk:

Clause 25 Amendment of section 55 - who may be gainfully employed

Clause 26 Amendment of section 58 - consideration of application for work permit by Board, etc

The Chairman: The question is that clauses 21 through 26 do stand part of the Bill.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clauses 21 through 26 passed.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Mr. Chair, can I beg your indulgence for [clause] 26? It was on the other page and I didn't see it.

The Chairman: Yes.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you very much. It relates to the advertisement of a vacancy to which the application relates in the local newspaper or other prescribed media for 21 days before the submission of the application. If I could just get some explanation as to how that works. I know years ago you put it in *Compass* or whatever, and I agree it should be advertised, but the 21 days... Does that mean they have to be consecutively, concurrently, once in 21 days? Can you just explain how that's going to work?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Yes, Mr. Chair, it's 21 days consecutively. Currently it's 14 [days].

The Chairman: I think the question the Member is asking is, do you have to put the ad in the paper every day for 21 days; or put the ad in the paper and 21 days have to expire before you can make the application — two different things.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chair, to clarify. It's not 21 days consecutively. Once the ad goes in, they cannot apply for a work permit for at least 21 days. However, they have to also put that ad on the JobsCayman portal for 21 days.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chairman, I just want clarity on what the Minister said: that it's currently 14 days. As far as I am aware, it is currently 14 days for the portal but not for the newspapers because it was taken out of the newspaper two administrations ago. This is a new provision reinserting the obligation to the newspapers now.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Correct. We are adding the newspaper back in, yes, but on the JobsCayman portal it is 14 days consecutively.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Okay, so just for clarity, Mr. Chairman. One is moving up from 14 days, and one is introducing it [at] 21 days altogether because it's not currently required by law.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Yes. We are adding the newspaper. They advertise in the newspaper and they have to wait 21 days before they apply for a work permit. They also have to put it on the JobsCayman portal for 21 days. It's now going to be in two different places, two different areas of marketing, giving every Caymanian the opportunity to see it.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: One last question, Mr. Chairman. Is there a definition as to what a newspaper is, because there wasn't a definition in the law before? Do we have a new definition of newspaper?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chairman, currently it's just prescribed as newspaper.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chairman, please give me a little bit of leeway with this because I think there are going to be questions by business owners as to what a newspaper's definition is. There are news entities that could say they are a newspaper, but they don't print in a paper format, so they are paperless news. Will they meet the requirement as [a] newspaper? I'm only trying to avoid you guys having those questions come up because they're going to come up from an advertising perspective.

[Pause]

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Through you, Mr. Chair. What we are ensuring happens is that the ads will be in a print newspaper. The current Bill gives Cabinet the opportunity, where it says "prescribed media", to make decisions in the future; that if we foresee that people want to go that way [of] online blogs and so forth, Cabinet and Caucus have the opportunity to make that decision. Hence, why do we put it in here as "prescribed"?

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chairman, is the Minister saying that at this point he has excluded all other media other than those that are physically printing, which are *Cayman Compass* and *Caymanian Times*?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Correct.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: So any other media house that does news will not be considered meeting the requirement for advertising. Am I understanding that correctly?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Unless they write to the Cabinet and we sanction them as a newspaper to run these ads.

[Pause]

The Clerk:

Clause 27 Repeal and substitution of section 64
— change of employer

The Chairman: Minister, I think you have an Amendment to clause 27.

Amendment to clause 27

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chairman, in accordance with Standing Order 70, I beg to move a motion for the Bill to be amended in clause 27, in proposed section 64 as follows —

- (a) in subsection (3), by deleting the words "terminates his or her employment" and substituting the words "ceases to be employed with the person's employer";
- (b) in subsection (4), by deleting the words "terminates his or her employment" and substituting the words "ceases to be employed with the person's employer";
- (c) in subsection (5), by deleting paragraph (a) and substituting the following paragraph—
 - "(a) proof of the existence of the applicable prescribed circumstance; and"; and
- (d) by deleting subsection (6) and substituting the following subsection —
 - "(6) Where an application is made under subsection (4), the person shall not work while awaiting the determination of the person's application."

The Chairman: The amendment has been moved. Does the Member wish to speak to the amendment?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, the amendments made to clause 27, in proposed section 64, are a clean-up exercise in order to ensure that we capture persons who may quit their job as well as persons who may deliver poor service in order to be dismissed from their job. The phrase "terminates his or her employment" has been replaced with "ceases to be employed with the person's employer".

Also, sub-clause (6) has been amended to state that the person shall not be allowed to work while awaiting the determination of their complaint.

The Chairman: Member for Cayman Brac East.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To the Honourable Minister: If he could perhaps take this opportunity to explain the practicality or workability of sub-clause (6), where they shall be permitted to reside in the Cayman Islands, but not allowed to work. Would they then be here on a visitor's permit, and where would they get their financial substance from?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chairman, to the Member. What this means is that in the event that the guest worker is harassed or fired for [inaudible], they

have to file a claim with the Department of Labour and Pensions; while they're waiting on that investigation, they have some options. One,

1. They must become a visitor because they're no longer on a work permit;
2. It gives them the option of leaving the island until their case is resolved; however, their roll-over won't start so they don't have to leave the island for a year. It is just until their case is actually resolved.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chair, while given approval to be on the island, will the applicant be required to show proof of financial sustainability?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chairman, they would have to show proof to CBC [Customs and Border Control] in order to remain on island.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Mr. Chairman, I have sympathy for the Minister because he's almost caught between a rock and a hard place.

I mean, ceasing to be employed could end up as a Labour Tribunal situation and it's difficult enough for those poor souls to win it when they're here in the jurisdiction, much less when they have to leave the jurisdiction, especially in a case where it is unjustifiable dismissal or redundancy or whatever they wish to call it—whatever flowery language they utilise. I would invite the Honourable Minister and his Government, at their leisure, to look at this particular provision. If not today, I think it warrants urgent attention, because I can see quite a bit of injustice occurring, perhaps unintentionally, but it's not a good situation for someone.

It's like a double jeopardy— you are already fired or terminated; you're given two weeks, if you can prove that you can stay here financially; and then the other option, which usually is not an option (you probably don't have enough money to pay to go back), because you have to go to the Department of Labour to get the severance pay or get those things done and most of them can't afford an attorney. Are you going to look at the legal aid aspect of it, to make a provision for them to have access to representation?

It is not a simple matter and it really requires a number of the different Ministries looking at it and coming to a resolution, because it could create some liability for want of a better terminology.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chairman, the Member is right. It's also the reason why we as a Ministry and certainly as a Government have taken a very hard look at our labour laws because they also haven't been updated in many, many years. They also have several loopholes employers use in order to further victimise, certainly Caymanians, but definitely many foreign nationals who work in lower-line jobs, so I agree with the Member.

It is something that I am not just looking into. As I've said, in subsequent presentations, come January, our labour reform takes centre stage. Pension reform but definitely our labour reform will also take centre stage and we will certainly be going out to public consultation with that.

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: I understand also, Honourable Member, that there is a 30-day window within which the Director is required to resolve the issue, so it is time-sensitive as well. That probably helps, because I understand the point you're making about the double jeopardy. It's like you're in a bad marriage and you're forced to leave and then you are punished for leaving a bad marriage.

My understanding is that the Director has the discretion, if it is *prima facie* that there was some justification for leaving employment, to allow you to continue to be employed and remain on the island. I think it probably needs to be finessed, if I might use that word.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Through you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Honourable Attorney General. That's comforting to know, but I can see this becoming an issue. Perhaps the Honourable Minister and his team may want to create — even though there seems to be a soft moratorium on staff — a staff or certain staff to do like a quasi-director [function] because this particular law gives a tremendous, colossal amount of powers to the Director.

Mr. Chair, that was one of the procedural issues I had from a statutory perspective. Most times you would see the functions of the Director, but for whatever reason this has many [instances] where it's to the Director or the Board. I wasn't quite sure what the machinery was for a person to go to the Director, regardless of who he or she may be, as opposed to an eight or nine-member board. I just want to ensure that we know what we're creating when we do it this way. That's not questioning anyone's integrity; it is purely from a statutory [perspective] based on experience.

The Chairman: The question is that the amendment to clause 27 be approved.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Amendment to clause 27 passed.

The Chairman: The question is that clause 27 as amended, do stand part of the Bill.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 27, as amended, passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 28 Amendment of section 66 - term limits

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Mr. Chair, I know you're trying to expedite, but I have a quick question on clause 28 related to sub-clause (b)(iii).

On page 46, where it refers to "**employed as a civil servant and then became a worker**". Are we envisioning a situation where the reverse is happening, because one of the problems we have now is that they had like a year to go and wanted to switch over to government so they could get some sense of permanency. Is this a reversal situation being envisioned whereby they were a civil servant and they could become a worker, and how are we going to deal with that? Is it permissible, and under what parameters?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chairman, Member, what we're doing is just ensuring that term limits in the civil service and outside the civil service remain the same, that we're tracking both. An example of this is that if a person is in the civil service and quits their job to go to the private sector and let's say they've worked in the civil service five years and they are transitioning to the private sector and the rollover is let's say seven years; once they transition to the private sector, they know they only have two years to be employed in the private sector before they go on rollover, so we track them both ways.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Mr. Chairman, maybe I'm missing something. I just want to make sure I understand because this is delicate; it was a huge issue with current and past governments. If you're a civil servant and you leave to go to the private sector, there's supposed to be a period of time [during which] you become a visitor if you're a non-Caymanian. I'm just trying to make sure that's what's going to happen — that because you're a civil servant, you still have an extra safety net to leave the civil service.

This is particularly sensitive in areas, for example, where we have data protection or things of that nature. We train them in the civil service and then they go to the private sector after we invest time, dollars and everything else in them. I just want to make sure that this statute is not creating a benefit for the non-Caymanian civil servant that is not being created for the domestic worker, the farmer, or someone else from the private sector. Would they then have a period

of time when they leave the service, that they become a visitor until they apply for the private sector, because the way it's worded says "**as a civil servant and then became a worker**"— it is almost implied that the work permit would be approved. Is there an immigration purgatory period called a visitor permit?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Through you, Mr. Chairman. There's no purgatory period in this; whether you are in the civil service or out, your term limit stays the same as I just expressed in my example. If you are in the civil service for five years, leave, go into the private sector, you have seven years so there's no purgatory in between.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Mr. Chairman, I understand the term limit and to a large extent, save and except for the exemptions that are being carved out, I agree with the term limit.

What I don't want to see happening is that you are a non-Caymanian civil servant and you want to leave after being trained up or whatever the reason is, because nine times out of ten you are not going to be fired, so it's usually voluntarily leaving the service and then getting a work permit to leave because you're non-Caymanian. What's the quantum leap between being a civil servant — because that's how you were here in the territory, yeah? Once you leave, should you not either have to leave the island like what just happened in the previous paragraph because you're leaving one employer to go into the next one or should they not then juxtapose into a visitor permit while the Director of WORC exercises (or not) his discretion to give them that permit to go over because you do not want [people] jumping ship around the place; we want them jumping planes.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Through you, Mr. Chairman, any guest worker in the civil service who leaves would still have to apply for a work permit and throughout that time of their work permit, they have to go on a visitor's visa. Based on how this law is written, I don't think it gives them an advantage at this point.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Mr. Chairman through you.

I'm expanding on the Member for Cayman Brac East's point, recognising in government that some of the people who we have working in the civil service also work with sensitive data. I mean, I can think of security forces, I can think of regulatory agencies and so forth. To have non-Caymanians move from government straight into the private sector with sensitive information or knowledge of sensitive information, I think is something we need to weigh out.

First one that comes to mind for me is CIMA [Cayman Islands Monetary Authority]. CIMA has a strong regulatory standpoint, but we also need to let the private sector know that people, especially if they

move to a competitor of someone else, aren't just moving with sensitive government knowledge to a competitor. I think we need to give the other sectors, at least the business people, some comfort that their sensitive data, their sensitive information, isn't going to a competitor.

In that regard, I think at a minimum we need to... We're already challenged enough whereby Caymanians can do it, but to open the possibility that non-Caymanians can do the same thing, I think it is something that needs to be looked at depending on the kind of job they have.

The Chairman: Other sections of the law require a person who is changing work to leave the island, certainly while the work permit is being processed, but there was something about a year or something that you might have to leave before you can apply once you leave the island.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Within the first two years, yes.

The Chairman: No civil servant who is employed by the government, especially a non-Caymanian, can just go and get someone to apply for a work permit because they're under contractual regulations and work permit specifications to work for government.

[Pause]

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Mr. Chairman, all I'm trying to do is to ensure that what we were trying to achieve by putting term limits on the non-Caymanian civil servants (to protect the Caymanian civil servants) ...

That we're not allowing a loophole for those same non-Caymanian civil servants to go on to compete with the Caymanians in the private sector, because they're being treated differently. If someone leaves [a company in] the private sector to go to another private sector [company] or to the government, there's a break whereby they have an option to go home or become a visitor.

That's what I'm trying to avoid. Maybe it's not an issue, but to me it's an issue.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Mr. Chair, the AG asked if the lady Member could repeat the concern.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: It refers here "[employed] as a civil servant and then became a worker" that there were going to be opportunities where a non-Caymanian civil servant decided to leave to go to the private sector. I wanted to find out whether there is going to be a period when they would become a visitor, because obviously they would have to wait to get a work permit in the private sector, and I'm

not persuaded that such is being contemplated, that rather, they'd just get a work permit and go into the private sector.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: So what happens during the gap?

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Yeah, what happens during that gap? I used the loose term purgatory, but that's what [I meant].

[Pause]

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Mr. Chair, I thank the lady Member for the question.

To address the point: The lady Member has identified a gap that would occur once a non-Caymanian leaves the civil service and attempts to get a job in the private sector, and what happens in that period — which is covered if you are a non-Caymanian leaving the private sector and you'll be rolled over. [The Ministry has given the undertaking that they will look at the legislation to cover the gap.](#)

The Clerk:

Clause 29	Insertion of sections 66A, 66B and 66C - exemption from term limits under section 66; term limits for non-Caymanian civil servants; exemption from term limits under section 66B.
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The Chairman: The question is that clauses 28 and 29 do stand part of the Bill.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clauses 28 and 29 passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 30	Amendment of section 67 - work permit fees
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The Chairman: Honourable Minister, you have given notice of an amendment to clause 30.

Amendment to clause 30

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In accordance with Standing Order 70, I beg to move a motion for the Bill to be amended by deleting clause 30 and substituting the following clause —

"Amendment of section 67 - work permit fees

30. The principal Act is amended in section 67 as follows —

(a) by repealing subsection (1) and substituting the following subsection —

“(1) An application for a work permit shall be accompanied by —

- (a) the application fee;
- (b) the work permit fee; and
- (c) the fee for an identification card issued under section 71, which fees shall be paid into the general revenue of the Islands, and where the application is unsuccessful, the notification of refusal shall be accompanied by an authorisation for a refund of the work permit fee to the applicant.”; and

(b) by inserting after subsection (2) the following subsections —

“(2A) Notwithstanding section 72(2)(f), the Director, after consultation with the Minister, may prescribe by notice the fee for a work permit or temporary work permit in a case where an occupation for which a work permit or temporary work permit is being sought is not prescribed.

(2B) A fee prescribed under subsection (2A) shall not exceed the highest annual work permit fee prescribed under section 72(2)(f).

(2C) The Director shall cause a notice specified under subsection (2A) to be published in the *Gazette*.”.

The Chairman: The amendment has been moved. Does the Member wish to speak to the amendment?

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Mr. Chair, before the member speaks, if you would kindly indulge me.

I ask to be excused to go to the other jurisdiction called home on Cayman Brac. I just wanted to say that my abstention was based on the fact that I did have questions in Committee—I still have a few more, the main ones were out. Had I not have to catch the commercial flight when it came to the Third Reading and reporting, I was going to elevate it to an affirmative. That's the reason for the abundance of caution while I'm gone, that any other stories won't emanate therefrom.

Thank you.

The Chairman: You're excused. Safe flight.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Happy Holidays.

[Crosstalk]

The Chairman: Honourable Minister, would you wish to speak to the amendment?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair.

Noting that it is the Government's intention to begin issuing identification cards to work permit holders, this amendment seeks to require payment of a non-refundable fee for issuance of an identification card at the time of applying for a work permit.

The Chairman: Does any other Member wish to speak?

Member for George Town East.

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart, Elected Member for George Town East: Thanks you, sir. Through you to the Minister. I'm wondering, an application fee for an identification card to be made non-refundable, what would be the thinking behind that? I think it is reasonable and just to return that and the work permit fee and government keeps the application fee.

[Pause]

The Chairman: Minister, under the proposed amendment, for an application that is refused, you are returning the work permit fee. The question the Member for George Town East is asking is why you are keeping the identification card [fee] because the person would not have been issued an identification card if they didn't have a work permit. Maybe that should be refunded along with the work permit fee, and the government retains the application fee, which was the

administrative work that was done. That's the point he was trying to make.

[Pause]

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chairman, through you. Thank you, member. We will make the identification fee refundable in the event that the individual does not attain a work permit; we will make the necessary amendments to the law.

The Chairman: Member for George Town East.

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: Mr. Chairman, may I propose a Motion to amend it here, in the draft Bill.

The Chairman: Just add the words on to this.

**Motion to amend the
amendment to clause 30**

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: In the last four lines of it: "...the notification of refusal shall be accompanied by an authorisation for a refund of the work permit fee 'and the fee for an identification card' to the applicant".

I put the Motion.

The Speaker: The Motion has been moved. Does anyone wish to speak to the motion? *[Pause]*

All those in favour of the amendment to the amendment to clause 30, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The amendment to the amendment passed.

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: Thank you, all.

The Chairman: The question is that the amended amendment to clause 30 be approved.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The amended amendment to clause 30 passed.

The Chairman: The question is that clause 30 as amended, do stand part of the Bill.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 30, as amended, passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 31	Amendment of section 70 - marriages and civil partnerships of convenience
Clause 32	Insertion of section 71A - reissue of documents and provision of duplicates
Clause 33	Amendment of section 72 - regulations

The Chairman: The question is that clauses 31 through 33 do stand part of the Bill.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clauses 31 through 33 passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 34	Insertion of section 75A – offence to submit false information concerning financial standing
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The Chairman: Honourable Minister, you have filed an amendment to clause 34. Would you move the amendment, please?

Amendment to clause 34

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, in accordance with Standing Order 70, I beg to move a motion for the Bill to be amended in clause 34 as follows —

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

"Insertion of sections 75A and 75B - offence to submit false information concerning financial standing; offence to submit false information concerning annual declaration";

(b) in the chapeau, by deleting the words "the following section" and substituting the words "the following sections"; and

(c) by inserting after proposed section 75A, the following proposed section —

"Offence to submit false information concerning annual declaration

75B. Where a person is required under this Act to file an annual declara-

tion and the person provides false information in relation to the annual declaration —

- (a) the person commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of ten thousand dollars or to imprisonment for a term of one year, or to both; and
- (b) the provision of that false information by the person is a ground for revocation of the grant of the right to be Caymanian or of the relevant Certificate.”.

The Chairman: The amendment has been moved. Does the Honourable Minister wish to speak to the amendment?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: No, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have any comments on this one.

The Chairman: Does any other Member wish to speak? *[Pause]* The question is that the amendment to clause 34 be approved.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Amendment to clause 34 passed.

The Chairman: The question is that clause 34 as amended, do stand part of the Bill.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 34, as amended, passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 35 Insertion of section 83A - further transitional matters

The Chairman: Honourable Minister, you have given notice of an amendment to clause 35. Could you move the amendment?

Amendment to clause 35

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In accordance with Standing Order 70, I beg to move a Motion for the Bill to be amended in clause 35, in proposed section 83A as follows —

- (a) by deleting subsection (4) and substituting the following subsections —

“(4) Section 28(3) and (4) of the principal Act as amended by section 10(a) and (b) of the *Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2025* shall not apply to a person referred to in subsection (4A) —

- (a) who has been granted the right to reside permanently in the Islands, or whose Certificate has been issued, under —

- (i) the principal Act;
- (ii) the repealed *Immigration Act (2015 Revision)*; or
- (iii) any prior immigration law saved by the repealed *Immigration Act (2015 Revision)*; and

- (b) whose right to reside permanently in the Islands or whose Certificate is in force at the date of the commencement of section 10(a) and (b) of the *Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2025*.

(4A) For the purposes of subsection (4), the persons are as follows —

- (a) a person who has been granted the right to reside permanently in the Islands after having been legally and ordinarily resident in the Islands for a period of at least eight years other than a person referred to in section

- 37(1)(a), (b), (c), or (d) of the principal Act;
- (b) a spouse or civil partner of a Caymanian or permanent resident who is the holder of a Residency and Employment Rights Certificate by virtue of marriage to, or civil partnership with, the Caymanian or permanent resident;
- (c) a person who is the holder of a Certificate of Permanent Residence for Persons of Independent Means; and
- (d) a spouse or civil partner, and any dependants, of the holder of a Certificate of Permanent Residence for Persons of Independent Means who is the holder of a Certificate of Permanent Residence for Dependants of Persons of Independent Means.
- (4B) A person referred to in subsection (4) may apply in accordance with the relevant Act under which —
- (a) the person's right to reside permanently in the Islands was granted; or
- (b) the person's Certificate was issued, for the grant of the right to be Caymanian under section 28(3) or (4) of the principal Act or under any other earlier analogous provision.”; and
- (b) by deleting subsection (6) and substituting the following subsections —
- “(6) Subject to subsection (6A), where, on the date of commencement of section 10(d) of the *Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2025*, a person holds the right to be Caymanian pursuant to section 28(5) of the principal Act, the person is required to comply with the requirement to file an annual declaration as set out in section 28(6A).
- (6A) Where, on the date of commencement of section 10(d) of the *Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2025*, a person has held the right to be Caymanian pursuant to section 28(5) of the principal Act for more than seven years, the requirement to file an annual declaration as set out in section 28(6A) shall not apply.
- (6B) Where, on the date of commencement of section 14(h), 15(a), 17 or 20 of the *Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2025*, a person holds a certificate referred to in the relevant provision, that person is required to comply with the requirement to file an annual declaration as set out in that relevant provision.
- (6C) Where, on the date of commencement of section 12 of the *Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2025*, a person holds any category of certificate which grants the person the right to reside permanently in the Islands, the person is liable to pay the relevant prescribed fees in respect of the person, the person's spouse or civil partner and the person's dependants for the continued approval of the right to reside permanently in the Islands in accordance with section 36(2A).”.

The Chairman: The amendment has been moved. Does the Honourable Minister wish to speak to the amendment?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

The amendment seeks to make it clearer which specific facilities are covered in the transitional provisions. Therefore, in clause 35 the new subsection 83A(4) has been broken down into further subsections. One that relates to and specifically lists out all the relevant types of permanent residents that this validation clause will relate to; and one that confirms that the person can thereafter apply for the grant of

the right to be Caymanian under subsection 28(3) or (4) of the principal Act based on the version of the law under which they received their permanent residence.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chairman: Does any other—
Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, this is a very substantial amendment that I don't think even some of the members on the Government side understood because it goes from, *subject to subsection so and so will be so and so subsection to so and so*, and it's like a web of confusion for legislation.

Now it may be easy for drafters to totally understand that but I'm certain if you ask any member of the public [if they] understood what just transpired in that whole amendment, they'd probably say "no", unless they're in immigration themselves. This is exactly why I debated that we should have a red line document to explain how this is interpreted.

Here's the question, can the Minister explain in common terms what he just said as to the amendment? [For] someone who doesn't know anything about law, what does it mean?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chairman, the Member is right. I understand it — can I coach a person through it? No, that's why I have these folks back here. The law at the end of the day is written to ensure that the folks behind here can do their jobs. My job is to create legislation and help them do their jobs to the best of my ability.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to say thank you to the Honourable Minister for his honesty, but it's not only for the technocrats to understand. We're here legislating on behalf of the people so if he can admit that he doesn't understand what he just said, how do you expect the public to understand it?

This is why we talked about not having the opportunity to discuss this 26 hours before the debate. This is a substantial amendment to the Bill... I don't know what else to say, Mr. Chairman.

[Pause]

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chair, to simplify it some more. What it really means at this point is which certificates and which permits fall under which transitional provisions. This was one of the feedbacks that we got during the stakeholder meetings — that we needed to simplify the language.

All of this information is in there. What we've done is split it so immigration consultants, immigration lawyers, can actually go down the way and interpret it better; also, as our team puts our immigration policies

together in 2026, they will lay them out in more layman's terms.

The Chairman: The question is that the amendment to clause 35 be approved.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Amendment to clause 35 passed.

The Chairman: The question is that clause 35 as amended do stand part of the Bill.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 35, as amended, passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 36 Validation

The Chairman: Honourable Minister, you have filed an amendment to clause 36. Could you move the amendment, please?

Amendment to clause 36

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chairman, in accordance with Standing Order 70, I beg to move a Motion for the Bill to be amended in clause 36, by inserting after subclause (1) the following subclause —

"(1A) Where, prior to the commencement of section 10A of this amending and validating Act —

- (a) the Director of WORC granted the right to be Caymanian to persons who satisfied the requirements under section 28(10) of the principal Act, instead of the Board as set out under that provision;
- (b) the grant was issued citing section 33(2) of the principal Act as the purported statutory authority for the granting of that right; and
- (c) fees were paid to, and charged and collected by, the Director of WORC, without statutory authority, for the grant,

the grant of the right to be Caymanian issued to those persons by the Director of WORC, and the payment to, and the charging and collection of fees by, the Director of WORC are validated and considered to be lawful as if the grant was issued, and the fees were charged, paid and collected, under section 10A of this amending and validating Act.”.

The Chairman: The amendment has been duly moved. Does the Honourable Minister wish to speak to the amendment?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

[Pause]

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chairman, clause 36 is being amended to insert a provision in order to validate those facilities that have been previously issued pursuant to section 33(2) along with the collection of the monies relating to the application fees for those facilities.

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

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As a procedural matter, I have an amendment to this section. Do you deal with his first, or do I...

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: My apologies.

The Chairman: Your amendment is to the next clause, clause 10.

The question is that the Amendment to clause 36 as proposed by the Minister be approved.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: I do have a question all the same, Mr. Chairman.

Is it fair to say that this change gives them the authority that any fees that may not have had the legal authority to be collected can now be collected?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Yes, and validate the ones that we already collected.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Is that an acceptance that there were fees collected?

The Chairman: The question is that the proposed amendment to clause 36 be approved.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Amendment to clause 36 passed.

The Chairman: The question is that clause 36 as amended, do stand part of the Bill.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 36, as amended, passed.

The Clerk:

Clause 37 Orders or determinations by court not affected

The Chairman: The question is that clause 37 do stand part of the Bill.

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

AYES.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: We are at [clause] 37...

The Chairman: Standing Orders require that any new clauses are introduced after we have gone through all the clauses of the Bill. We have to do all the Bill and then, if there's a proposed new clause, it has to be introduced at that point, not before.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you.

The Chairman: All those in favour of clause 37 standing part of the Bill, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clause 37 passed.

The Clerk: New clause 10A.

The Chairman: Honourable Minister, you proposed a new clause 10A. Could you move the clause, please?

New clause 10A

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chairman, thank you.

In accordance with Standing Order 70, I beg to move a Motion for the Bill to be amended by inserting after clause 10 the following clause —

“Amendment of section 29 - persons who may apply to the Director of WORC for the right to be Caymanian

10A. The principal Act is amended in section 29 as follows —

- (a) by renumbering section 29 as section 29(1); and
- (b) by inserting after section 29(1) as renumbered the following subsections —

“(2) A person who is Caymanian by entitlement and —

- (a) who has attained the age of seventeen years;

- (b) whose Caymanian status by entitlement —

- (i) will expire when that person attains the age of eighteen years; or

- (ii) has expired on that person having attained the age of eighteen years; and

- (c) who has been legally and ordinarily resident in the Islands for at

least five out of the seven years immediately preceding the date of the application,

may apply to the Director in the prescribed form for the grant of the right to be Caymanian and the application shall be accompanied by the prescribed fee.

(3) An application made under subsection (2) shall be granted unless the Director has compelling reasons for refusing it.

(4) Where an application made under subsection (2) is granted, the grant shall take effect —

- (a) when the person attains the age of eighteen years; or

- (b) where that person is already eighteen years, from the date of the grant.

(5) In relation to the qualification for legal and ordinary residence referred to in this section —

- (a) where any question arises as to whether an applicant was or was not, during any material period, legally and ordinarily resident in the Islands, such

- question shall be decided by the Director;
- (b) where an applicant has been legally and ordinarily resident in the Islands and has been absent from the Islands for any period for the purpose of that person's education, health or business, the Director may count such period of absence as a period of legal and ordinary residence in the Islands if the Director is satisfied that, but for such period of absence, the applicant would have in fact continued to be legally and ordinarily resident in the Islands; and
- (c) nothing in this subsection shall have effect so as to preclude any applicant from appealing to the Immigration Appeals Tribunal, under section 21, on the grounds that the Director came to a wrong decision on the question of whether during any material period that person was or was not legally and ordinarily resident in the Islands.
- (6) The Director of WORC, in his or her discretion, may require or allow an applicant to attend before the Director of WORC in support of that person's application, but an applicant is not entitled to appear before the Director of WORC.
- (7) An applicant who is aggrieved by the refusal of the Director of WORC to grant that person the right to be Caymanian may, subject to section 21, appeal to the Immigration Appeals Tribunal against such refusal."
- The Clerk:**
New clause 10A
- Amendment of section 29 - persons who may apply to the Director of WORC for the right to be Caymanian
- The Chairman:** The new clause having been read a first time, the question now is that this clause be read a second time.
All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.
- AYES and one audible NO.**
- The Chairman:** The Ayes have it.

Agreed: New clause 10A was given a second reading.

The Chairman: Is there any debate on the new clause?

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chairman, in accordance with Standing Order 70(1) and (2) of the Parliament Standing Orders, 2025, I, the Honourable Kenneth Vernon Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition—

The Chairman: No, no. We got to deal with the clause first. When the clause is finished, then you can move because your amendment calls for it to be deleted. If there's nothing to delete, you can't delete it, okay? I'll call you. I'm not going to miss you.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Can you repeat the question then, Mr. Chairman? I think you're opening the Floor to discussion.

The Chairman: The new clause is required to be read a first time by the Clerk. Then we have to vote on it being read a second time, just like if it were on the Floor of the Parliament. Now it's open for debate. Does the Mover wish to speak to the clause?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Clause 10 is being further amended by repealing current section 28(10) of the Act and moving it to section 29 which is entitled "persons who may apply to the Director of WORC for the right to be Caymanian".

The Chairman: Are you finished, Honourable Minister? Does any other Member wish to speak?

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chairman, I am challenged. I think the Minister just said this section is moved from one section of the legislation to this new section... Did I hear that right, because we're in a debate now, Mr. Speaker.

The Chairman: We're in Committee so you can speak more than once.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chairman, I have serious concerns about the process. I know the good, honourable member will highlight that I am trying to delay this proceeding because of due process. You may not appreciate due process yet, but in time you will, especially when you're on the opposite end of the process.

Mr. Speaker, from a historical perspective, whenever legislation is brought to this honourable House, it goes through a series of steps. That is out-

lined within our Standing Orders, and within conventions and parliamentary procedures. The component of public consultation which the original Bill has done is important, and the Minister has spoken to that tremendously; how many meetings they had, consultation with the private sector and so forth.

The privilege to make amendments to clauses that have been put out to the public is for minor amendments — for clarity, not substantial changes. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, when you add substantially new clauses to a Bill, it is ultimately circumventing the scrutiny provisions on the public's ability to examine it. Now, the Minister may say, rightfully so, that this came from the public. At least I am going to assume that, as opposed to the department just saying, *oh, we caught on to this. Let's put it in now as well*, because what this is with a brand-new clause, the public would not have had the opportunity to examine this and say, *oh, here's my feedback*. That's the purpose of public consultation.

Whether I agree or disagree with a substantive change or amendment to the Bill is irrelevant to the point that I'm trying to make, Mr. Speaker, especially with the Government's commitment to doing things in a proper way. When we start to not pay attention to these conventional provisions of making sure the process is done right, and just saying, *oh, while we're going to the House, let's change this other part*, it is going against the protocols of allowing good process; it is not conventionally appropriate to just be adding a new clause to a Bill that has already gone through public consultation.

I don't know, Mr. Speaker; it is not even in my authority to decide what is considered to be a substantive change or not. Technically speaking, that is your job. My assertion is that this is a brand-new clause and therefore... The Minister has not even said where this clause came from, and it sounds to me like an exercise that came directly from the department, and even if I said I agree with the proposed changes, what we have to recognise is that we're not doing things the right way.

The Chairman: In response to you, Member for George Town Central, this is not something new. New clauses at this stage of Bills are not something new. Section 70 of the Standing Orders specifically provides for exactly this to happen, so it is within the rules for it to happen and it happens often in this Parliament. Just to give you the comfort that in my view, it is all done within the rules of Standing Orders and the normal provisions of what happens in the House and what is allowed to happen.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and that is your ruling on the Floor which has to be accepted as you're the Presiding Officer. I'm assuming you're speaking to section 70(3), (7) and (8). If you would indulge me by

allowing me to read them. It may be good for Hansards to be heard, particularly in the areas you were highlighting. It says —

“Amendments, new clauses and new Schedules

70. (3) Every amendment shall be relevant to the subject matter of the clause to which it relates”.

I'm quite sure we can all say that this is related to immigration.

“(7) The Presiding Officer may refuse to put an amendment which appears to the Presiding Officer to be intended to vary the basic substance of a clause if, in the Presiding Officer's opinion, the proper course is to negative the clause and propose a new one.

(8) The Presiding Officer may refuse to allow an amendment, which is, in his or her opinion, frivolous or meaningless, to be moved”.

Now, there are other provisions as to your authority, Mr. Chairman, but—

The Chairman: Member for George Town Central, read [section] 9.

It says, **“New clauses shall be considered after the clauses in the Bill as printed have been disposed of and before consideration of the Schedules”**. What you read relates to existing clauses that amendments are proposed to within the Bill. This is a new clause and new clauses are allowed, and we have to follow the procedure that we are now following for new clauses.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chairman, I am not suggesting that this Committee under your authority is not allowed to add new clauses. That's not what I'm saying. Substantial new policy provisions within the clause [*sic*] that were not able to be seen by public consultation are the problem that I'm talking about.

The Chairman: You mean within the Bill, not within the clause.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Within the Bill.

What we could potentially be doing is, for example, we put a Bill together, carried out the public consultation, something substantial about it we haven't put out there for the public to see and then we come stick it in at the last hour under these provisions. That is substantially going to have a significant effect on the changes [for] the people who were affected by the law.

The purpose of amendments is supposed to be for clarity, minor grammatical errors, fundamental fixing of legal structure, not fundamental policy — new

points. Otherwise, the public has missed the opportunity to have their say and state, *oh, you know what, government, I don't like that* or *Oh, I love that*. They haven't got that opportunity. I mean, again, the government has the authority by way of numbers to do it, but I'm saying it is not good practise.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Mr. Chair.

The Chairman: Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank you. What I might suggest to the Member, also, is that maybe the substantive change came from consultation.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chair.

The Chairman: Honourable Minister.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Clause 10 isn't new. Clause 10 already exists in the current Immigration Bill. I hear what the Member is saying. This is not substantive; clause 10 already exists. The public already sees clause 10. All we're doing is moving it under clause 9. We, in here, have already passed clause 9. All we're doing is taking clause 10 and moving it under clause 9 so it reads better. That's it.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chairman, can the Minister say if it has any changes in effect, where they are and under what heading they are? If it doesn't, why did he change it?

The Chairman: He just told you. Anyways.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: All right.

The Chairman: Honourable Minister.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chairman, we have agreed in this Committee on clause 9, which empowers the Director to make decisions. We're doing the same when we move clause 10 under clause 9. That's all it is; it's just a continuation. We've already done it.

We've already given the Director permission to make decisions under clause 9. We're taking clause 10, we're transitioning it under clause 9 so the Director can make decisions and keep on moving the system to where it's efficient. Right now, it doesn't read well. I'm hoping the member would agree: the challenges are that people are moving up and down in the Immigration Bill and can't find what they're looking for. We're just trying to make it read better. When we went through the stakeholder meeting, it was a major feedback.

The Chairman: All right. Does any other Member wish to speak?

Member for George Town East.

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: Mr. Speaker, I'm a bit unclear. Are we dealing with his Motion?

The Chairman: No, no. We're dealing with the new clause.

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: The new clause. That's where I have my question.

The Chairman: Once we've completed dealing with the new clause, we will deal with the Member for George Town Central's [amendment].

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: I'm looking at the proposed new clause 10A subsection (5)(b) where it talks about someone who is legally and ordinarily resident and has been absent for a period for the purpose of that person's education, health, or business. It says that the Director may count such a period of absence as a period of legal residency, which suggests to me that it's at the Director's discretion.

To me, it would be totally egregious for a Director to not allow a person's absence from the Island for school, for training, or for health reasons to count towards his residency, so I'm just wondering... I would suggest we consider changing that word "may" to "shall".

[Crosstalk]

The Chairman: Member for George Town East, I think your [query] would be covered under subsection (7) where they have the right to appeal the decision of the Director. If he does something that is blatantly wrong, they can appeal it.

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: All right. I would then suggest, Mr. Chairman — I want to know what the circumstances are under which he might refuse to allow for that time period away from the Islands to be counted towards residency. Minister?

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Chairman, while the Minister confers.

I think in general terms, I'm in agreement with the Member for George Town East; however, there are times, especially under the term "medical reasons", when there can be some manipulation whereby it's not *necessary* "medical reasons". I think that could pose some challenges because there are many, many optional types of medical reasons for which persons could absent themselves from the islands — and I would ask members to perhaps not state on the mic what I stated off the mic.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chairman, by all means, I'm no longer

going to be putting any challenges or any other questions to this. I just want to say for wrap up—because this is the last clause of this Bill and then we're going back into the House. Thankfully, this will be over soon and [we'll] move on to the other Parliament matters, but I want to put it on the record of the Committee, because I think it's going to come back and haunt us.

We have no guidelines for these discretions. We have given much power and discretion to the Director in this Committee today; *much*. I think that it may end up being challenged and this idea that you can go to the Tribunal — the Tribunal itself still has to hold the decision accountable as per the law, and if the law has no guidelines, then technically the Director has full authority because it's fully in their discretion. I think that's a dangerous thing to do.

I think it could put us in a challenging situation before the courts; that there has to be some level of guidelines around discretion. That's why I asked if the AG was here earlier, because I would like for him to give input; but he's not here. I just want to record it on the Floor of the House that as one of the Members of Parliament who was in discussion at this time, on this day and this year that, God forbid it comes back up, I brought it to the attention of this Committee when we were passing this legislation.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Does any other Member wish to speak?

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Mr. Chair, let's just have the AG clarify the point about guardrails around discretion. Hold on. It's an important point that the member raised.

[Pause]

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: Thank you. Well, two things.

Firstly, the hope is that at some stage, there will be guidelines that are promulgated and published which the public can be made aware of.

Secondly, and probably more importantly, section 19 of the Constitution contextually says the Director is a public officer and so he's subject to the strictures of the Constitution. Section 19 of the Constitution says whatever he does must be reasonable and proportionate. He would have been bound by that language. Clearly, if it is that he acts arbitrarily or unreasonably, those can be challenged like any other public officer and dealt with. Whatever he does, he would have to do that with an eye or two on section 19 of the Constitution.

Apart from that, as chambers, we have been advising public authorities that when you have wide policy discretions, you must put in place some sort of a guideline so that the public can have an idea what

to expect in terms of the protocols around the exercise of those discretions.

Thank you.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Member for Bodden Town West.

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

I just want to make a note here. I guess this is a reminder; I think everyone in this honourable House would know what I'm about to say already, but for the listening public: When the 2009 Constitution came into being, all except those highlighted under section 55 of the Constitution, which are the Governor's reserved powers, went into the political directorate realm.

I will say — and I don't know whether the practise has continued — that after the 2021 election, when we were doing the Cabinet Note on the finances of the country we treated almost every Ministry like an annual report whereby stats, et cetera, were provided to Ministers so everyone had an idea. For example, for immigration, how many work permits were processed, how many were deferred, et cetera.

We did that pretty much for every Ministry so there is information. I think the issue comes in, and I'm going to say it, in that some Ministers were far more effective in going through those numbers with their staff but I can tell you that you have one of the most competent Chief Officers in the public service in Wesley Howell. When I was Minister, any information that was asked for, we saw it — the number of permits processed, the number of deferrals, et cetera. I will say to Cabinet Ministers: it is important that you have those discussions with your Chief Officers on a monthly basis to find out exactly what has been happening, because there is nothing worse than getting an annual report saying, *well, this is what happened a year before*, seeing a number explode and you're like, *when did this creep up?* It is important for the Ministers.

I know from my experience when I was there that Minister Bryan and Minister Jay did a very good job of going through their stats each month; I can't say others did, but I can tell you that they did because they sat with me almost every month going through just about everything of material movement in their Ministry. I can't stress this to Ministers enough, and I know the Premier will probably do the same too, that these are the kinds of things that you have to sit on, stay on top of, to ensure because this thing has been devolved to you; do not take it for granted.

As the AG said, you can send directives and policies down, because these things are exactly within the realm. The only thing I will tell you they need to fix is the National Conservation (NCC) Act because to this day, I do not understand how, when Cabinet is the highest executive authority in this country as per the

Constitution, you have entities within government that wield more executive authority than Cabinet. That is a bastardisation of the Constitution that needs to be fixed — and not only for the NCC; every other legislation where an entity subordinate to Cabinet is wielding more power than the Cabinet, where executive authority lies, is a problem for this country.

Premier, I hope such a clean-up exercise is done to restore the balance of what Cabinet or the Parliament has to do.

Thank you.

The Chairman: Does any other Member wish to speak on the [clause]? *[Pause]*

If no other member wishes to speak to the new clause, the question is that the new clause be added to the Bill as clause 10.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: New clause 10A added to the Bill.

New clause 25A

The Clerk: New clause 25A.

The Chairman: Honourable Minister, you have an amendment adding another clause. Could you please move the Motion?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In accordance with Standing Order 70, I beg to move a Motion for the Bill to be amended by inserting after clause 25 the following clause —

“Amendment of section 56 - application for work permit

25A. The principal Act is amended in section 56(4)(a) by deleting the words “the administrative filing fee, the work permit fee” and substituting the words “the application fee, the work permit fee—

The Chairman: Minister, sorry to interrupt you, but I made a big goof up. I apologise to the Member for George Town Central. I need to call on him to move the amendment that he filed on clause 10A.

Withdrawal of Committee Stage Amendment to new clause 10A submitted by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: I won't even say what's going through my mind right now.

Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure of the procedural steps necessary for withdrawal of this; whether I move it, then withdraw it, or do I do an outright withdrawal; either way, based on your direction, I'll take heed, sir.

The Chairman: I think you just move that you wish to seek the leave of the Committee to withdraw the amendment you proposed.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chair, I seek leave from this Committee to withdraw the Notice of Committee Stage Amendment standing in my name that reads — there was one before this, so I have to read out what it said.

In accordance with Standing Order 70(1) and (2) of the Parliament Standing Orders, 2025, I, the Honourable Kenneth Vernon Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Elected Member for George Town Central, give notice to move the following amendment to the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2025 —

1. That the Bill be amended by deleting the new clause 10A.

I thereby ask leave of this Committee to withdraw such amendment.

The Chairman: The question is—

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Mr. Chair, just as a procedural matter. I agree with everything that has just been said, but this happened during Finance Committee and I want to just get it straight.

On my interpretation, if a member has put forward either an amendment or a Motion and wants to withdraw it of their own volition, I don't think they need the leave of the House to withdraw it.

The Chairman: I think because it has been tabled and circulated—

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Yeah, but he is withdrawing it. Do you need leave though? What happens if we say, "No", and it stays? We would have a conundrum.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Chair, we've had this. I can't tell you what has happened and how these new Standing Orders work, but I can say that in Committee, as the Mover, you didn't need a seconder and you could do as you please because, as the Premier said, suppose now the Government says, no. We cannot force a member to move a Motion. That is his right. I think everything is correct up until "leave". I think he simply moves to withdraw in his name because he no

longer wants to move the amendment. He doesn't need us.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Chair, if I dare say the terminology "seek leave of this Committee" is actually not to the members but to the Chair. You give direction, please. Whichever procedural way you want me to do it, I'll do it.

Mr. Chair, just out of an abundance of caution, I'm going to do it quite quickly. Seeking leave of the Chair of this Committee, I ask that the Committee Stage Amendment, standing in my name, that reads as such be withdrawn.

"In accordance with Standing Order 70(1) and (2) of the Parliament Standing Orders, 2025, I, the Honourable Kenneth Vernon Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Elected Member for George Town Central, give notice to move the following amendment to the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2025 —

1. That the Bill be amended by deleting the new clause 10A."

The Chairman: Leave to withdraw granted.

Agreed: Committee Stage Amendment to delete new clause 10A was withdrawn.

[Crosstalk]

The Chairman: Honourable Minister, would you read the amendment to new clause 25A, please?

Amendment to new clause 25A

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That the Bill be amended by inserting after Clause 25 the following Clause:

"Amendment of section 56 - application for work permit

25A. The principal Act is amended in section 56(4)(a) by deleting the words "the administrative filing fee, the work permit fee" and substituting the words "the application fee, the work permit fee, the fee for an identification card issued under section 71".

The Chairman: The amendment has been moved. Would the Minister wish to speak to the Amendment?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Once again, noting that it is the government's intention to begin issuing identification cards to work permit holders, this amendment to section 56(4)(a) of the Act replaces the phrase "administrative filing fee" with "the application fee".

The Chairman: Work permit fee and identification card fee.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: And requires the payment of a fee for the issuance of an identification card at the time of applying for a work permit.

The Chairman: Does any Member wish to speak to the amendment? If not, the question is that amendment to clause 56A [sic] be approved.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed:

The Chairman: The question is that new clause 25A be added to the Bill.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: New clause 25A was added to the Bill.

The Clerk: A Bill for an act to amend the Immigration (Transition) Act (2022 Revision) to give the Caymanian Status and Permanent Residency Board and the Director of WORC the discretion to allow a Residency and Employment Rights Certificate to remain in force where the holder's marriage or civil partnership is, among other things, dissolved; to make exemptions provided for under section 53(1)(b) either unconditional or subject to such conditions as may be determined by Cabinet; to introduce term limits for non-Caymanian civil servants; to introduce Certificates for Commercial Farmhands; to provide for the making of regulations to deal with the refunds of fees in certain circumstances; to provide for the validation of certain fees charged and collected by the Director of WORC and certain fines imposed; and for incidental and connected purposes.

The Chairman: The question is that the Title do stand part of the Bill?

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Title passed.

The Chairman: The question is that the Bills be reported to the House.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Bills will be reported to the House.

The Chairman: That concludes the business in Committee. The House will go back in session.

House resumed at 5:29pm

The Speaker: This honourable House is back in session.

REPORT ON BILLS

SUBMARINE CABLE (TELECOMMUNICATIONS RESILIENCE) BILL, 2025

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Planning.

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Mr. Speaker, I have to report that a Bill shortly entitled Submarine Cable (Telecommunications Resilience) Bill, 2025 was considered by a committee of the whole House and passed without amendments.

The Speaker: The Bill has been duly reported and is set down for a third reading.

IMMIGRATION (TRANSITION) (AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION) BILL, 2025

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Caymanian Employment.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm pleased to report that the Bill shortly entitled the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2025 was considered by a committee of the whole House and passed with amendments.

The Speaker: The Bill has been duly reported and is set down for a third reading.

THIRD READINGS

SUBMARINE CABLE (TELECOMMUNICATIONS RESILIENCE) BILL, 2025

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Planning.

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill—

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, the third reading is over. I was waiting for a way for me to move my motion after that stage was completed — if you recall from the earlier proceedings.

The Speaker: We're doing the Third Reading now; it's not over yet. At the end of this—

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Your Bill *[sic]* is related to the next Bill. The question is that a Bill...

An Honourable Member: He has to move it.

The Speaker: He moved it. Oh, you were interrupted.

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: I started but was interrupted, sir. Very rudely, yes.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill shortly entitled the Submarine Cable (Telecommunications Resilience) Bill, 2025, be given a third reading and passed.

The Speaker: The question is that a Bill shortly entitled Submarine Cable (Telecommunications Resilience) Bill, 2025, be given a third reading and passed.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Submarine Cable (Telecommunications Resilience) Bill, 2025, was given a third reading and passed.

[Desk thumping]

IMMIGRATION (TRANSITION) (AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION) BILL, 2025

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Caymanian Employment.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I beg to move that the Bill shortly entitled the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2025, be given a third reading and passed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: The question is that a Bill shortly entitled Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2025, be given a third reading and passed.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Mr. Speaker, a division, please.

The Speaker: Madam Clerk, would you do a division, please?

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: It's just challenging the interpretation of the Speaker.

Division No. 6 of 2025-2026

AYES: 15

NOES: 0

Hon. André M. Ebanks

Hon. Gary B. Rutty

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine

Hon. Nickolas T. A. DaCosta

Hon. G. Wayne Panton

Ms. Heather D. Bodden

Mrs. Julie J. T. Hunter

Hon. Michael S. Myles

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders

ABSENT: 4

Hon. Joseph X. Hew

Hon. Pearlina L. McGaw-Lumsden

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly

Mr. A. Roy Tatum

The Speaker: The result of the division is: 15 Ayes, 4 Absentees, zero Noes. The Bill is therefore passed.

Agreed: The Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2025, was given a third reading and passed.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Honourable Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, they haven't changed the boundaries quite yet.

[Laughter]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, I rise to move a motion under Standing Order 43(k) for the exemption from notice; and for the order of this House it says:

“Unless these Standing Orders otherwise provide, notice shall be given of any motion which it is proposed to make, with the exception of the following —

(k) a motion arising out of any item of business made immediately after that item is disposed of and before the next item is entered upon”.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Motion is for the Government/the Minister to provide to the Members of Parliament the list and definitions of prescribed particulars listed in the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2025 before close of business on Monday.

An Hon. Member: Monday the what?

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for whoever said to this honourable House to specify the date. If my memory serves me well, today is the 12th, so Monday would be the 15th of December, 2025.

The Speaker: Do you have a copy of the Motion?

The Motion has been properly moved. Do you wish to speak to the Motion?

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, as I was not made aware of the obligation to have it written...

The Speaker: No, there's no obligation. When I go to call the Motion, I just need to [have] a copy so I can call it properly for the vote. That's all. Please speak to the Motion.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, what I've written here has had a tiny amendment to it. That's why I am suggesting that copy would not be sufficient other than what is outlined per the Standing Orders; because the timing of the request would be changed as the moving of that Motion was intended before Committee Stage. As you can see, I made amendments to the timeline of requirement.

The Speaker: I'll try to remember what your motion was.

Do you wish to speak to the Motion?

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Very, very shortly, Mr. Speaker.

Simply to say that in the spirit of supporting the Government's unanimous approval of the Immi-

gration Bill; and being able to lobby for this historic approval on behalf of the good Government of the Cayman Islands — its Cabinet, its Premier and its Minister — it would only be fair that we can fully understand some of the things that have not been provided for us in the approval of the Bill, such as the prescribed particulars, which have caused concern for many Members of this House's constituents, as they don't know what this new Bill will be requesting of them.

Besides that, Mr. Speaker, it's a simple request. Hopefully the Government is willing to accommodate the members of the Opposition.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

[Crosstalk]

[Pause]

The Speaker: Member for George Town Central, if we take a half-hour break now, would you be able to put it in writing so people can see exactly what they're debating and voting on?

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Okay. The House is suspended until 6 o'clock.

Proceedings suspended at 5:43pm

Proceedings resumed at 6:27pm

The Speaker: This Parliament is back in session.

We're trying to get the TV back on. Just hold on a minute.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Parliament is back in session and the TV is on so...

Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise briefly to recap a discussion I had with the Member for George Town Central, the Mover of the Motion. As I understand the Motion, it's looking for prescribed particulars in relation to one of the prescribed forms.

What I mentioned to the Member, which I believe I [also] mentioned to his Leader earlier this week, is that the implementation, enactment and commencement plan is that the main policy parts of the Bill, not revenue, will commence later in Q1 [quarter one] — probably early March; therefore, there may be

preliminary drafts of regulations and forms the Department and the Ministry may be working on, that have not come to Caucus yet.

Primarily what we would be concerned about is that technically, this Bill that we're debating is not law yet, so there's no point in delving too deeply into those until you have certainty that it's actually become law. When that occurs, we're happy — and it has always been the plan — to share drafts of the near final regulations with the Opposition prior to commencement so that feedback, including on prescribed forms, can be taken from the Opposition before the entire package is commenced of the primary legislation as well as the secondary regulations which would bring in the forms.

My understanding from my discussion with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the Member for George Town Central, is that it is acceptable and there's no need for this Motion at this time.

The Speaker: Honourable Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In the spirit of Christmas and unity in Parliament, the Honourable Premier and I did have discussions about the lack of need for this Motion to move forward, and because it's not a traditional Motion, I think the Standing Orders will allow me provisions to seek leave of the Chair to withdraw it; but I would say in my wrap up that the reason we find ourselves in situations like this is unconventional—or maybe unconventional is not the best way to say, because I have to do further research as to other Commonwealth parliamentary practises as well as the UK Parliament and Erskine May. Regardless of what the practise is among other jurisdictions, Mr. Chair, I think it is fair to say that it's very uncomfortable to feel the pressure to approve something without full understanding.

We have the practise here whereby in many cases we approve primary legislation missing the secondary regulations that support it, which ultimately gives you the outcome of the policy the government is trying to drive. I don't think is good practise; but I know that in the spirit of transparency, the Premier has given commitment that before the enactment of this Bill the Motion asking for the prescribed particulars will be provided to the Opposition as well as a presentation to go over those draft regulations. One that can only be accepted because that is exactly what we want to do — work in partnership with the Government to ensure that on anything to do with this very sensitive area of immigration we're all on the same page.

With that said, Mr. Chair, I formally move a motion to withdraw, with your permission, the Motion that was presented earlier this evening.

The Speaker: Motion to withdraw is granted.

ADDENDUM ORDER PAPER

The Speaker: Fellow parliamentarians, we have come to the end of the business for today's Order Paper; however, we have an Addendum Order Paper, as we need to deal with a couple of very short but very important matters. I can give the House the assurance that the necessary certification for urgency has been delivered to me as Speaker and I have approved the bringing of these Bills under that provision.

Madam Clerk, can you read the first item of business?

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

STAMP DUTY (RATES OF DUTY) (NO. 2) REGULATIONS, 2025

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Finance & Economic Development *and* Education & Training.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government, I beg to lay on the Table of the Parliament the Stamp Duty (Rates of Duty) (No. 2) Regulations, 2025.

The Speaker: So ordered.

Does the Honourable Minister wish to speak to the [Regulations]?

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: No, Mr. Speaker. There will be a Bill that deals with those Regulations; I will offer a brief contribution at that time.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

BILLS

FIRST READINGS

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION) BILL, 2025

The Speaker: The Bill has been deemed to have been read a first time and is set down for second reading.

LAND HOLDING COMPANIES SHARE TRANSFER TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025

The Speaker: The Bill has been deemed to have been read a first time and is set down for second reading.

SECOND READINGS

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION) BILL, 2025

The Speaker: Honourable Minister.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the Second Reading of a Bill entitled the Information and Communications Technology (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2025.

The Speaker: The Bill has been duly moved. Does the Member wish to speak thereto?

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, my comments on this Bill will be very brief based on the fact that honourable Members of this Parliament received a thorough explanation of the Bill yesterday in the spirit of cooperation and inclusion during the break in Parliament.

The Bill before the House amends the Information and Communications Technology Act (2019 Revision), which I shall refer to as the “principal Act”, and consists of three parts.

Part 1 of the Bill is captioned “Preliminary”.

Clause 1 provides the title of the Bill.

Clause 2 proposes to change the use of Roman numerals in the principal Act to Arabic numerals.

Part 2 of the Bill is captioned “Amendments to the principal Act”.

Clause 3 inserts expanded definitions of “licence fees” into an application fee, an annual fee, a renewal fee, and a one-time fee for each experimental or temporary licence. Clause 3 also breaks down the annual fee category into further specific fees: a radio licence fee, a regulatory fee, a royalty fee and a spectrum fee.

Clause 5 proposes to move away from the current rigid requirement of a prescribed form to be used in connection with a licence application to a more flexible approach being a form approved by the Office.

Clause 6 provides that licence fees are to be prescribed in regulations.

Part 3 of the Bill is captioned “Validation provisions and connected matters”.

Mr. Speaker, honourable Members received a briefing on this aspect of the Bill yesterday evening and therefore, I don't need to repeat the information today. On behalf of the Government, I commend this Bill to the House and ask all honourable Members to support this Bill.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Does the Mover wish to exercise his right of reply?

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just to thank all honourable Members of this Parliament for their tacit support of this most important Bill.

The Speaker: The question is that a Bill shortly entitled Information and Communications Technology (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2025, be given a second reading.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Information and Communications Technology (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2025, was given a second reading.

LAND HOLDING COMPANIES SHARE TRANSFER TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Finance.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government, this Bill is part of the presentation of the 2026-2027 budget that was moved, debated, taken to Finance Committee, and passed by the House.

At the time, I advised this honourable House that the budget contained a package of revenue enhancement measures designed to generate additional revenue for the government. One of those measures is the increase in stamp duty from the rates of 7.5 per cent to 10 per cent on the conveyance or transfer of properties developed or undeveloped where the consideration, market value or purchase price, whichever is higher equals CI\$2 million or more. These regulations which I tabled earlier give effect to the change once they come into force.

Mr. Speaker, stamp duty on property transfers is significant and a reliable source of revenue to the government. The unaudited financial results for 2024 show that government collected some CI\$88.735 million for stamp duty on property transfers, substantially exceeding that year's approved budget of \$67.5 million.

Further analysis by the Lands and Survey Department indicates that C\$35.641 million or 40.1 per cent of this duty is related to property transfers in the \$2 million and above bracket. In 2025, stamp duty revenues continued to be a star performer with some \$87.826 million collected as of the 30th November

2025, already surpassing the approved 2025 budget of \$76.1 million.

Looking ahead, these new stamp duty rates, once implemented, are expected to generate additional stamp duty revenues of CI\$11.7 million in 2026 and \$11.2 million in 2027, which will support government's ability to achieve the forecast financial results set out in the 2026-2027 Budget.

Mr. Speaker, in determining this revenue measure, the government took care to set a threshold that will not impact or unduly burden the ordinary person. A person acquiring property valued CI\$2 million or more is by definition operating at the top end of the market and it is reasonable to expect that such purchasers have the capacity to pay an additional 2.5 per cent in stamp duty.

Mr. Speaker, the Stamp Duty Act (2019 Revision) currently applies a flat stamp duty rate of 7.5 per cent on property transfers regardless of value, subject to specific concessions for Caymanians making their first or second purchases of property.

It is important to note, Mr. Speaker, that stamp duty rates have been adjusted by successive governments over the past three decades. By way of example: in 1995 a 10 per cent stamp duty rate was implemented for properties where the consideration was 250,000 or higher; in 1997, rates were amended to apply a 9 per cent rate for properties on the Seven Mile Beach Corridor; in 2001, rates of property for Seven Mile Beach Corridor were reduced to [*sic*] 5 per cent; in 2006, the rates for properties on the Seven Mile Beach Corridor were reduced to 7.5 per cent while other properties were adjusted to 6 per cent for non-Caymanians and 4 per cent for Caymanians; in 2009, rates on the Seven Mile Beach Corridor were reduced to 5 per cent, rates for non-Caymanians were reduced to 5 per cent and 3 per cent; in 2012, a uniform 7.5 per cent stamp duty rate was applied across all properties.

Mr. Speaker, this record clearly demonstrates that changes in stamp duty are not unusual. They are a normal and customary way for government to implement its fiscal policy; and adjustments set out in these regulations are fair, targeted, and proportional.

Mr. Speaker, this particular stamp duty increase is one that once you apply the incremental increase—that is the increase above 7.5 per cent— all Members who are fair are going to recognise that that additional rate is one that does not place an undue burden on persons who are able to acquire properties of CI\$2 million or more.

More importantly, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that stamp duties, whilst an important source of government revenue, have been one that have been controversial for a number of decades. There are many people who believe that this important asset class, real estate in the Cayman Islands, ought to actually attract for certain high end properties, an annual property tax. Why do people feel that way? If we look

at property values in the Cayman Islands 96 m as an asset class, that is, you look at them like technology stocks. If you look at them like private equity investments in private equity hedge funds, there is no asset class in the last decade that has performed stronger than property values in the Cayman Islands.

Mr. Speaker, I do not need to belabour the point about how our people have been, in large measure, crowded out of the property market because of skyrocketing values in the Cayman Islands. This, Mr. Speaker, is targeted for anyone who qualifies and is able to acquire properties of CI\$2 million or more. This is not going to hit the average man.

In crafting this budget, the government was extremely careful to ensure that our revenue measures were specific [and] targeted, to ensure that any impacts on the local economy and what we would call the average Caymanian would be little to none.

I feel extremely confident that given how our economy is structured that the revenue enhancement measures, because they are targeted to extremely specific areas of our economy, are not going to have the ordinary and customary inflationary pressures that other revenue measures in the past may have had. For example, if I were coming to this Parliament and producing a budget that was going to call for import duties across a wide section of consumables that the average Caymanian would ordinarily consume, quite naturally, that would have inflationary pressures on the Consumer Price Index in the goods within the ordinary basket of goods that Caymanians typically consume.

Having been down this road before, I can remember in 2001 what was then considered the biggest revenue enhancement fee measure package in the history of Cayman. In 2010, when we had the financial crisis and meltdown, we still had the largest fee package increase in the history of our country. That when you actually look at the impact on the average Caymanian, you will see that when you target things like high-end properties, fees for exempted companies, the fund annual filing returns, when you increase things like the operational licences for professional accounting and law firms, they don't impact the average Caymanian because the average Caymanian does not operate and consume products in those areas.

More importantly, there is no passing on of those fees, because again, a hedge fund in New York that's going to quite gladly pay this very nominal fee increase that we have for fund annual returns, et cetera, does not play in our economy. Therefore, it will not have any impact on *our* cost of living. We were very targeted and measured in our revenue enhancement measures during the creation of this budget.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also happy to report as an early Christmas present to my colleague to my right, the Minister responsible for housing, that whilst 10 per

cent has not been the customary fee for even high-end properties or in areas that are considered high-end like the Seven Mile Beach Corridor, the Ministry has committed that any increase over the 9 per cent, that is, one per cent, we are going to track during the 2026-2027 budget cycle and we are going to earmark those funds for housing and housing-related improvements, projects and building for Caymanians.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, this is a government of compassion, this is a government that cares, this is a government that is laser focused on improving the lives of all the people whom we serve. I can say beyond any doubt that Caymanians who reside in every constituency whom we represent are going to be happy to hear that we are going to be ensuring that we start to identify additional funds for affordable housing and housing-related projects.

Critically important, we know we need to get more Caymanians on the property ladder. I am very confident, with this announcement just before Christmas, that the Member for George Town Central is going to be so ecstatic with the impact this is potentially going to have for his constituents and all of our constituents that this is now going to allow him to kick-back, feel relaxed and understand that the government cares, [and] the Minister of Finance is laser focused on ensuring that, whilst I'm a bit conservative, over the next two years we are going to continue to have policy priorities that the Member advocates for. I give the Member credit. I think it must have been at the end of every output group he asked about honorariums, et cetera for our hard-working civil servants and public officers.

In fact, just the other day, the Honourable Premier was able to announce an honorarium. Why? Because all of us, all of us, work cooperatively for all of our people. Thus, when I can bring a Bill that ought to be non-contentious, a Bill that ought to elicit the support of every single Member of this House, a Bill, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker that we shouldn't even have to debate once I've sat down, because the intention is clear, it is clear that we set specific targeted outcomes that are going to ensure that our people's lives are better; better than they would have been yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, clause 2 amends the principal Act by adding the additional 2.5 per cent consideration for property transfers where the consideration is C\$2 million or higher.

Clause 3 sets out the transitional provisions and makes clear that the increased rate will apply only to those transactions executed after these regulations come into force.

Mr. Speaker, the regulations have been prepared under the authority of section 27 of the Stamp Duty Act (2019 Revision), which provides that such regulations are subject to a negative resolution in Par-

liament. Accordingly, the regulations I have just tabled will take effect after three weeks, unless they are negated by a contrary set of regulations that the Parliament approves.

Mr. Speaker, I feel confident that this policy priority of the Government is one that will enjoy wide support. In fact, as my good friend, the Member for Bodden Town West has often reminded us, *we shouldn't play politics with the finances of the country*, in particular, when the finances of the country are going to be utilised in such a way as to improve the lot of our most vulnerable citizens and those whom we know we need to assist to get on to the property line.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, with those very, very brief remarks, I commend this Bill to all Members of the House; and in the spirit of openness, transparency and working together and showing Caymanians that we actually can put aside petty politics and do what is right, I say, and I humbly, humbly ask all Members to support, support, support this Bill.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yeah, they didn't want to see the podium; it means we might be here for a little bit, but I have to do my job, Mr. Speaker.

Our bond, relationship outside of these hallowed halls, and the lunchroom and the coffee shop, is always great, and I know my good friend, the Minister of Finance, is still going to be an amazing friend to me after this debate; but Mr. Speaker, it's important that I offer some contribution not only on behalf of myself but on behalf of my team.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Be careful now, be careful. Okay.

Mr. Speaker, I think we need to get some procedural matters out of the way. The first one is, per the Standing Orders, I must disclose that I have an indirect interest in the particulars of one part of what the Minister spoke about. My wife is a real estate agent. Mr. Speaker, as per the Standing Orders, I don't have a direct [interest] as per the Bill, but the Standing Orders do allow for me to contribute by way of debate.

Even though I'm allowed to, I'm not going to vote on this Bill just from the PR [public relations] perspective, but it would be irresponsible of me not to highlight my concerns of any fee increase for that matter, not only specific to this one.

Now that the first procedural matter is out of the way, the second procedural matter, Mr. Speaker, is scope of debate. I particularly noted the words that were used by the Minister in his opening remarks as well as throughout his contribution, by which he opened the door. I know that you would be ever so lenient as you feel in respect of the scope of this discussion.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to get into the specific particulars but more so into fees in general of any government increase, but let me share a housing perspective that was put forward. I was so happy to hear the Honourable Minister speak about the new housing announcement and the revenues collected from this new change, an increase from 7.5 per cent to 10 per cent only for those who can afford it. He's right, I don't think this will directly impact the average home purchaser. I agree with him there.

Mr. Speaker, the concern was from a contractor whose sole business is housing development; small houses, the common \$400,000 - \$500,000 houses, quite similar to the Frank Hall Homes developments — not that this is specific to that company, but people know it. The developer said to me, *"Kenneth, it's going to affect the housing market by way of cost, because I am a developer, I'm going to go buy property and build houses that I'm putting on the market. That price will hit me and I'm not going to digest the expense; I'm going to pass it on."*

It could be miniscule, because the Minister is 100 per cent right that coming from \$500,000 to \$2 million is a mere \$50,000 difference, I think, but in the scope of development, when you are developing 20 houses on five acres or something like that, it can add up.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: I think the Honourable Minister just said an extra \$1,000 per house; maybe \$2,000 per house?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: On a \$500,000 house. I think he's admitting there himself that he is increasing the cost of housing, but by a small amount in his estimations.

Mr. Speaker, granted the Government will look from their viewpoint, but our job in the Opposition is to give different perspectives. Now I'm going to try to address this debate by raising concerns and asking a couple of questions, and maybe in response, the Minister will be able to inform the public. I know that the Government's commitment is to transparency and to ensuring things are done the right way.

Mr. Speaker, we could have dealt with this matter during the budget debate. I don't think it was intended by the Minister in any capacity because the

Minister did give a scope of the fees that he was planning to implement, but unfortunately, it wasn't until after the budget was over that we would discuss the specific details of what those fees would be. I think that is a fair assessment of the truth so we couldn't give much contribution throughout the budget debate — even though many of us didn't get a chance to debate for another reason altogether, but I won't rehash that; it's not necessary.

We are forced now to give our thought process on the fee structure in Committee Stage where we can't really do a debate. Now that we fully understand the scope of those fees, I'm going to try my best to keep it within the parameters of this, using a hypothetical fee element rather than going to specific fees within that fee structure, as per your advice, Mr. Speaker. I am forced to deal with them here and ask questions.

One of the first things that come to mind is that I think it is a very substantial amount of money that the Government is intending to raise, more than what they already do, based on fees, taxes and revenues that they earn. I support the Government and I want the public to know that the Government needs the money. The money goes to operational costs, meaning to our civil servants, many of our programmes, our elderly, education, scholarships and so forth. By all means, I'm not suggesting the government is not in need of that money. My concern is, what will be the impact of any fees the Government brings?

Mr. Speaker, as I grow in my journey as a Member of Parliament and a representative of the people, I continue to research and understand what strong parliaments are like and how they create structures to ensure that scrutiny and the proper process are done so that we don't have any unintended consequences, so I ask myself about major financial revenue measures done by any government: When and where is the scrutiny done?

I know the [Members of the] Government themselves probably have done their own internal assessments of these revenue measures, whichever ones they're planning to bring either by way of regulation or legislation, to say they do not think they're going to have a major impact. Naturally they're going to do so, because no government would suggest that they're bringing things that will have [negative] impact, but my job is not to just accept that they've said so.

Most parliaments have the proper procedures of what the former Member from East End used to say, *trust but verify*. In most other parliaments, before government creates any revenue framework you have committees which are formed to assess whether or not the revenue measures, tax increases, or implementation of new taxes will have any kind of negative impacts on the economy and on society. This is normally called an Economic Impact Assessment.

My first question to the Minister is, has the Government done an Economic Impact Assessment and if so, who has done it because... Forgive me, Mr. Speaker, maybe the Honourable Minister could remind me of the total amount planned to be raised over the two years. I think it is \$180 million.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: \$176 million.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Which I'd say is about 10 per cent. Any revenue measure of 10 per cent of any budget is pretty substantial and could have impacts, positive as well as negative. Obviously, we're concerned about the negative ones, and I am going to speak about the potential positive impacts as well.

If there has been an assessment internally, who did it? Was it done by the ESO; was it done by the Ministry of Finance? What were the criteria that they used? The reason I have to raise it, Mr. Speaker, is that unfortunately we've had a history of concern about projections, and these revenue measures are based on projections.

Now, I know the good Honourable Minister is very good at his job. Everybody talks about his abilities in respect to accounting, and I'm certain that he will be a strong Minister of Finance, but I want the reassurance that will come without the conflicted potential bias by themselves. I want some independence and I'll give you an example of what I mean by that.

In the UK Parliament and in the United States, they have a review committee before any major implementation of revenues, fees, and taxes.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: I think my good friend for Bodden Town West spoke to it in a previous debate. I think it's a treasury committee in the United States.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: They do a review before the government implements any new changes just to make sure that it's not just based on policymakers. It's a pre-budget review committee and sometimes there are nonpartisan or bipartisan [members], and sometimes they have private sector members involved.

However, particularly the one in the United Kingdom, they have outside agencies as well that will do an assessment on a proposed set of new revenue measures and give a report as to what they think the

effects of those revenue measures will mean to the greater economy and the different sectors of the economy; and therefore, the government of the day will use that as an assessment to make those decisions.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I have yet to find that parliamentary structure and governance structure within our democracy; I've looked for it — and again, by all means, I'm not here to talk about the capability or the trust of the Government, but about our governance model, which the Premier speaks about wanting to do it the right way. These are some of the systems we need to put in place, because I know none of us want to have done a policy measure for revenue creation and know that it would have some negative impacts on our economy.

For example, Mr. Speaker we know that financial services are the number one earner in our economy. Who is charged with saying to me and to the country, *do not worry, we have not increased the [fees] in financial services so much as to make us uncompetitive to the rest of the jurisdictions we compete with?*

We just got through discussing an immigration Bill which will bring significant changes to the industry. They will also have some fee increases in their labour market that they get outside labour for — I wish they were all Caymanian, but we rely heavily on outside labour. The Cayman Islands unfortunately is known to be a very expensive jurisdiction. Will the combination of the expense to operate in the Cayman Islands along with the increase in the cost of labour within the industry put us in a place that we're not competitive? I don't know.

I know the Minister has said that we are going to be fine, but is it just the minister's word? I would like to know that we have done some sort of assessment with confidence that I'm not only relying on his viewpoint. Granted, I'm not suggesting that his viewpoint is not solid; but my job here is to ask all the right questions to ensure that the Government is doing it the right way.

Mr. Speaker, he's said to me in private that *obviously, those who are affected by it are not going to give you positive feedback. They are going to be like, oh, these fees are too high! Because they too are biased.* He's right to say that. I am left now as a security guard of the Government's policies because my job is to scrutinise. It's not the most pleasant job. Most people hate the Opposition because all they do is complain, but it's a very important one. My job is to ask: Has the Government done its assessment? Has it been unbiased? Is the sector saying [it's] fair in its criticism, is the government fair in its assessment?

Sometimes you have systems quite like what you see in the United Kingdom with independent bodies who make an assessment on a group of taxes and fees to say, this will not have a negative impact, or it could have a negative impact in some areas but we

can digest that and we know that it's not going to impact the average person.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to go into the various other fees because I have to stay within the Standing Orders direction of the scope of the discussion, but there have been other fees that have caused me to think and feel concerned about what this group of fees will potentially do to the overall economy by way of cost of living for the Caymanian people, but also for our attractiveness as a financial jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, I know the Honourable Premier is probably fully aware that there are a number of countries out there that would love nothing better than to take our market share of financial services. We have done very well over the decades as a financial services jurisdiction, staying ahead of the game, keeping up to standard with our legislative changes, being forward-thinking with our amendments, and a lot of that has been guided by former Ministers and former Premiers and now our Honourable Premier today. He was tremendous in his role in the last administration and I am certain he will give nothing less than the best in this administration, keeping us ahead of the game.

I say that to say that he's fully aware there are other jurisdictions that compete with us and they want our business. As a matter of fact, we want other people's business, so our competitiveness is important and my job is to analyse whether this set of fees attached to the revenue measures within the current Bill is going to put us at a disadvantage. It forces me to ask questions like, have you done that assessment and is there a report that we can see, so I don't have to worry and be concerned.

Mr. Speaker, another question came to my mind. I'm forced to get the confirmation here this evening, but I think that the Minister has said that the bundle of fees and revenue measures was calculated in the current projections for 2.3 [per cent] inflation for 2027 and 2028. I don't know if I heard that correctly, but I did a little background check for when that calculation was done, for the 2.3 per cent inflation rate, and I've been informed that the new set of fees that were presented to the honourable House in Finance Committee were not considered in the inflation rate equation because they were not known at that time, which is natural; they weren't ready yet.

The Government announced them once they were completed. Before the announcement, the Cabinet had just approved the revenue measures a couple of days before, maybe about a week before if my information is correct. The announcement of the inflation rate was already calculated in the budget statement, as well as in the Strategic Policy Statement; therefore, the new revenue measures that equated to \$170 million over the budget period could not have been considered in that.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Minister has said it will not cause any inflationary measures, and I hope he is right because that's the last thing we want.

I really do, because the country will win; but like the concerns that have been circulating around the immigration matters, which the Government has outright refuted that they are pushing an anti-expat government — and I genuinely feel that they do not want that — there [is] a perception that the cost of living will increase by this set of fees. If the fees were not calculated at that inflation rate, the question is, what is the inflation rate for next year and the year after? Maybe the Honourable Minister can answer some of those questions.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy to hear that the Honourable Minister has committed — and clarify it for me, Honourable Minister, if I got it wrong, and I would be happy to retract my statement. I think he said anything over 9 per cent of the revenue percentage will go to housing-related costs.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Yeah, and that's great news, Mr. Speaker, because one of the things I'm going to be asking the Government in my wrap-up, when I get there—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: You want some coffee? I can get some coffee for you. You heard what the Honourable Minister of Caymanian Employment said — we get paid handsomely; we're here to work, so don't complain no matter how late we're here. We have a job to do.

An Hon. Member: Efficiency.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be proposing that the Government consider something because here's the thing, Mr. Speaker, yes, governments need to raise the necessary revenues that they need to operate and offer the services of running this country. There's no question about that, but sometimes, without proper assessment, impact studies, review committees, and so forth, you don't know what the outcome may be.

What about this? What if the list of fees and taxes that have been implemented ends up causing them to raise \$250 million over the two-year period, a whopping \$80 million more? What then? Should the government have been raising that money potentially on the backs of the people? And I say potentially on the backs of the people because I'm not convinced yet that the set of fees outlined will not have some sort of trickle-down effect.

I know the good Honourable Minister will get up and explain why that will not happen. I think there is a misunderstanding in the public domain about what work permit fees are going to go up, and he can help

clarify this perspective of the effect of these fees on the cost of living.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to propose to the Government that whatever the amount he stated in his budget delivery, the Government commits that at the end of the two-year cycle, any amount raised over that goes back to the people by way of a rebate, whether it be by duty waivers on fuel or duty waivers at CUC.

Point of Order

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, point of order.

Mr. Speaker, during the Finance Committee I gave great leeway to the Member. There are no increases in duty rates. He is going around the backs of people. I am not going to agree to give back annual return fees to hedge funds. I'm not going to give rich people money back on \$2 million or higher. None of our revenue measures are on the backs of people. What the Member is saying is misleading.

The Speaker: I consider that a matter of clarification and you gave way.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe the Honourable Minister misunderstood me. I agree with you, sir. I'm not suggesting that you give back any fees to any hedge funds either.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Let me say it again. I think other Members probably understood what I said.

Mr. Speaker, I suggested that if the Government is intending to raise about \$170 million over the two-year period, if they raise more than that — say hypothetically speaking, they raise \$250 million — they do a rebate not to the hedge fund [firms] but to the good people of this country, whether it be by duty on fuel (not funds) or duty at CUC, ways that will have a decrease effect on cost of living.

Governments have done such programmes before. As a matter of fact, many of the good Members that are in Government now, five Members, will recall that in our administration every household got a certain percentage off of their light bill for a three-month period. I'm saying that if the intention is not to tax the people and we're only doing it because we need to cover the things that we need to cover and we've estimated what those are, if we get in excess of that, why not be willing to give back?

I'm not saying that if you don't make the mark, do it. I'm saying if you make more money than you intended based on these revenues and fees and taxes that you've increased, why can't we give some relief back to people at the end of the two-year revenue cycle? That's all I'm saying.

I'm not suggesting you give back to the funds [companies]. I'm talking about average Caymanians who have high electricity and other costs. Whether you want to do a waiver on food items for six months — something to at least make this revenue package palatable to the people. If people feel they are going to experience a little trickle down, rightfully or wrongfully, they say, *well, you know what, at least the people we elected are going to give us something back if it's more than they need.*

Our job as legislators is not to take money out of the pockets of the people, you know? It's only to take out only what we need to run the country, because money in the hands of government isn't good. Our job is to keep money in the hands of the people.

Mr. Speaker, trust me, I have no intention of upsetting the good Honourable Minister.

[Crosstalk]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Too late.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: *Oh boy, gon' get myself in trouble now.* He say it too late.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Well, I mean, that's okay. My job is to do my part and I think what I'm suggesting is reasonable, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have another request for the Government. I'm certain they are confident that the fee package they will be implementing over time — granted, I see that not all of them are going to come in at the same point. Some of them are in primary legislation and others are in secondary regulation, so we don't even know when anything is coming into play but that's the Government's job, they're in power and we respect that. I think the Honourable Premier has suggested that some of them won't be coming into effect until 2027, right Honourable Premier?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Yeah, just one; so you have staggered times and the Government will do as they need to cover the cost of operating this country.

In light of the absence of a review committee, which would be common practise in other jurisdictions, particularly those under the Westminster System; and if, in fact, an economic impact assessment was not done on the package of revenues, fees and taxes that will be implemented, would the good Government consider that a bipartisan committee meets every 3-6 months to periodically review the scope of these fees in the event that they are having an ad-

verse impact than was intended because if we don't monitor it on a constant basis, we don't know what is happening to the economy.

Granted, the ESO's job is to do quarterly reports. Am I right, former Minister of Finance?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: They themselves will have to continue to monitor, but it would be good to have a bipartisan committee that also has laypersons from the private sector meet once every quarter to give feedback to the government and this committee, to say *the market is [or not] responding in this way* or to give feedback for the government to potentially take corrective action if necessary. If, as predicted, everything goes well, no big deal.

We need to start building a structure and practise of constant monitoring, particularly when it comes to our economy, and potentially start looking forward to such review committees. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, in most Commonwealth jurisdictions it is obligatory, before you can increase any revenue measures or tax measures, regardless of what the review committee says. I'm not suggesting that the review committee give permission to do anything; the Government is the Government, and it has the right to increase anything it wants. They are the representatives of the good people of this country.

What it does is allow you to have another set of eyes, people who are qualified in assessing these things. Not only qualified, because we have many qualified individuals within the service to assist with this, but people who are looking from a different perspective and who do not have a biased viewpoint — and that's kind of hard to do sometimes because everybody has a bias. It is in that spirit, Mr. Speaker. It's only for us to ensure we don't do something with new revenue measures that are going to end up causing the country any grief if not assessed properly.

Mr. Speaker, one of my biggest concerns throughout the budget is that a key component that is going to be necessary for revenue generation and revenue collection — and this is probably going to make some people unhappy, is the drop in planning applications and upcoming projects. We receive a significant amount of revenue based on imports of things that we use to develop. We receive large amounts of money on planning applications and on the labour necessary for the development that we want, or allow.

Now it's a bit of a conflicting position because we are trying to slow down development, but we get so much revenue from it, and it's going to be a wicked problem for the government to resolve. I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, and I hope that the Government continues to have a strong monitoring process as to where our economy is going over the next two years.

I'm very, very happy that we recently saw another announcement that the US Fed is down by another point, so interest rates are dropping, particularly for those who have mortgages. I think this is the third drop for this year.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: A quarter. This is the third drop by a quarter this year, which is substantial. I hope it continues to drop because it is one of the things that help us reduce the cost of living.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to risk going any further. I hope the Honourable Minister recognises the spirit in which this has been delivered. I think it's only fair to ensure that what is being presented is not going to have a negative impact on businesses, families, the cost of goods and services, and that it doesn't put us in a place, particularly from the financial services perspective, where we lose our competitive edge.

I'm certain the Honourable Premier would have given input on the fee package amounts.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, just for clarity, I want the honourable House to know that I am not a real estate agent. Unfortunately, I see that shenanigans have started, but I don't take it lightly.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: It's not funny. It's not funny because it has serious consequences as per the Standing Orders of this House. I'm not—

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: I did say that.

Mr. Speaker, I was saying that the Honourable Premier would have obviously given input on the fee package, particularly when it comes to the financial services fees, and I'm certain that he would have had consultation with the industry.

By all means, Members of the Opposition and I want the Government to collect the necessary fees they need to operate this country. Being a former Minister, I know fully that the Government needs the fees to pay the civil servants, take care of our elderly, pay pensions to our retirees, pay for scholarships for kids to go off to school, and pay for our education system. The list goes on, and on, and on, so I support them to raise the money. All I am asking for, Mr. Speaker, is to ensure that we continue to monitor whatever taxes and fees that we implement so we don't have any un-

intended consequences because whenever you increase any taxes and revenues, it has an effect. The question is what is that effect? The Minister and the Government have given a commitment that it will not.

I'm also asking to put in mechanisms to ensure it doesn't happen; I'm asking for relevant reports that substantiate their position; I'm asking whether the equation for inflation was taken into consideration when these fees were made. I'm asking for surety, Mr. Speaker; not that I don't want the government to raise the money. I just don't want it to have a negative impact. With that being said, Mr. Speaker, I'll reiterate the last two requests of the government before I take my seat.

Mr. Speaker, we in the Opposition are asking that if the Government collects more than what it projected to raise over the two year period, at the end of the two-year period, the Government uses the excess amounts to consider a rebate programme to the good people of the Cayman Islands to help them with their cost of living impacts; for example, potential cost reduction on electricity or a rebate at the fuel stations, which is the only true way of giving direct rebates in our current structure.

The second request, Mr. Speaker, is whether the Government will be willing to do a bipartisan review committee that can meet quarterly just to examine the effects of the implementation of these fees to ensure we monitor that there are no unintended consequences on the economy in order for us to have enough time to take proactive corrective actions if, in fact, the fees have any inflationary impact.

With that being said, Mr. Speaker, I hope that my contribution will be taken in the spirit that it was delivered. I want to remind the good Honourable Minister that it is Friday and it is late, and we all know it is Christmas and Santa will be here soon and he wants us to be good boys for Christmas, otherwise we won't get any presents. The Honourable Minister knows I support him heavily. I want him to know that he has my full support on this Bill; I wish this honourable House's full support on the Minister's Bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

Member for Bodden Town West.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the Honourable Minister of Finance is familiar with this famous quote in accounting/finance, whichever you choose to look at it, *"revenue is vanity, profit is sanity, but cash is reality."*

Mr. Speaker, when we got notice about this Bill, I discussed it with my colleague for Bodden Town East. We had a fair discussion on it and he has given me permission to reveal the contents of said discussion, so what I'm about to say also represents my colleague from neighbouring Bodden Town East's views.

I said that quote to say that last month we went through the Government's budget for the next two years and in that process, we looked at the government's balance sheet, statement of financial performance and statement of cash flows. The statement of cash flows is a statement that became quite popular in the late 80s, early 90s or thereabouts— forgive me, I've been out of university for God knows how long and my age is coming out.

Something I remember about the statement of cash flows, Mr. Speaker, is that many companies during the 1980s were posting record profits, stocks were going through the roof, but then those companies were going bankrupt. The reason those companies were going bankrupt was that, despite all the revenues they were making, the cash wasn't coming in, so it didn't mean anything. Despite all the profits they were posting, if the cash didn't come in, it didn't mean anything.

Earlier today, we did the third reading for the Submarine Cable Bill, and in that Bill we recognised when I spoke and I will repeat it, the telecoms industry revenues (I can only go by their revenues because I haven't seen their bottom line) made well over C\$300 million in two years. If I were to use a probable, normal industry bottom line margin, probably anywhere from \$60 to \$90 million would have made it to the bottom line at a minimum. Yet, a valuable piece of infrastructure that is needed for the survival of our country's connectivity to the world is not being done by the people who basically should be providing it; the government has to step in and use the Caymanian people's money to look out for the Caymanian people with this vital piece of infrastructure?

Mr. Speaker, we can no longer continue in a situation where we are willing to privatise profits and socialise losses in this country. What is happening in Cayman isn't new. Some of you may recall how in 2020, once the COVID curtain opened up, they found out that two of the top performing companies in the United States, namely Walmart and McDonald's, many of their staff were getting food stamps, Medicaid, et cetera. Despite the whopping profits that these companies were making, the taxpayers still had to go in and subsidise their staff with basic things like healthcare and to put food on their tables.

Earlier this year, Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General did a report that focused on the long-term financial sustainability of the Cayman Islands, and in that report, the Auditor General spoke about the rising costs in government over the period between 2018 and 2023, the percentage increase in revenues, the percentage increase in expenses and everything else. However, as I said in the Public Accounts hearing at that time, what the Auditor General did not look at was the overall economic impact of government spending or civil servant spending during that time. In other words, the report focused on what government was putting in to their employees, but it wasn't looking at

the impact that employees were having on the wider public. We're talking about a private sector where the majority of people employed are non-Caymanians versus a government sector where the majority of people employed are Caymanians.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at Cayman's GDP in 2023, it was around \$6 billion, and within the calculation of that \$6 billion, again per ESO, \$2.8 billion of that related to salaries or costs of employees. If we go back and look at 2023, you will also see that we had around 58,000 people employed in Cayman, of which roughly 7,500 or 13 per cent were actually employed within the public sector; in short, just over 7,000 of the 58,000 were public workers. When you look at the \$2.8 billion in expenses or the GDP calculation for employees, close to \$600 million was what the government paid the public sector employees, which was roughly 21 per cent of the total. The public sector or public servants' salaries, despite being 13 per cent of the workforce, made up 21 per cent of the salaries.

Mr. Speaker, we have a structural problem in this country. We have seen it already in healthcare, where, whether we want to accept it or not, CINICO [Cayman Islands National Insurance Company], which is regulated by CIMA [Cayman Islands Monetary Authority], has to maintain certain regulatory ratios for compliance purposes. Whether we want to accept it or not, the fees that government is putting into CINICO to cover the civil servants and public servants also subsidise, within NGS 55 and HEA 2, the cost of people retired from our private sector with NGS 55 being the larger, which is also the non-HSA [Health Services Authority] care. One of the best healthcare plans you can have in this country is to be indigent, because you have choice. The civil servants who are actually subsidising the costs don't have as much choice; it's not as easy for them to go elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, more and more — and Cayman is not unique — people are asking more of their government simply because they're recognising that the private sector, the corporate conscience that it should have and the corporate responsibilities that it should display aren't there as they used to be. We get up and we celebrate all the achievements of these companies — and nothing is wrong with that. I love companies being successful.

You may recall, Mr. Speaker, that for the year 2018, of all the RE/MAX companies across the globe, Cayman Islands of all of the RE/MAX companies across the globe, very own RE/MAX was the top real estate agent. On top of that, it wasn't even their first time winning it but their third time being in that club, where they basically had over \$500 million worth of transactions. While the Minister was presenting earlier, I went around the back where we have all those books and had a look at what government stamp duty was in the year when RE/MAX was putting on their record performance — and I looked at other metrics

while I was there too, because, you know, I just can't help myself.

Mr. Speaker, we have sat in this Parliament and watched the people's surplus dwindle from well over \$100 million dollars down to the tens of millions. At what point are we going to say enough is enough? I've listened to Members speak about their disappointment. I can tell you the only disappointment I have is that in some cases, entities that should be paying more weren't charged more. I am going to say again, Mr. Speaker, that I have a fundamental problem that Class A banks with a physical real estate space in Cayman made \$986 million in revenues for 2024, \$752 million in profit, and buried inside that are tens of millions of dollars they have made converting CI\$ to US\$ and vice versa with our currency. Something that was never designed for them to make in the first place, but they took advantage of something that was happening 53 years ago; and I know you know this, Mr. Speaker, because you and I have discussed it. In essence, they got a slap on the wrist. I know

The Premier and the Minister of Finance have discussed with me how we will be looking at some of these things again in the New Year to find some level of equality because, Mr. Speaker, we cannot continue on this path where we are asking the government to do more, and more, and more, and more, while trying to have the government collect less, and less, and less.

[Desk thumping]

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: That structural construct of our economy has got to change.

People have this belief that whenever the private sector does it, they do it better. Mr. Speaker, the private sector has certain luxuries that the government does not have. The private sector can afford to compete, win and put a company out of business. What happens to those employees when that company fails? Where do you think they end up? Government does not have the same luxury. Government is not a business. As much as people like to think that government is a business, it is not.

You think we can really and truly put a price on the real service that we get in this country from public servants? That is why I've always pushed for them to be paid what they should be paid, because truthfully, if it wasn't for the Caymanian public servants this economy would not be doing as well as it is. Honestly — when you go to supermarkets and different places, does anyone think of all the money leaving the country? Have they looked at CIMA's report to see the amount of money that is leaving the country? Again, when you calculate in our GDP what is actually earned and then look at what actually stays here, it is something completely different.

Lest Members forget, Mr. Speaker, earlier this year I brought a Motion asking the Government to increase

the stamp duty on non-Caymanians buying property. I won't bother going back through the liquidity exercise that I mentioned in my earlier debate, but we're not looking at monetary policy. There are many issues driving inflation out there that we have not looked at yet. You and I have had the conversation; I've also had it with other Members on the Government side and my colleague for Bodden Town East, about putting together other standing parliamentary committees to start looking at other external factors that affect the Caymanian people. We can no longer be focused just on government agencies that we have control of when there are other entities out there that are doing business in a manner that is driving up the cost of living, which government then has to come in here and grapple with.

Mr. Speaker, I have no problem, and my colleague has indicated to me that he has no problem with the 10 per cent on properties above \$2 million because if you can afford a \$2 million property, you can afford to give back something. It's as simple as that. People have this belief that if we do this or that, we're going to drive people away. Let me make something clear. If people honestly believe that when people are looking to move to the Cayman Islands they sit down and think, *I wonder what is the fee for this and the fee for that* — they don't!

An Hon. Member: No.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: I can tell you there is no place on this planet better to live and work in than right here.

[Desk thumping]

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: There is a price for living in paradise. There is a price for the good security that we have because regardless of the crime we may have here and there, other countries are way worse. The quality of life that we have here in Cayman comes at a premium. This island was never designed for the bargain thing; this is a Rolls Royce of an island, but we keep driving it like it's a Toyota.

[Desk thumping]

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: I can tell you upfront, we have had people who come to this country and have become millionaires literally overnight and don't want to pay anything, yet we wonder why the middle class is taking a beating.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you a little rule in economics: The only group of people who pay taxes, *really* pays taxes in a country, is the middle class. The poor don't pay it because they can't afford it, and the rich basically pass them on; so if you tax this water bottle, and someone increases the price, who do you think pays it? Donald Trump has found out the hard

way now that they're getting ready to pay farmers a subsidy, because they thought they were going to implement all of these tariffs, but where did it end up? Right back at their doorstep. It is this mindset whereby no one wants the government to make anything that has eroded the Caymanian middle class. It is part of the reason.

The Minister of Finance highlighted it. We have sat here and made it so that it's almost mathematically impossible to get the points needed for PR without owning real estate. What do you think is going to happen when you have 600, 700, 800, 900 people every year trying to buy something that is not growing, trying to buy land and every time land is developed, it means that there's less available land for development. What do you think happens to the price of that less available land? It keeps going up! There are other factors out there that we need to deal with and every single time the government says we need more, it becomes a problem.

Mr. Speaker, I was born in 1973. You know the good thing about it? I know what it is like to struggle. I know what hardship feels like. I attended eight years of school in Kingston — I've seen poorness. I know what it's like. I know what it's like when people struggle; I deal with it every day as I'm sure other Members deal with it every day. Mr. Speaker, sometimes I wish we could do more. I really wish we could do more, but we can't because we do not have the luxury of going into a room and printing money and just getting what we want from it. We don't have that luxury, so we have to make do with what we can.

Mr. Speaker, I will close with just a reminder of what happened in the good book of Mark 12, when the Pharisees went to Jesus and asked him if they should pay taxes.

An Hon. Member: Oh yeah.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Jesus asked them whose face was on the coin, and then he said to them, *render to Caesar what is Caesar's and render to God what is God's*. With that, Mr. Speaker, all I will say is render to the Caymanian people what is for the Caymanian people. If you can come here and afford a \$2 million property, you can afford to pay some more. Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? *[Pause]* Does any other Member wish to speak? *[Pause]* Does any other Member wish to speak? *[Pause]* Does the mover of the Bill wish to exercise his right of reply?

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I did think that on a Friday we should be doing something a little more...

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Joyous, yes, that's the word I'm looking for.

I did say to the honourable Member for George Town Central that he ought to be very careful who he takes advice from. I'm reminded of the book of Luke 23:24 [sic]. **"Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'"**

[Crosstalk]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Let me make sure that the Member for George Town Central understands how dangerous the contribution he just made to this Parliament is. He comes to this Parliament and he says we need more policing and we haven't funded the police. We know the pressures to provide more.

During my debate on the budget, I made sure to point out we were in phase one of CIFEC [Cayman Islands Further Education Centre] expansion to get us to 18 years old before Caymanian children leave school. I admitted and told the Parliament openly that early childhood care and education and what we're doing for ECAP [Early Childhood Assistance Programme] was phase one; we're doubling it this year, but we needed to double it again. No Government has ever had the luxury of raising enough revenue to fulfil all the wishes of all the Ministers with all the policies they want to implement. He sat in Cabinet; he ought to know this.

To come to this Parliament, knowing that we still have so much building to do in this country, and suggest... We have a capital programme that we're projecting to borrow for. You want to play this game of 'let's take some back', let's get revenue but then play politics with it to give it back versus giving back to this country what we ought to be giving back, which is the best policy position and the services this country desperately needs. In this game of trying to tell the public that if we outperform we should be out there with more political handouts versus hand ups, I say to the Member — George Town Primary School needs its second building, where does he think that money is going to come from? John A. Cumber Primary School needs its additional building. Bodden Town Primary School needs to have infant care because that constituency is the only one that has none provided for right now in the geographic area. We have to build the East-West Arterial.

An Hon. Member: East End needs a new primary school.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: East End needs a complete new primary school. North Side needs a complete new primary school. We need a third high school.

Let me paint a picture of reality for our people, because if they listen to that contribution, the expecta-

tions will be that if governments budget outperforms by \$50 million we ought to be handing out \$50 million versus giving people the true hand up they need, which is a world class, early childhood care and education system, and increasing funding in early intervention programmes to save our most vulnerable children. I told this House that we are doubling it and I said I wanted to quadruple it.

What I can guarantee to the Member is that this Government is going to utilise the government's balance sheet to try to get more Caymanians on the property ladder. This Government is going to ensure that when we raise revenues, we do it in a way that does not hit the average man or woman. When we do that, along with all the good work that is happening in financial services under the leadership of the Premier, we'll expand that sector and get the additional resources the country needs. We cannot continue to play politics with the public purse.

Let me ask the Member for George Town Central, does he know that when he demitted office on April 30th, this country literally had no rainy day fund. Where are the great General Reserves? His policy is, as a family — we're the Caymanian family now — as soon as we make it, we spend it, instead of ensuring that we shore up the foundations, build out the foundations and save some money because we need general reserves in this country. Not restricted reserves like the EPF [Environmental Protection Fund] and the infrastructure development fund, which are savings for very specific purposes. We need to ensure that we are delivering what this country needs to make our citizens' lives better and to give Caymanians the best possibility for the best possible life.

If any of us think that on the 12th of December, 2025 we have a perfectly positioned and funded infrastructure for delivering services to Cayman, we are greatly, greatly, amusing ourselves. We're fooling ourselves and we ought to be very truthful to the public. The work of government is never done. If this country had a billion dollars in a general reserve fund that was there for a rainy day, if this country had all the resources that we needed within the public service, then perhaps we could be like some oil-rich countries who do refunds back to citizens, but this country is not in that position, Mr. Speaker, and to set that as an expectation, in my opinion, is reckless.

This nonsense about, have we done an impact [assessment]; let me give the Member a blow-by-blow. Increasing fees on accounting and law firms whose business is international services — PWC, EY, Deloitte, Maples, Walkers, how many average Caymanians waltz up to any of those firms and require services? How many? None.

Without fear of contradiction — every single revenue enhancement measure that the Premier brought to us in finance was revenue measures that were recommended by the industry. Why would the industry recommend revenue measures that are going

to cause them to lose business and cause them to compromise Cayman? Why would they?

Let's be clear, I'm not going to try and brag as though Cayman can do whatever it wants and charge whatever it wants, but this notion of other territories — who perhaps might be on a grey list pretty soon. I hope not, but their houses are not nearly as in order as the Cayman Islands. [This notion that] all of a sudden, we are going to be at risk because hedge fund managers and captive insurance managers are going to suddenly flee from Cayman, with the safe regulatory regime that we have, a regime that has proven it is stable, because the government increased, for example, fund annual returns for \$150. Many of these hedge funds are billion-dollar funds. An investment manager is going to look and say, *well, the fund's annual return fee is now going up by \$300, oops, I'm going to now move my fund. I'm going to deregister and leave the best regulatory framework there is.*

Why do you think we have over 30,000 registered in Cayman, just because they like us? No, because we have the best framework on the planet. We can't be overconfident; no, we must stay aggressive, but if we listened carefully to the point made by the Member for Bodden Town West, when we look at the overall structure of how we have funded the Cayman Islands for decades, the fundamental weaknesses that exist are obvious to any economist or person who is a qualified accountant or financial professional. We've not gone out and systematically looked holistically at our economy, at the various sectors, and ensured that they paid according to what they are able to afford and what they actually cost the country. Do we think the size and cost of CIMA ought to be something that we disproportionately spread to other areas, or should it be funded by the very industry it has to regulate?

I can tell the Member for Bodden Town West that yes, and I will say it publicly, we have had a discussion about looking big picture at our revenue buckets and ensuring that we start to rectify these structural weaknesses that have existed forever. Let me predict it— we are going to have those out there in the private sector who want to have their cake and eat it too, then call up Members of this Parliament with Anansi stories: *Oh, well, you know, there's going to be fees and they're going to have a trickle-down effect.*

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: In Cayman's history, this theory has never been proven. If they were going to have a trickle-down effect in 2010 when I was here, the budget that we had to pass at the time to balance our books would have meant that Caymanians would not have been able to afford to live in Cayman. We placed the fees on areas that [we knew] could pay, but also because we knew we had a burgeoning financial services sector, we knew that all the regula-

tions we had to bring in to get us off grey lists and keep us off black lists meant that CIMA had to be buffered up. We had to ensure that we put a fit and proper regulatory regime around the accounting profession and that we continue to advance legal services legislation.

Mr. Speaker, he asked whether we had done an independent study. No, we have not done an independent study. Quite frankly, I don't need to do an independent study with very basic, basic fees. This isn't us coming out and saying we're now going to introduce a brand-new tax and it's going to be based on persons' income, et cetera. These fees are simple fees in nature.

Let me be clear, the one before us that has to do with stamp duty, yes, we had to make certain assumptions. Let me be clear to the House, the reason for the decline between 2026 and 2027 is that there is a projection by the professionals. I went through, I understood, we had the discussions with the Lands and Survey Department and their professionals and whilst they are extremely conservative, I do believe that once GT ONE, the Grand Hyatt and Landmark are completed and close, there is going to be a small lag between that and the next big projects that have come online, such as the Mandarin Oriental, et cetera. That's why we don't have an aggressive upward trend in 2027.

I do not believe these fee increases for entities that operate in that sector of our economy are going to chase anybody away. You are coming to a place that is safe, stable, with no systemic corruption. Government has never had to be shut down or interfered with by the UK Government. People don't just come to Cayman because we're nice guys; they come because we have a product and a country that we ought to be proud of and it is first rate. They understand that in order to live somewhere that is first rate, you have to pay. Look at what we're asking, 2.5 per cent more on property transactions above \$2 million; 2.5 percent more, an immaterial amount to the cost of any transaction.

When I was in the UK, I had a meeting with the Office of Budget Responsibility. Let's get this point, because the Member for George Town Central refuses to listen regarding this whole issue of projections. I want him to look at the reports of the Office of Budget Responsibility and tell me how much better they are than we have been at the end of our financial years each time. How much better are they?

We had a meeting with the director of fiscal projections the week before last. When we explained what we do and what we did in this budget, he looked at us and said, *Well, I can't add anything to what you're doing. I can't add one more suggestion because you have as robust a system as we have in terms of our projections.* He laughed and said, *the issue is that it's so hard to explain this to the average person, but projections are never right. We never get*

it 100 per cent right. It is one of those jobs in the world that you know, every year that you do it, you are actually going to be wrong; you just want to be materially correct — and he is so right. He was absolutely right.

That office was created in the UK to try to provide an independent voice, so I will admit that the Member for George Town Central has a point. What I can say is we already have in our legislative infrastructure a number of things that most countries don't have. Find for me how many countries have to produce and gazette quarterly and audited financial statements by the government. How many countries do it? How many countries actually do that? We've gone to great pains, but we seem to not be able to get this point across, and so it's really, really making me rethink, as Minister of Finance, about how we need to report in this country.

The vast majority of our revenues are derived during the first quarter. There is something that I've been mulling over, and I know the Member for Bodden Town West is going to agree but I'm just going to say it publicly right now because it will feature in yet another area that we are going to have to reform. That is, we are going to have to consider how much of the revenues that we earn in the first quarter do we ought to start recording as 'unearned revenue', so that we stop having this situation where the first quarter produces a "surplus" which then funds the rest of the year.

What this does is, the average person hears these reports and says, oh, good grief, the government in the first quarter had a \$200 million surplus; therefore, you multiply it by four, you should get an \$800 million surplus. Whereas I and every Member of this House ought to have known that every year, for decades, April through December are always in deficit. It is just the nature of our economy and our legal infrastructure. We say fees have to be paid in the first quarter in financial services, so the revenues come in. In tourism, the high season is the first quarter, so the revenues come in.

We are going to have to truly go through an exercise of modernising not just our budgeting, but our financial reporting system, so that we actually start to produce information that is more accurate, because from a real economic standpoint we've earned the money, and those monies aren't refundable, but the fact is we recognise it all in the first quarter. It then gives this false sense of security and so policy-makers and the public get these reports that are actually not accurate from the standpoint of what we all know is going to happen for the 12 months. That is something else that we are going to have to put in the mix— how do we actually report our busy season's true earnings and profit and loss statement recognition as it were, that first quarter of the year. I think that's something that would be very helpful if we actually do it from a financial reporting standpoint, so that we don't have all of this confusion.

The second thing is — and let me say it because apparently this point still has not resonated with certain Members of this Parliament. When projections are done, but the projections incorporate what ministries know they are going to spend versus what's budgeted, because a supplementary bill is then brought to this House does not then mean that those numbers that you actually appropriate are going or haven't been already considered. What do I mean by that?

Let us just say, for example, in 2025 we had, I think it was some \$18 million in the budget for NGS 55, whereas we knew that the history was \$40-\$45 million plus. When the finance team goes out to ministries and they actually give us their feedback, the ministries know that it's not going to be \$18 million, so they already included it in their projections and therefore that gets included in what gets purported publicly. When we come down here and do a section 12, we're not "getting that money again". I got this question asked of me during the budget process; a member of the public who had been listening to much of what has happened since the election, asked me the very pointed question of how is it that we came to the Finance Committee and appropriated monies for HEA 2, NGS 55, and TP 41 and TP 47, yet I was still projecting out a deficit that was very small? They thought this was net new money, but it was already included in the projections that had been reported publicly. All that section 12 appropriations were doing was filling in the actual legal authority for us to spend what the ministries already knew those expense items would be.

Mr. Speaker, there has been so much confusion around this whole topic of projections and the poor Financial Secretary and his team are made to look amateurish publicly when in fact, they are doing a stellar job. It's just that our Members don't actually understand their own system of governance in this country. That is right, Mr. Speaker, there are Members in this House who think they understand, but I suggest that if they want to understand, they ought to go back to school and actually become experts. Don't just lay around and have people give them all this hog wash.

Insurance licence fees, what impact are offshore insurance licence fees going to have on the average Caymanian? Exempt company trade and business licence fees, what impact is that going to have on the average Caymanian. Annual operating fees for accounting firms, again, which average Caymanian is that going to impact? Special economic zone trade certificates, which average Caymanian is that going to impact? Fund annual return filing fees, which average Caymanian is that going to impact? Exempt limited partnership and corporate service provider fees, which average Caymanian is that going to impact? Virtual assets service provider fees, which average Caymanian is that going to impact? Registration and annual company fees, which average Caymanian is that going to impact? Practising certificates for in-house

counsel and law firms and admission fees for non-Caymanian attorneys and law firm operating fees, which average Caymanian is that going to impact? Website recovery fees, which average Caymanian is that going to impact?

The vast majority of work permit fees, let me be clear, are not going to be increases in actual work permits. There is one, the standard administration fee has been banded; if the cost of the work permit is \$0 - \$2,000, the fee goes from \$100 to \$150. I give the Member for George Town Central [that], any Caymanian or small business, typically that's the level of work permit fee that's going to impact the average Caymanian. The annual administration fee is going to go up from \$100 to \$150. Now, if he is going to suggest that it is going to cripple the average Caymanian, then that could very well be his opinion, but it's certainly not mine. It is certainly not my opinion.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the vast majority of the fees, and even in immigration, you know where the big fees are coming from? Residency certificate - persons of independent means increased from \$20,000 to \$50,000. That's non-nationals who are coming in to get permanent residency. Certificate of permanent residence for persons of independent means, \$100,000 to \$200,000. We've long said we're giving away the country and we're giving away these certificates. These are wealthy retirees coming to the country. Direct investment certificates, \$20,000 to \$50,000.

You see, Mr. Speaker, the vast majority are fees attached to persons of means who are typically either in the financial services industry or persons who are wealthy. That is where the vast majority of these fees are being derived, so this story that I, as Minister of Finance, need to go out and hold this hugely sophisticated economic impact analysis, when I could clearly see that these are very targeted, specific measures that are not going to impact the average Caymanian...

If we want to talk about other facts, let's look at the average basket of goods that the average Caymanian actually spends their money on. That, Mr. Speaker, is what the Government focused on. This is published data that the Government looked at: Cayman Islands per capita household consumption, housing, utilities, gas and other fuels - 32.7 per cent. What fees have we increased in that area? Zero. Transportation - 11 per cent. What fees have we implemented in that area? Zero. Food and non-alcoholic beverages - 9 per cent. Mr. Speaker: 9, 11, and 32.7, we're up to 53.7 per cent of the average Caymanian household; what fees have been implemented in that area? Zero.

Restaurants and accommodation services, what material fees have we impacted in that area that is going to drive the cost of living for the average Caymanian? Insurance and financial services — again, Mr. Speaker, we have placed the fees in the offshore sector, not the onshore sector of that indus-

try. Nothing on the onshore sector. Furnishings, household equipment, and maintenance, no fees in those areas.

When we look at what the average Caymanian consumes, that is why we were very confident in rolling out this package of revenue measures to ensure that the average Caymanian and how the average Caymanian has to live and have their being would not be impacted by these revenue measures.

Now, let us get back to the business at hand, the Land Holding Companies Share Transfer Tax (Amendment) Bill that we're debating. Mr. Speaker, we are ensuring that anyone whose beneficial ownership of land in the Cayman Islands is done through transfers of shares in a company that owns the land is what is caught in that specific Bill, because we needed to ensure that people couldn't just go from having personal, in their name, ownership, to doing it through a company and therefore avoid the increase in fee. That is why we have this Bill before us. Whilst Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge that the majority of revenue is typically through persons purchasing property in their own right, in their own name, we had to ensure that those who own their land through a company would also have to pay the increased fee that is the 2.5 per cent increase in the one-time stamp duty.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know why... I wish I was blessed like the Member for Bodden Town East to speak 12 languages —

[Laughter and inaudible interjection]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Because if I were, I think I would have been able to speak at least one language my good friend the Member for George Town Central would have understood; because it seems it would have taken me to 12 languages to convince the Member. I have given the Member evidence, after evidence, after evidence, yet I don't know who these people are that he talks about who have been telling him about this trickle-down effect.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Let me also make sure he understands one thing: trickle-down economics was one of the biggest failures in economic policy in US history. That's the reason why even the new Republican Party doesn't push that as an agenda item. I understood the point he was making. Namely, what impacts could it have?

I accept that, so I'm not going to pick on a specific term, but one of the good things about life is, my good friend Member for George Town Central, if God spares our life, 12 months from now we are going to be able to look back and see how the budget has performed. We will be able to see whether Caymanians are better off or not. We will be able to see if we can avoid some of the borrowings, because that is

what we are looking to do. We're hoping to beat the budget projections, but in doing so, we are going to have to ensure that we shore up policy areas that we know we would want to spend some more money on. We can avoid borrowing as much as we are projecting to and therefore avoid the interest cost that would be attended.

If we beat the revenue projections, Member for George Town Central, isn't that a more practical use?

[Inaudible response]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Okay.

You see Mr. Speaker, this is what I love about a Friday after a good little bit of preaching to start off. You start off with the Bible and you end at the right place.

[Laughter]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: I've now converted the Member for George Town Central. He is saved!

[Laughter]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: He has come to the altar and he must now be forgiven. Now, Mr. Speaker, he has confessed his sins and I am so happy.

You see, I didn't think we would get to this day, but you are now in agreement with the fiscal policy of the government and I assure you, here's my promise: any revenue projections that we beat, we are going to buffer up with additional policies that we know are going to drive good results for our children. You would agree that if I can do more for ECAP that is better than a rebate. You would agree with that. You would agree that if we can avoid borrowing as much as we are projecting, that it would be a good thing for the country; and you would agree that if we start to set aside more in a real reserve for a rainy day, that's a good thing.

Mr. Speaker, I didn't think we would get here as I said, but we are here. It is so good. That's what an old Member of this House used to say, if you keep them late long enough, then you can get an agreement.

[Laughter]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: At 8:30 p.m. on Friday 12th, December, this House can record that the Member for George Town Central agrees with the fiscal policy of the National Coalition for Caymanians.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: I look forward to him voting for this Bill because this is the best way forward; but let me be 110 per cent serious.

Colleagues, the committees that you all have heard me in this House commit to creating are about the collective capacity of Parliament, bringing in our public servants and the private sector where we need to and where it's appropriate, because we have to address our structural weaknesses. We must build the capacity so that we leave all of our systems stronger than we found them.

One thing that the Member for Bodden Town West and I share in common is we are 100 per cent in lockstep about the changes we need to make to our finance system, health insurance industry, pensions, and banking and how we utilise the government's balance sheet to truly benefit the country without risking our financial position.

Mr. Speaker with that, I am happy to say that I can now really rest easily tonight knowing that the Land Holding Companies [Share] Transfer Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2025 enjoys the support of Members of this House, and now we can go off and really have that Merry Christmas that the Member for George Town Central said that we ought to have. A glorious day it is, Mr. Speaker; I thank you.

The Speaker: The question is that a Bill shortly entitled Land Holding Companies Share Transfer Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2025 be given a second reading.

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Land Holding Companies Share Transfer Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2025 was given a second reading.

The Speaker: Parliament will now go into committee.

COMMITTEE ON BILLS

House in Committee at 8:42 p.m.

The Chairman: The House is now in Committee.

The Clerk will now read the clauses of the Bill; before she does that, with the leave of the House, may I assume that as usual we will authorise the Honourable Attorney General to correct minor errors and such in these bills. Everybody agrees with that? Okay.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION) BILL, 2025

The Clerk:

Clause 1 Short title

Clause 2	General amendments to the Information and Communications Technology Act (2019 Revision) - references to Parts
Clause 3	Amendment of section 2 - definitions
Clause 4	Amendment of section 9 - powers and functions of Office
Clause 5	Amendment of section 26 - procedure for the grant of a licence
Clause 6	Repeal and substitution of section 30 - licence fees
Clause 7	Amendment of section 34 - register of applications and licences
Clause 8	Definitions for this Part
Clause 9	Validation of charge, payment and collection of licence fees
Clause 10	Validation of charge, payment and collection of fees
Clause 11	Immunity
Clause 12	Orders or determinations by a court

The Chairman: The question is that clauses 1 through 12 do stand part of the Bill. All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clauses 1 through 12 passed.

The Clerk: A Bill for an Act to amend the Information and Communications Technology Act (2019 Revision) to amend the definition of “licence fees”; to provide for administrative fees and types of annual licence fees; to clarify the requirement to provide for licence fees to be prescribed and for the making of an application form for a licence; to validate the charging, payment and collection of certain fees during specified periods; to validate actions taken in the charging and collection of certain fees; and for incidental and connected purposes.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Title passed.

LAND HOLDING COMPANIES SHARE TRANSFER TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025

The Clerk:

Clause 1	Short title and commencement
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Clause 2	Amendment of section 3 of the Land Holding Companies Share Transfer Tax Act (2022 Revision) - returns, etc., of transfers to be to be delivered and tax payable
Clause 3	Transitional provisions

The Chairman: The question is that clauses 1, 2 and 3 stand part of the Bill. All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clauses 1, 2 and 3 passed.

The Clerk: A Bill for an Act to amend the Land Holding Companies Share Transfer Tax Act (2022 Revision) to change how the rates of tax are calculated in some cases; to increase the rates of tax payable in the case of a transfer of any equity capital of a land holding corporation where the value of the transfer is two million dollars or more; and for incidental and connected purposes.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Title passed.

The Chairman: The question is that the bills be reported to the House. All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Information and Communications Technology (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2025 and Land Holding Companies Share Transfer Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2025 to be reported to the House.

The Chairman: That completes our work in Committee Stage.

House resumed at 8:48 p.m.

The Speaker: This honourable House is back in session.

Honourable Premier.

Suspension of Standing Order 14(1)

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, just belts and braces. I move the suspension of Standing Order 14(1) to allow the business of the House to go beyond the hour of 8 p.m. until the conclusion of the business on the [Addendum] Order Paper.

The Speaker: The question is that Standing Order 14(1) be suspended to allow the business of the House to continue beyond 8 p.m.

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Standing Order 14(1) suspended.

REPORT ON BILLS

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION) BILL, 2025

The Speaker: Honourable Minister.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, I am to report that the Information and Communications Technology (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2025 was considered by a committee of the whole House and passed without amendment.

The Speaker: The Bill has been duly reported and is set down for third reading.

LAND HOLDING COMPANIES SHARE TRANSFER TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Finance.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. I am to report that the Land Holding Companies Share Transfer Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2025 was considered by a Committee of the whole House and the Bill was passed without amendments.

The Speaker: The Bill has been duly reported and is set down for a third reading.
Honourable Premier.

Suspension of Standing Order 65

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move the Suspension of Standing Order 65 to allow the Bills currently before the House to be read a third time.

The Speaker: The question before the House is that Standing Order 65 be suspended to allow the bills before the House to be read a third time. All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Standing Order 65 is suspended.

THIRD READINGS

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION) BILL, 2025

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Finance.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Information and Communications Technology (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2025 be given a third reading and passed.

The Speaker: The question is that a Bill shortly entitled Information and Communications Technology (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2025 be given a third reading and passed.

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Information and Communications Technology (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2025 was given a third reading and passed.

LAND HOLDING COMPANIES SHARE TRANSFER TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Finance.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Land Holding Companies Share Transfer Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2025 be given a third reading and passed.

The Speaker: The question is that a Bill shortly entitled the Land Holdings Companies Share Transfer Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2025 be given a third reading and passed.

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Land Holding Companies Share Transfer Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2025 was given a third reading and passed.

The Speaker: That completes the business on the Addendum Order Paper. I now invite the Premier to move the adjournment of this honourable House. Once the adjournment is moved, I will wish you all a Merry Christmas and the rest can follow.

ADJOURNMENT

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank all Members for their contributions for this entire Third Meeting. It was a long one. It gives me great joy to move that this House do now adjourn sine die.

The Speaker: Thank you.

Honourable Members, this is the time when we wish each other a Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year, so let me start off by wishing each of you and your families a very merry and joyous Christmas and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year, and caution us all to remember the reason for the season. Without the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, there would be no Easter and therefore no redemption opportunity for our sins. Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year to each of you.

Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you for that touching and poignant reminder of the reason for the season. I'd like to first of all thank all the Members of the House, the Caucus, including the official Opposition and the independent Opposition. It has been a very, very productive year in 2025; we've conducted a lot of business openly in front of the public, had very strong debates, good, strong contributions, and I think it has been good for the country under your Speakership to invite in more of the community as you've been doing. This week we saw the Ministers' Association and were blessed with the primary school children's Christmas carols. I know that you will continue that in 2026.

For my part, I want to wish the entire country a safe and prosperous holiday season. Take care of each other, take care of each other on the roads; slow down. If you drink, you can drink, just don't drive. Remember again that we live in a blessed country for which we should be grateful. When you look around and you span the globe, it's hard to find places that are better to play, live, work, and love than the Cayman Islands.

I'd like to say a word to the good people of West Bay South. I can't wait for the final Cabinet

Meeting to end so I can get out and about in the constituency and visit as many of you as possible. Thank all of our supporters. This was in fact an election year, so I thank all of our supporters, the Caymanian Community Party, and all the constituents across the Islands that supported us. Thank you for that. Also, none of us can do this without our families. I'd like to thank my wife Tiffany; Jackson, Savannah. I broke a promise; I thought I could get home for supper tonight. That's gone, but there will be suppers that I will be able to attend during the festive season to have quality family time.

May God continue to bless these Cayman Islands. Merry Christmas.

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier, Minister of Tourism & Trade Development, Elected Member for George Town South: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity this evening.

It's been a pleasure and an honour to be here with you in this honourable House these last couple of days and I thank you for your patience and for your guidance, because I know you've been tested. I also want to thank my colleagues, the Honourable Michael Myles for bringing a very, very touchy Bill to this House and getting it passed. I also want to recognise the Honourable Minister Rolston Anglin for his contribution as well.

I could not go without mentioning the last three remaining Members of the Opposition here this evening, the Member for George Town Central, [Member for] Bodden Town East and [Member for] Bodden Town West. You stuck it out with us and we thank you all very, very much.

I want to wish the good people of George Town South and the Cayman Islands a merry and safe Christmas. I'll also touch on my family; my wife has been here the last two days enduring this process with us and my daughter is here — thank you. I got two... they're somewhere around the island today, I don't know where they are, but anyhow.

Let's look out for each other. Be careful, be safe; and always remember, like what you and the Premier said, the reason for the season. You know, we're very fortunate in this country. We're still a small country, we still know each other, and can still lean on each other. There may be differences across, like I said it's about 15 feet across, but by the end of the day, we're all Caymanians to heart.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: No matter what we do, we're doing it for the best interests of our children.

God bless you all and God bless these Cayman Islands and may we have a prosperous 2026. Like the Minister of Finance says, let's hope in a year

from now we can look back and say, wow, *what a good position we are in.*

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'm grateful for this opportunity to offer greetings to the people of the Cayman Islands. Thank you for starting us off by reminding us of the reason for the season. To not sound repetitive, I think the Honourable Premier and Deputy Premier have shared a lot of what I've been thinking that I would say. Earlier today I saw a quote on social media; it said "*Your presence is the most important present.*"

As we go into the Christmas season, the Premier touched on being safe on the roads. The National Drug Council and the Royal Cayman Islands Police have worked very hard to ensure that on New Year's Eve anyone who wants to go out and have a very good time will have transportation throughout the entire Island. Thanks to the support of the Ministry of Planning, as well as my Ministry, the usual efforts that the National Drug Council makes have now expanded and it's actually quite easy. Persons can pretty much just stand out in front of their homes and they'll see these buses driving around with purple lights; but that's just New Year's Eve.

There are many other occasions that we're going to be celebrating over Christmas, and as the Premier said, and as Minister of Health, I want to just reiterate it's very important for us all to be responsible. We all have individuals whom we know might not necessarily take it upon themselves, but even so, if a friend or a family member is having a Christmas dinner or an office function, offer to pick them up and drop them home.

Coming off of that, I want to just wish all the Members of Parliament a Merry Christmas. I think we all feel the same way. It has been an election year and we've hit the ground running coming into a new term and I think the people who feel it the most are our family members. I am certainly looking forward to being able to get home, get in my kitchen and just spend some good quality time with my family.

Before I sit, I want to thank the staff of the Ministry of Health Environment and Sustainability for all of their hard work, as well as all the directors and the CEO of HSA. I certainly can't leave out the constituency staff; especially since the election, they have been the ones bearing all our loads while we've been busy in our Ministries, so I want to just acknowledge them.

I could go on and on, Mr. Speaker, but in closing, I want to also thank my husband, Michael, and my children; and my mom, Mary, who is watching right now. She really enjoys watching these videos and I enjoy reading the commentary when I sit back down. Mom, I appreciate all of your support and I'm looking forward to getting in the kitchen and baking with you.

With that, Mr. Speaker, thank you all and a Merry Christmas to everyone.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I know you have daddy duties to do, so I'll let you break the flow.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. I'm trying my best to stay out of the doghouse.

Mr. Speaker, let me first say thank you to you. We're coming to the end of the year; we're not going to be back until next year. You're a man of strong personality, and so am I. I appreciate much of the leeway you've offered me over this year and I look forward to 2026 again with you.

The Speaker: Yes. *[Laughter]*

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: To all the staff here in Parliament who work so hard to make sure our democracy operates appropriately, I thank you. To all the civil servants who come in here and deal with our political characters — because let me tell you something, you have to be a special character to be a politician. I appreciate you putting up with us, dealing with all the questions, the annoying comments, and all the other stuff and only getting \$500 honorarium, which you deserve more. We appreciate you.

To all of my colleagues in here, I wish you a Merry Christmas, you and your families — particularly my new closest friend, the Honourable Deputy Premier, who I know is probably going to beat me at pickleball later on in the week.

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Oh yeah!

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: To all you Members, we will have differences of opinions, but we will go to the lunchroom and laugh it off as we always do — the Honourable Minister of Finance owes me a coffee.

[Laughter]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: On behalf of my Honourable Leader who unfortunately had another engagement, I want to say a special Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all the PPM members in our community whom we operate on behalf of and all others in our society. On behalf of my party, I want to say a special Merry Christmas to them, but also to my constituency staff in my own office in George Town Central, my team and my committee who support me throughout this process.

To all my constituents in George Town Central, each and every one of you, I'm going to do my best to be out in the community as well as do our rounds for Christmas. I hope to see each and every one of you and give you a hug or a kiss and have a chat with you to talk about Christmas, so hopefully this is not my last conversation with you.

Not only to George Town Central, all the constituencies and districts and islands, Little Cayman and Cayman Brac as well, I wish you all a Merry Christmas. As you said, Mr. Speaker, we all should remember the reason for the season, because Mr. Speaker, there are going to be some families this year bringing in this Christmas without somebody that they love for the first time, and it's going to be a weird Christmas for them. I think about you and I pray for you and my sympathies are with you for those who are going through that difficulty.

I want to also say a special Merry Christmas and protection for all of our emergency services members: the police, the fire department, customs, and border control; while we are all trying to enjoy the spirit of Christmas, they're still on duty trying to make sure that our Christmas is enjoyable.

I want us to also remember to try to think about somebody who may not have something to make their Christmas warm, whether it's a plate of food, whether it's a gift, whether it's paying their bill, because there are many people in our community who ain't gonna have as wonderful a Christmas as all of us. I know all of us, as politicians, we always do something, but try to find those who are genuinely hurting inside and need some support, because the best way for you to have a good Christmas is to make sure somebody else does.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Finance. I knew you and your generosity would give way to the Member for George Town Central.

[Laughter]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Oh, yes, Mr. Speaker, especially after having such a wonderful worship service with him earlier and to see him come and be washed and be one with the NCFC, I had to give way.

[Laughter]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, firstly, thank you. I recognise you as Speaker and therefore I begin by wishing yourself and your entire family a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and prosperous 2026. Many of us do not realise in our parliamentary democracy that whilst you're no longer active in representational politics, you still have to put up with us, and also

be here late — like 9 o' clock on a Friday night — away from your family as well serving the country in this most esteemed role.

In an election year, as being someone that I've known for many, many years, I thank you for your service because your stewardship here in the Parliament is greatly, greatly appreciated. How you've brought the community into Parliament is something we talked about in my first three terms that I served, but we never managed to achieve it and this is wonderful, wonderful, wonderful to see.

Let me thank the good people of West Bay North. As I sat, I thought about being back here 12 years later to offer Season's Greetings; it has been a long journey back, but I thank each and every one of you, whether you voted for me or not. I thank every one of you — especially those who showed up on April 30th and exercised your democratic right — for participating. I thank you for placing your trust in me and that trust will be one that you will not regret because I will in my own way represent you to the best of my abilities and represent this country, because when you're a Minister you represent everyone. I'm not the Minister of Education or Finance for West Bay North, but for the entire Cayman Islands, and so I thank all of you.

As the Member for George Town Central said, let us be real, there will be families who are missing loved ones or for whatever reason may have challenges this Christmas, let us do our endeavour best — all of us, not just politicians, but all of us in our communities, to reach out and make someone's Christmas merrier.

As for me, on Saturday, December 20th, I'll be holding my annual children's Christmas party at the Teacher Al Al Park, so I welcome and hope that I will see many of the children from West Bay North in attendance. I will also be, as many Members are, going throughout the community in a tradition that I have been doing now for the better part of, I think this will be my sixth year. I will be going around visiting seniors and disadvantaged families this Christmas because that's extremely important. Once again, I thank every one of you.

Let me then thank all the Ministry staff, all staff of the Department of Education Services, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, and all the departments under that Ministry for all of your service to this country.

I especially want to thank all of our teachers and those who work and have an impact on our schools, whether you're a cleaner, a bus driver, or a therapist. Whatever you do in regard to our children, I thank all of you from the bottom of my heart.

I want to thank all staff in our health, uniformed services, transport — people who are going to move us around, some of us will fly this Christmas to another place and those persons will be out there on Christmas Day, piloting planes and sailing cruise

ships and doing all sorts of things when many of us will be at home with our families. I wish all of them a Merry Christmas; keep them safe.

I want to echo the sentiments of colleagues. If we're going to have a little more joy and joyous occasions this Christmas, let us keep safe. Let us not drink and drive. Let us ensure that we keep ourselves and our communities safe. Let us have a Christmas that is free of tragedy and ensure that we all make it to 2026, God willing.

Let me also thank my family. I want to thank all of my five children. Mr. Speaker, I'm blessed to still have one parent, and so I want to wish my father a Merry Christmas. I know times are tough right now for him; being the manager of the butcher shop at the turtle farm, this is his busy season. He's under a lot of pressure, but it's something that he absolutely loves, and so I wish him a very Merry Christmas. Certainly he, my nephew, and I will be having quite a few fun card games and that's the way he loves to enjoy his time. To the rest of my extended family, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Last but by no means least, I want to thank all the hard-working committee members who put their trust and faith in me and worked assiduously for me to be back in this position. All the work that you put in has not gone unnoticed. There's an old saying that sometimes you have to be careful what you wish for — I have not been able to spend as much time as I would have wanted to, but we needed to get a budget and much work has gone in. I really want to say to each of you, thank you and I will be seeing all of you over the Christmas season while moving around not just West Bay North, but the community generally and districts generally. I will be attending functions in various districts of colleagues to try and see as many Caymanians as humanly possible during this Christmas season.

Mr. Speaker at this joyous time, let us thank our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for being the saviour of the world, the light of the world, and let us all seek that light during this most heavenly season to celebrate his birth.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Minister of Social Development & Innovation.

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, like my colleagues before me, I also want to thank you. Thank you for being a captain of this ship for this season and for steering us through the many, what could have been turbulent waters.

I want to also thank all the parliamentary staff for all the hard work they've had to do, especially making changes on the fly, Order Papers, printing, all sorts of things. Also, my parliamentary colleagues here — what people will probably see and hear on the

radio is not how we are when it comes to socialising and stuff. We all have our desires to see the Cayman Islands do well, but we have different thoughts on how we achieve that.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank all civil servants, those who are seen and those who are not seen, who help make this country run as effectively as you see it. I also want to thank all the staff members from both my ministries, Ministry of Social Development & Innovation and the Ministry of Youth, Sports, Culture & Heritage, and all the relevant departments that we are responsible for, all the staff members there. To those who are working throughout the whole weekend at the care homes, I also want to thank them for the hard work they put in.

Mr. Speaker, especially to those primary school kids who came here today, I have to say how pleased I was, and I want to also thank them, their teachers and especially the PTA [Parent Teacher Association] president for bringing them out to sing Christmas carols for us.

A couple of persons have mentioned the reason for the season, but it was also a gift. The first gift that we got was John 3:16, "**God so loved the world that he gave us his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish,**" that was the first gift we got. Certainly, in the joy of giving, while we may not be able to give [gifts to] everyone, we can give everybody something; some time, a phone call, something to share with our communities this coming Christmas season.

To the entire Cayman Islands, especially the constituents of East End, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to represent you in this honourable Parliament. I wish you joy, peace and love to your hearts and your home, and I want to wish everyone warmest Christmas greetings. Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of District Administration & Home Affairs.

Hon. Nickolas T. A. DaCosta: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what a year it has been. Well, I know it's only been eight months, but I've certainly aged more in the past eight months than I have ever in my life.

[Laughter]

Hon. Nickolas T. A. DaCosta: Christmas has always been a special time for me, and hearing the Minister next to me speak about the radio reminded me of one of the special moments growing up in Cayman Brac experiencing Christmas. I always tell people I had a unique opportunity being a child in Cayman Brac where I experienced traditions of the past; I grew up

backing sand from the bay into Granny's yard, I did that as a child and one other special memory that I have is these same messages from Parliament. Before YouTube, before TV, we had the radio — sometimes it wasn't even live, we heard it afterwards, and we had to memorise the voices. I would always say *Mama, who that is, who that is?* And she would tell me and you memorised who was speaking. To actually be here now, seeing those Christmas messages take place brings back many childhood memories.

Mr. Speaker, no matter where you go throughout this world, Christmas in Cayman is truly special. It cannot be beat — anywhere. I'm only reminded of our national song; 95 years ago, our national hero, Honourable Leila Ross-Shier, wrote our national song and one of the verses that we very seldom sing and probably very, very few know is the third and final verse.

The Speaker: Sing it.

Hon. Nickolas T. A. DaCosta: Sing it?

The Speaker: Yeah!

Hon. Nickolas T. A. DaCosta: I'm not sure about that, sir.

**"When tired of all excitement,
And glam'rous worldly care,
How sweet thy shores to reach,
And find a welcome there,
And when comes on the season,
Of peace, good will to man,
'Tis then I love thee best of all,
Beloved Isle, Cayman!"**

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Nickolas T. A. DaCosta: Mr. Speaker, no matter how far we roam, how far we go, Christmas, the season of peace and goodwill, cannot be beat other than the shores of the beloved Cayman Islands. We are truly blessed and highly favoured for all that we enjoy and the family that surrounds us.

On December 1st, Mr. Speaker, we had the official tree lighting in Cayman Brac and in Grand Cayman simultaneously to open the Christmas season, and then on Cayman Thanksgiving on December 7th, we had the official tree lighting in Little Cayman, so Christmas is officially here. One message that I have been saying to everyone is: let us go into this season and welcome the New Year especially, reflecting on and remembering the village. The village of where we came from, the village that built us, the village that was around in 1930 when that verse was written, because it's up to us to take care of each other, Mr. Speaker.

It's up to us to remember the reason for the season, remember the spectacle, the miracle, the gift,

the greatest gift that we received and how that has changed our lives. We must be that difference in changing lives this season, the year to come, and for many more years to come.

We must bring back the village. It not only takes a village to raise a child, Mr. Speaker, but it takes a village to survive, and we must ensure that that village is also there to help us thrive. That is my challenge to everyone; honourable Members in this House, everyone within the sound of my voice: bring back the village. Take care of one another because at the end of the day, we are all we have. We need to look out for each other.

Mr. Speaker, to you, to the staff of Parliament, I wish you a very Merry Christmas. I know you must be excited that we are sine die so early in the month. To my Ministry, the Ministry of District Administration & Home Affairs and all the departments and agencies under my Ministry, which include all of our first responders, this is the season when we see a lot of activity, a lot of festivities, and we want to ensure that everyone is kept safe. Our men and women on the front line are there to protect us, but we want to ensure that they are able to go to their families as well and not have lingering memories of any tragic loss on our roads around our communities. We don't want any family to not be whole. I ask that everyone keep that in mind as we celebrate the Christmas season.

This year, Mr. Speaker, I started off saying it brought many changes, but many blessings. I want to sincerely thank my family for standing by me, especially my little boy Simon, 4.5 years old — he fully understands when I'm working late and he puts strict orders on me sometimes too. He knows that on Tuesdays especially, my colleagues over here like to keep me in Caucus for long hours, so he knows that daddy doesn't come home on Tuesdays; he sees me the next day. They have been truly great at understanding and all that I do. I said it in my first speech here and I'll say it over and over again; it is for that generation that we must do what we need to do in this House. We must continue to always remember that in the back of our minds.

To everyone else, especially the people of Cayman Brac West and Little Cayman, I wish you a very Merry Christmas. Unfortunately, I was not on the jet this evening because I was here, but I look forward to coming home this weekend and staying with you throughout the season and celebrating with you into the New Year, because home is where I want to be and home is where I shall forever be. To you all, to everyone here and your families, I wish you a very Merry Christmas and indeed a Happy New Year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Minister of [Caymanian] Employment.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if I never have to say “in accordance with Standing Order 70”, I would be blessed.

[Laughter]

Hon. Michael S. Myles: My brain is tired. It's been a hell of a day, it's been a hell of a year, and I can only trumpet what everyone else has said before.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank God for getting me here. I would like to ensure that our people know that I'm a God-fearing man who has stood here in service for them. I've written down a few things because I didn't want to forget anyone, but I'd like to thank God for good health and strength for all of us in here. I know all of us have worked hard to get to Parliament and like the Minister of Finance rightfully said — it's been a long time for him as well, but I look at all the things that we've all done and how we've clawed ourselves back in this to make it worthwhile, to ensure that we're not just here to save a country, but we're here to serve.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to thank my family, in particular my wife, who has also been here for the last couple of days and has been a phenomenal support for me. She's picked up slack because this job demands a lot and I'm here to give a lot, so she is working overtime to do her job and certainly raise our very ambitious 11-year-old. I want to give her thanks because she planned and executed my campaign to get me here, walked the road with me, did everything possible and continues to stick with me throughout the long hours, long days, weekends, and holidays. While there are times when it's broken her down, she stands firm and has continued to support me.

I'd also like to thank my mother who just turned 70 this year and is in great health, still works hard and just loves being at the hospital and serving people. I've got much of my determination and my perseverance from her, certainly my humbleness and quite often my fierceness to consistently fight for what I believe in. She has always taught me about being respectful, but firm. I'd love to tell her thank you for all the lessons that she's taught me about hard work, and about heart and courage. Mama, I love you. I love everything that you've done to raise me to the man that I am.

I would also like to thank my daughters and all the work that they have done to support me over the years and certainly the things that they're doing in their lives. I have a daughter in the UK who's very cold and wanting to come home, but, you know, she is holding her own.

I'd also like to thank my Aunt Elsie who raised my mother. She's 92 years old and she is as feisty as she possibly could be. She raised my mother and she's really been my grandmother. I grew up in her yard on Mary Street, Eastern Avenue, and she's

taught me wonderful lessons about being courageous and having the heart to do the work of service.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the Prospect community for believing in my ability to lead and trusting in me to give me a vote to put me here to represent, not just them, but the entire country. I remain humbled by all the belief and guidance and well wishes that they have provided me over the last nine months. I love the folks in that community, I love that they reach out to me on a consistent basis and I love that every single day I get at least 10 people sending me prayers, voice messages, praying for me. That has humbled me in so many ways. Without breaking a stride, every single day I get WhatsApp messages from many people, telling me how they believe in this government and they believe in all the work that we do and that continues to keep me very grounded.

I'd also like to thank my father figures. These men have been with me since I was about eight or nine years old, and they've taught me valuable lessons on what being a man is. Gillie Seymour, whom I've known since I was about nine years old, and who probably knew me before I was born. He's taught me so many things about life. Not just about football, but he's taught me to live and take risks. Everton Edwards, who has been a tremendous mentor, friend, and father figure to me.

The late Winston Chung, he always wanted me to get into politics. In 2018, God took him away, but I still live a lot through him and through the messages he has guided me with over the last 40 years. I met him in 1982 and he's been a mentor, father figure, and friend ever since then. He's been a tremendous support for me in my life.

I'd also like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, because ever since I came in, you have pulled me, encouraged me, guided me and inspired me to keep on doing this and never break a stride because it's the right thing to do. I want to wish you and your family a Merry Christmas because I believe in folks like yourself who have done this before and are now reaching back and pulling up people like me to ensure that I represent this House with honour. Thank you for all of that.

I'd like to thank this team; our NCFC team has been a tremendous group of people from whom I have learned a lot because everyone brings something unique. I often sit and listen to from Deputy Premier Ruddy to our Minister of Health to Nick over in Little Cayman and Cayman Brac, and it's all so touching because we have so much strength in this team. To sit down and listen to the Minister of Finance quote figures... I'm often amazed. Also, Mr. Saunders — the things that he can recall, the passages I hear him quote or things he's read and can bring up in an instant, it's been inspiring.

I've loved it all. I've absorbed it all. I've learnt so much from the Premier; Mr. Panton, who continues to be that quiet voice encouraging me to move silently

but determinedly; to Minister Isaac, who consistently teaches me about parliamentary procedure. It's been an honour to really have this team. It's all been a phenomenal experience. Ms. Heather — and Mrs. Julie, who gives me a smile and says, *you're doing well, keep going*. All those things go such a long way, because I don't feel this pressure yet; I don't know what it's supposed to feel like. What I feel is a need to serve, and I've always felt that need; but to have this team consistently say *you're doing the right thing* or, *you know something, you should have looked at it this way* has been a blessing.

I'd also like to thank Mr. Dan Scott for including me in the Cayman Islands National Party. I think we have a phenomenal team there as well and all the supporters. They're a home away from home because every time I sit with that team of folks, I learn many things. Mr. Scott has been a phenomenal mentor and friend and he's taught me quite a bit about what being a representative should look like and carrying with class what he wants to see us do as a government, but also as a party.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say thank you to my constituency team. They have been a phenomenal help. I've been slammed with so many things at the Ministry, and Ronnie and Lucia and Coach Gill have taken it by storm and got out in the community and have done many amazing things without me having to prompt them to do any of that work. I'd like to also thank the district council we put together eight years ago; 12 people have really come on strong and they are planning things and are doing a lot of really great work.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank our people. Our people have been absolutely amazing. I can't describe it in words. Whether I'm going into a grocery store or just walking on the road, I have people stopping and saying, *man, you guys are doing great* or *Michael, keep going*. It has been a blessing to have that level of confidence. There are occasions when you think people don't notice that you need that little encouragement, and then I'm walking on the road and someone blows and says, *hey, I'm watching you; keep on going*. It touches my heart. It gives me the warmth in my soul that we can't fail while doing this. We must continue to carry on. Our people are resilient; they are some of the best people I could ever ask for to be a countryman and a citizen.

It's been lovely to grow up in this country. You know, Nick just mentioned taking sand from the beach and putting it in his grandparents' yard. I did that same thing. Or cutting down a Christmas tree and putting it in the middle of the yard, or in your house, and decorating it. Those are the memories that have built me as a man.

Tonight, I want to take some time to thank our people for all their love, all of their confidence, all of their inspiration and their well-wishes. I wish all of Cayman a brilliant Christmas and a phenomenal New

Year. I also can't wait to get out in the community to do my meeting and greeting, and celebrate with our people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Member for Savannah.

Ms. Heather D. Bodden, Elected Member for Savannah: Thank you Mr. Speaker. As we bring tonight's Third Meeting and Seventh Sitting of the 2025 Session of the Parliament of the Cayman Islands to a close, I wish to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt Christmas greetings to my Savannah constituents, our dedicated civil servants and the Clerk and staff of Parliament.

This season causes us to pause in gratitude and reflection. Tonight, as important decisions were debated and made in this honourable House, Mr. Speaker, I am deeply mindful that the work we do here carries real consequences for the lives and future of our people. These decisions are not simply legislative Acts, but commitments that help shape our communities because community builds country.

I also wish to extend a special word of thanks to the staff of Parliament who so beautifully decorated the House of Parliament with Christmas decor. It truly feels like Christmas, with candles burning with the warmth and spirit of the season which brought so much joy among us. The care and attention to detail have created an atmosphere of comfort and reflection and joy during what are often long and demanding Sittings.

May this Christmas bring peace to your homes, rest to your hearts and renewed hope as we look ahead to the New Year. Warmest Christmas wishes and blessings to everyone across the three Islands.

To the constituency office staff, you're so appreciated for all you do while we're here. To my colleagues, stay safe and enjoy your family time. Mr. Speaker, you're an inspiration — thank you so much. Your service is deeply appreciated and please enjoy your family this Christmas. May God continue to bless our beautiful Cayman Islands and please remain safe throughout this holiday season.

I would ask that everyone take a drive to Savannah and see how magical it is, all lit up with Christmas lights. Thanks to NRA for completing the roundabout; it is being appreciated by all who drive through.

Thank you. God bless you all.

The Speaker: Honourable Attorney General.

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is my favourite time of the year as it is for most people, I'd imagine. I want to ex-

tend Christmas Greetings to you, sir, and your family; and all colleagues in this House and their families. It is a special time for us all. As others have mentioned, by dint of tour of duty, we have been kept away from bonding with them as we would have liked to; fortunately for us, they understand why we are doing it and they appreciate what we do so, Mr. Speaker, the Christmas season is an opportunity to fill that empty chair around the dinner table and share with the smiles and joy and everything, all the trappings of Christmas.

I also want to extend Christmas Greetings to my staff, Mr. Speaker. They are invariably behind the scenes, working very hard with no complaint at all. They are meant to prevent government from potential exposure, so I want to thank them dearly for their continued sage advice, professionalism, and support.

Mr. Speaker, like others have done, I want to extend warm Christmas greetings to those who are less fortunate. I can't help but think of some of those in Jamaica who suffered untold devastation during the hurricane and won't be having anything close to any sort of a Christmas but our hearts are with them. For those among us here who are less fortunate, as a people, anything we can do to bring a little smile to their face or a little cheer to their home, it is incumbent on us to do so, sir, and I certainly intend to play my part in that respect.

To our security forces and those who work in our health sector, who watch over us and ensure that we are safe and take care of our well-being and our wellness, we want to extend Christmas to them. I know they will be working while some of us will be resting, so we need to extend gratitude then.

All in all, sir, this is a season of goodwill; we ought to be able to celebrate and be civil to each other. For those on the road who are prone to acts of indiscretion, we appeal to them to be sensible and to be civil. We're hoping that we will all have a very nice Christmas, a very Merry Christmas and make it all safely into the New Year where we again look forward to a productive 2026.

Thank you, sir.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Honourable Acting Deputy Governor.

Acting Deputy Governor, Hon. Eric Bush: Good evening, Mr. Speaker.

First, I'd like to say an honest thank you to you, and honourable Members, for welcoming me so warmly in my acting stint the last three days. The embrace and fellowship that have been shown to me is truly warming, so thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank and recognise the men and women of our dedicated and hard-working civil service and public service. I think that's been echoed throughout the messages thus far. I

think it's fair to say that the civil and public services have had another fantastic year in service to the government and to the people of the Cayman Islands. We finished off strong with the previous administration. We conducted fair and open elections and then we saw the swearing-in and formation of a new government, and the civil service has continued its consistent path of service for the people of the Cayman Islands.

I would like to thank the Government for its stance in working with the civil service and the public service, for your collaborative approach, for your willingness and ability to listen to those who have the expertise and then discuss the way in which you want to see your priorities advanced. I'd like to say thank you on behalf of the civil service for that.

I would also like to thank the Government for awarding the civil service and its retirees a one-time payment of \$500. I know there's been some back and forth about it, but I can guarantee it's very much appreciated and I thank you.

I'd also like to echo the sentiments around road safety and trying to avoid tragedy. As we enter 2026, we look to advance road safety initiatives. The holiday season has the propensity to be very joyous but also very tragic. Road safety is everyone's responsibility. Minister Ebanks-Wilks mentioned the purple buses; last year, over 5,500 people took those buses during one night — 5,500 people.

[Desk thumping]

Acting Deputy Governor, Hon. Eric Bush: It proves the programme works. It proves we can get public transport right if we come together for a single purpose, and the single purpose is to keep our roads and our community safe. I encourage everybody to slow down, and again, if you want to take that drink, have a designated driver or take public transportation — please.

On a personal note, Mr. Speaker, if I may, I want to thank my wife Laetitia, my children, Ethan, Sophie, Alex, and Christoph, for their support. They are my rock, my foundation, my motivation; they are why I get up. As said before, we make decisions not for ourselves, but for our future and our grandchildren. Of course, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention my mother, Nancy Bush. This will be the full first season we all go without my father, but he's in a better place where we all hope to be one day.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I would like to wish everybody a very Merry Christmas and a most prosperous New Year. God bless you all. Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town West.

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

Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, I'd like to thank God. As much as I may not live the life that my mother and my grandmother wanted for me, I still try to maintain my relationship with God in my own unique way and I really want to thank Him, more than anything, for sparing the Cayman Islands for this hurricane season. We saw how close it could have come; it could have easily gone a different way. Despite our challenges, this is still one of the best places to live and work, and I want to thank God for his continued blessings on the Cayman Islands and the people of the Cayman Islands.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, while I would have preferred to do it in a different order, I really want to thank my mother first and foremost. She's the one parent I have left, and I try my best. She has been an anchor and a solid rock for me, more than anything. Although she would have preferred me to have mentioned my wife first, because something my mother instilled in me from very early on when I told her I was getting married was, *don't put anybody in front of your wife, not even your parents, your unborn child, or anyone*. She has always pushed that, but I think this one year, for all we have been through this year, for some strange reason, I find myself thinking about my mother a lot.

I also have to thank my wife. Shawnette has been a rock. How she has put up with me, only God can tell you.

An Hon. Member: True.

[Laughter]

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Mr. Speaker, October gone made it 35 years since I've been with her, and in July we celebrated 26 years of marriage. I've been with her since I was 17, you know; she prefers them young, so that's fine. I really have to thank her, because she has given me three beautiful kids. Both my sons are in the UK and they are coming home next Tuesday. I think the Christmas spirit in my house will start once I have all three kids under my roof. My daughter, Jordan, God bless her, is back home. She's working, she's loving it at Appleby. Despite what people may want to say about some of these law firms in Cayman, based on the feedback I've gotten from my daughter, she loves going to work at Appleby.

Mr. Speaker, I really also have to thank the people of Bodden Town West. They have entrusted me for a third time to be their representative, their voice. Last election, I can tell you, they were there for me. I could not find the rhythm to campaign; I just didn't have it in me. As some of you may be aware, my in-laws were going through their own challenges. My wife lost her sister and her father literally within weeks, so my entire household was a little damp.

I never realised how much I depended on my wife, until she wasn't there to campaign with me.

Luckily for me, many people in Bodden Town West just said, *Chris, listen, we'll carry you through for this one*. I really and truly owe them more than anything.

I'm looking forward to starting my fruitcake deliveries this weekend — I need to get them out of the house because I'm literally going through one per day.

[Laughter]

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Last night I literally ate one entire fruitcake by myself. I'm sitting there, my eyes were a bit blurred, I'm pre-diabetic and I'm not supposed to be eating that much sugar, so the quicker I get the cakes out, the better off I will be.

The thing about it, Mr. Speaker, while we have been blessed, we need to recognise that there are people in our community who are still struggling. During the budget debate when Dr. Lockhart was here, we heard about loneliness in the community. Many people, despite being around other people, are still lonely. It is becoming an issue in our country. As I've always said, the four worst things that can happen to anyone are being sick, old, poor, and alone. I will encourage everyone, including members of the public, to go visit somebody. Sometimes people just want someone to go look for them, to remind them that they are somebody and can have their dignity, et cetera. With that, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank those who have been there for me.

I want to thank all the Members of this honourable House. Despite our differences, I've found most Members to be pragmatic, reasonable, and, most importantly, I found them to be decent. Regardless of what people want to say about politicians this or politicians that, they're still fathers, they're still husbands, they're still brothers, they're still sons and daughters, and everything else. It is one of the things that we need to recognise in this fraternity, that it takes a lot to get here and to stay here and work for the people.

Last but not least, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you. I said it in my speech and I've said it in many speeches: it was your Government that gave me the opportunity to get an education. What I've always said to people is that Cayman has never been about income inequality; it has always been about income ability. People's ability to work hard, study hard, do well, and upwardly better themselves. More than 30 years ago, your government made the investment to give many of us [that ability], and we can say it because there was a time in Cayman when many people did not have the opportunity to get a higher education; your government gave that to me, and for that, I'm grateful.

I'm even more grateful, again, Mr. Speaker because you actually saved my life. For those who have not heard, I'll tell you the story. I was misdiagnosed and was literally sent home to die. I wasn't elected yet or anything; this goes back to 2006.

Ezzard came to visit me as a good neighbour, though he was always in North Side. He came to visit me and just went to Shawnette and said, *listen, go pack Chris' bags; I need to take him overseas*. He came to check on me on Monday, and we flew out that same Monday evening. Tuesday, I was at Cleveland Clinic and they told me I couldn't see a doctor until Thursday. Right there in Cleveland Clinic, Ezzard pulled out his phone and dialled 9-1-1. The ambulance left from one side of the hospital and came around to the other side of the hospital, and at that point, they realised I was literally close to dying; by Thursday I had my first procedure and by Friday I had life-saving surgery.

When I say I owe him my life, I literally owe him my life, because I was completely misdiagnosed and sent home and, left unchecked, I would have died. That's the reason why, as much as people may have challenges and he has had political opponents, I've always said, *listen, the man saved my life; because of him my mother still has her son, my wife still has her husband and my children still have a father*, so when I say that, I really mean it. Even after that, he used to take me to Cuba to get medical check-ups at Cira Garcia to make sure I stayed healthy, so not just a matter of getting me better, but making sure — *Chris, let's go do a check-up. I'm taking you to Cuba to get a proper check-up*. Full 360 kind of stuff.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: I didn't listen to those guys, but trust me, if it wasn't for catching a lot of stuff early, I probably would be way worse off than being pre-diabetic.

Mr. Speaker, what that goes to show is that it still takes a community to do this. The point I was belabouring yesterday in my debate is that what has made Cayman unique is that we developed the right way, where the community came first, the economy came second and the politics came third, and I pray to God we never lose that, because the day we lose it is when we're going to lose this country.

Mr. Speaker, having said that, I just want to thank you, thank everyone, and wish everyone a blessed and merry Christmas. Stay safe, stay healthy and please just don't do anything too crazy. Don't get drunk or anything like that, and if you get a drink, don't drive — you know, the usual stuff that goes with it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. I want you and your family to have a very Merry Christmas and thanks for all that you do for this country and the way that you've tried to structure this

Parliament in a professional manner. I really thank you.

This is my fourth time here. The unique thing about the MP for Savannah, Ms. Heather Bodden, and the MP for West Bay North, [is that] we all have something in common: we left this House and then tried to come back. How crazy can that be? Sometimes it's the people asking you to come back because they like the way that you represented them.

Mr. Speaker, 16 months ago, I almost lost my life; in my words, I think someone tried to kill me — and I do not say that lightly. I was one inch from death. I'm very thankful that God has saved my life and he has more work for me to do; a lot more. I keep asking *God every day, what is my purpose? Please remind me of the purpose you put me on this land for*. I think when you wake up in the morning, everybody should actually say a special prayer and ask God to guide you towards your purpose, because everyone has been put here for a special purpose. Thank God for sending His son to save us from our sins as we celebrate this month, at Christmas, his birth.

To the wonderful people of Bodden Town East and the entire Cayman Islands, I'm wishing you and your family a season full of light, laughter, and fun. Best wishes for a joyous Christmas filled with love, happiness, and prosperity. May all that is beautiful, meaningful, and brings you joy be yours this holiday season and throughout the coming year.

I pray I see all those Members in Bodden Town East at our seniors' event on Wednesday 17th at the Nurse Josie's Park in Bodden Town, Gun Square area. We will have a great time there. We've got the band Impulse playing and everything, so anyone who wants to come out. I wish the Premier were here because I wanted to say a special shout out to him for actually coming to one of my events last year. It was the first time another Member actually came out to one of my children's or seniors' events.

We're going to have our children's event on Saturday, 20th December when we normally give away about 50 bicycles. We've been doing it for a very long time. I think we have the best children's Christmas party on Island. I dare [for it] to be challenged.

[Laughter]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Mr. Speaker, we will have great fun and prizes. I want to thank the sponsors in advance for their support.

Mr. Speaker, I call for unity and ask everyone to support our most vulnerable. I recognise hardships like the cost of living. I want to also thank the civil service and all the essential workers and all Members of Parliament.

I want us to bless the churches and all that they do for our community. Let's look forward to a better year and hope that our attendance comes up. One thing about churches that people rarely mention is the

work. Sometimes we ask, why has Cayman gotten this way or why are we losing our culture? The churches played a special role in our communities, and because the attendance in most churches has gone down, they're not able to play that same role, whether it's financially or otherwise. If you can go out to a church — because God said, wherever three or more are present, He's there.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my Bodden Town East office staff. I want to thank my Rum Point group, our groomsmen group, the Miami group, our BT finest group; we have about 20 to 25 men who get together on a monthly basis to try to do Caymanian cooking — Cayman style beef, rundowns, et cetera. I think some people here have attended before. It's really a good time that we have together.

We really need to create, as the Member for Cayman Brac West spoke about, the spirit of community, the village. We really need to create that. I grew up in a beautiful village and it was my university — Cumber Avenue and Gun Square. Nothing better than growing up in that area. One of the oldest areas in Cayman.

I want to mention the people of Frenchman's Drive, Midland Acres, Kipling, Belford, Bodden Town Central, Gun Square, Cherry Tree, Verneice [Bodden] Drive, Lookout, Condor, Christiana [Forbes] Drive, Silver Hill, Impulse Close, Starwood Drive, Doubloon Drive and Bright Court; God bless you all and your families.

I also want to thank the Filipino community for their support, *Maligayang Pasko*.

[Desk thumping]

An Hon. Member: You know that was coming!

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: And the Spanish community, *Feliz Navidad*. That one was easy.

[Desk thumping]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: God bless you all and your families. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing us to bring these greetings as customary.

Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: The question is that this honourable House be adjourned sine die. All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

This House stands adjourned sine die.

At 10:07pm the House stood adjourned sine die.