



PARLIAMENT
OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS



OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FOURTH MEETING OF THE 2025-2026 SESSION

First Sitting

Wednesday
4 March, 2026
(Pages 1-65)

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. Ruddy, MP	<i>Deputy Premier</i> , Minister of Tourism & Trade Development
Hon. Rolston M. Anglin, JP, MP	Minister of Finance & Economic Development <i>and</i> Education & Training
Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, MP	Minister of Health, Environment & Sustainability
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. Franz I. Manderson, MBE, Cert. Hon., JP	<i>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

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

OPPOSITION MEMBERS

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, JP, 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. Pearlina L. McGaw-Lumsden, JP, MP	<i>Deputy Speaker</i> , Elected Member for George Town West
Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly, JP, MP	Elected Member for Cayman Brac East
Mr. A. Roy Tatum, Cert. Hon., JP, MP	Elected Member for Red Bay
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, JP, MP	Elected Member for Bodden Town West

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
FOURTH MEETING OF THE 2025-2026 SESSION
WEDNESDAY
4 MARCH, 2026
2:03PM
First Sitting

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

The Speaker: Good afternoon. This Parliament is now in session. I call on the Honourable Minister Myles, responsible for Caymanian Employment & Immigration, to offer prayers.

PRAYERS

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

**ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS
OR AFFIRMATIONS**

The Speaker: None.

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

The Speaker: In keeping with our new tradition, I've invited [five] recently retired Cayman Airways pilots. At this time, I invite the Deputy Premier and Honourable Minister responsible for Cayman Airways to introduce them.

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 this opportunity.

It's with great pleasure that we have quite a number of our previous Cayman Airways pilots here with us today and some who weren't able to make it. There's nothing prouder than being a passenger on one of those Cayman Airways flights and seeing that in the left- and right-hand seats of that cockpit is a Caymanian taking us safely. Their safety record has been impeccable. They flew in all kinds of weather and they've always made sure that we landed safely at our next destination.

I'd like to recognise and thank the following individuals: Captain Joseph Jackson, retired on February 5th, 2026. I would also like to recognise Captain Norberg Kel Thompson, retired February 23rd, 2023; Captain Adrian Miller, retired December 31st, 2020; Captain Leroy McLaughlin, retired December 31st, 2020; and Captain Kristen Bergstrom, retired December 31st, 2020. This country owes you great gratitude, and

We want to thank them for all they have done for this country; they have probably flown millions of passengers, locals and tourists alike. On behalf of this House, thank you all very, very much.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Minister.
Member for George Town East.

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart, Elected Member for George Town East: Thank you, sir.

Please allow me time as well on behalf of the Opposition to extend our congratulations to all the pilots that have retired.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Retirement is a good job if you can get it.

[Laughter]

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: Absolutely!

It truly is a joy to see that and to know these gentlemen spent their entire careers here with Cayman Airways. All these years, there's nothing more pleasing than to travel on our own national airline, knowing we were led, captained and crewed by Caymanians. I've known all the names that were mentioned here just now for many, many years; practically all my adult life and so it's particularly pleasing.

I can say on behalf of the Opposition, we congratulate them and certainly wish them well in their retirement. I know some of them, once they retired from their piloting jobs, have continued to work with the airline in other capacities. That really speaks wonders for what the airline can do for our Caymanian people, and reinforces the contributions they have made to the betterment and development of this country, and in particular, Cayman Airways.

I salute them and wish them well in their retirement.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour, Elected Member for Bodden Town East: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank you, first of all, for changing up the way that we do business in this honourable House and utilising it to recognise Caymanians in the fashion that we have been doing over the past year. I want to thank you and I want the Parliament to acknowledge that.

[Desk thumping]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: I've worked 16 years with all these fine gentlemen. At times, I wouldn't even fly on the airplane unless one of them were the captain, I must admit.

On behalf of my Bodden Town West colleague, Mr. Christopher Saunders, if I may say so, and also his wife and sister-in-law who both worked there while I was there, (so it's all a happy family here), thank you all for the service that you have provided to this country, helping Cayman build such an economy.

Cayman Airways was definitely a positive vehicle. Thank you all for your support in the future for Cayman Airways. I wish you all the best in your future endeavours. Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Member for Cayman Brac East.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly, Elected Member for Cayman Brac East: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the avoidance of doubt, I do concur with the representative who spoke on behalf of the Opposition, but I felt it would be remiss of me, being from Cayman Brac where the number one airline by choice and without choice is Cayman Airways.

I'm probably the only Member here who's had the privilege and indeed the honour to have been a director for Cayman Airways, the legal advisor in many capacities with the acquisition of new [airplanes]. I even got my foot broken in Seattle when we brought in the first MAX 8 under the good leadership of another Cayman Brac captain, Captain Dave Scott.

Having said that, Mr. Miller, I probably have the most miles of any Member here, not just by tenure but having flown on Cayman Airways with all of these exceptional pilots. Even before then, I think I was an honorary member of Cayman Airways through my sister Joyce, who flew with them as a senior flight attendant for many years. There's hardly a family gathering where these names — you know, I call them Kel and Rex, and the others who are here, were not brought up.

If Joyce and Dave [were here] I'm sure they would want for me to put in the record their appreciation for the friendship over the years and for the many, many tactical flights that you had to get through, issues like sometimes having to fly around Cuba — which we hope we don't have to repeat based on what's happening now in our geopolitical atmosphere.

Mr. Speaker, it is a proud day when we have come full circle to see Cayman Airways, which many did not support. I spent many long hours; we had meetings at West Bay Town Hall when many wanted to shut it down, including the mother country. I remember one meeting in particular at the West Bay Town Hall; at least one other Member in the House here would remember that meeting quite well. It was one time a former Member of the House was asking for support for Cayman Airways; but I think one of the procedural fundamental tenancies of free and fair elections was forgotten. Slips of paper were passed out to vote in favour, but they weren't numbered or any other way to identify them. All the Cayman Airways pilots and everybody connected to Cayman Airways were there and the obvious outcome was that we voted in favour to keep Cayman Airways and the rest is history.

I believe from Mr. Norman days when you were there, as well, Mr. Speaker, it was identified that Cayman Airways was an insurance policy for the Cayman Islands. Just as the government now is attempting, as has previous governments, to ensure that any institution is fully genetically encoded with

that Caymanian DNA, Cayman Airways probably next to the fire station would take first prize for having brilliant, exceptional, Caymanians who broke that glass ceiling, both male and female.

I don't get to do it so much where I live now because there are so many airplanes now, thanks to Ministers of Tourism who ensure that our tourism numbers are up, but when I lived in Prospect, many, many times out in the yard, I don't know if you were looking down, but especially when you were going to the northeast, or Cayman Brac or to the southeast of Jamaica, you would just see this little Cayman Bracker (well, not so little anymore) with her hand up pointing towards Cayman Airways, saying a prayer for your safety. That prayer, commitment and love will continue. God bless you all.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Elected Member for George Town Central: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon colleagues. I concur with the Honourable Member for George Town East who spoke on behalf of the Opposition, but I thought it would be important as the former Minister responsible for Cayman Airways, as one of the amazing pilots here today retired during the tenure when I was Minister. I had the opportunity to hear all the great stories because, obviously, I'm much younger than him; to hear about all the great things they did.

I just want to say on behalf of all the staff at Cayman Airways, who I know are honoured to know that you are being highlighted again; both pilots. We are proud, we are thankful. A special prayer goes out for all pilots today and in the future, as the world goes through some very difficult times in the air.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Governor.

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

First, let me adopt everything that has been said. I think it's a very proud moment for all of us in this Chamber, and indeed the Cayman Islands, to be able to honour our pilots.

Mr. Speaker, when we walk onto a Cayman Airways plane, it's a special feeling. It's like you're walking into Cayman because you are immediately recognised — everyone is there. As the Deputy Premier said, when you peek into that cockpit and you see

two of your Caymanian people there, there is always that immense pride.

[Desk thumping]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, I had the great pleasure of growing up with Mr. Jackson. We had great moments on Boggy Sand Road in West Bay, playing king of the slippery ledges in West Bay. Great moments, great memories. From that early stage, he would always say *I want to be a pilot*. To fast forward to earlier this year, I think it was this year, when we went to the airport and saw him walk off the plane as a pilot for the last time, it really was touching. To see someone who, as a young boy, wanted to become a pilot and now he is able to retire at the very top of his game in the organisation — he wanted to be a pilot and he left as a captain — is an amazing achievement.

What we all want is for our people to be able to realise their dreams and I think Cayman Airways does that very well for Caymanian pilots; they give opportunities.

Mr. Kel Thompson is someone whom I think we all admire. He was a pilot, then he went into business, and then he came back to be a pilot; I guess the call to duty was strong. Again, great pride for all of us to see our people being able to realise their dreams.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the entire public service and Her Excellency, we want to sincerely congratulate all our Caymanian pilots, especially those here today on their retirement. I guess the only thing I can say is I look forward to joining them soon, so thank you.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Health and Environment.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, Minister of Health, Environment & Sustainability, Elected Member for West Bay Central: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I won't be long.

At first, I said I wasn't going to speak because I know that Deputy Premier shared quite a lot, but anyone who knows me will appreciate how passionate I get about flying and our Cayman Airways pilots. The list of pilots who were acknowledged today, I've flown with just about every one of them, except for one, Mr. Kel, but certainly he is near and dear to my heart as well.

I want to thank each of them for what I would say is prioritising safety. I know, being a former flight attendant, that's something that everybody talks about, and we've heard it today, about the pride that each one of our pilots gives each of us and certainly the comfort of getting onto an aircraft that they flew.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to wish each of them a happy retirement and to thank them for their mentorship. Just showing young Caymanians what inside the cockpit looks like... I flew long before 9/11, when you could actually go into the cockpit as a passenger. You could go into the cockpit and the captains would show you around. Certainly there are many, many good memories of flying with each one of those gentlemen and I want to thank them again for their service to our country.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

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

The Speaker: Member for George Town Central.

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

I arise on a procedural matter under section 48 (1) and (2) of the Standing Orders. In the last sitting of the House, I was waiting to address the matter until the very last minute of the sitting, as per the Standing Orders. Standing Orders 48 that deals with motions on national public policy says:

“(1) Every Private Member’s motion passed by the House which requires action on national policy issues shall be sent by the Clerk, within one week of the date of approval by the House, [which I can confirm has happened Mr. Speaker] to the Cabinet Secretary for submission to Cabinet for the consideration of Cabinet.

(2) A report on the Cabinet’s decision in response to the submission made pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be tabled at the next meeting of the House by the Premier or by a Member of the Government assigned by the Premier.”

Now, Mr. Speaker, obviously I waited the whole sitting of the last Meeting of the House. You would recall that in the first Meeting of this year's Session, I submitted a motion which was approved by the whole Parliament. I have seen that these Standing Orders have not been adhered to and was hoping there could be explanations, from a procedural [point], as to why the Standing Orders are not being kept by the Government.

The Speaker: Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks, Minister of Financial Services & Commerce, Elected Member for West Bay South: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Just to clarify, could you specify the motion?

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to do so if the Member gives me a couple of minutes, but just for reference, most Members would recall it had to do with the decriminalising of speeding in a no-wake zone. That was approved two Meetings ago. Ultimately, they were supposed to have the report to Parliament at the last Meeting, and it was not completed, which breaks the rules of the Standing Orders.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, this is a very new provision in the Standing Orders. I'm not going to get into what the discipline is if you break Standing Orders, but it has been broken. In the last Sitting, I waited very patiently to hear it and they have not done so. I'm hoping for an explanation and a commitment that it will not happen again, because the rules were changed specifically for this reason — so that when motions are approved, the Government won't just ignore them.

The Speaker: Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I thank the Member for the question because he's quite right.

We haven't ignored it. We're actually working on it. The Cabinet's intended decision (we're just waiting to document it) was that the matter would be dealt with in an update to the Port Authority legislation. It's been delegated to Minister Jay as the Minister responsible for ports. I'm pretty sure that we could tie that up within this Meeting and give a report before this Meeting is over.

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

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

The Speaker: Opposition.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Speak the future to be real.

Mr. Speaker, I hear and I appreciate the Honourable Premier's guidance, but I think it would be unfair to this honourable Parliament and to the former Speaker of this House who worked very hard to change the Standing Orders, for us to basically get up and say, *oh, we're working on it and we're gonna get it back later*.

Mr. Speaker, the Standing Orders are the rules of this Parliament and the Premier, in the second Sitting of his administration, has already broken the Standing Orders. It can't be just simply, *oh, we're getting on to it*. It'll be setting a precedent. If somebody else breaks the Standing Orders, can they just give an excuse as to why they did it and we bypass it? I just want to set the stage so we can be clear as to the

procedures moving forward. I'm not trying to make a difficulty out of it, but if that's what the standard is, I want to know as a Member of this House.

The Speaker: I welcome your commitment in particular to keeping the Standing Orders and I look forward to the Opposition obeying every single rule in the Standing Orders from now on, including the submission of questions, motions, et cetera, et cetera.
Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to clarify, I didn't mean to indicate that it would just be fluffed off to another Meeting, I meant dealing with it within this Meeting.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: The question was grappled with of how to deal with it. It took some time to analyse. Now the analysis is complete that it can be dealt with by way of the Port Authority legislation and we'll report that in this Meeting of the House.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND OF REPORTS

Cayman Turtle Conservation and Education Centre Ltd - Annual Report for the Year Ended 31st December 2023

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier, Minister of Tourism & Trade Development.

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I would like to lay on the Table of this honourable Parliament, the Cayman Turtle Conservation and Education Centre Limited Annual Report for the Year Ended 31st December 2023.

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

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: No, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to thank the management and staff of the Cayman Turtle Centre for their efforts in preparing the report and commend the report to the review of Members and the public.

Royal Cayman Islands Police Service – 2024 Adult and Juvenile Caution Report

The Speaker: Honourable Attorney General.

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and good afternoon colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I seek leave to lay on the Table the Annual Report of Adult Cautions administered for

the year 2024, prepared by the Commissioner of Police in accordance with section 12 of the Cautions (Adult) Act, 2017.

The Speaker: So ordered. Does the Honourable Member wish to speak to the report?

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: Mr. Speaker, just to point out that section 12 of the Act reads as follows, with your leave: **“The Commissioner of Police shall cause to be laid before the Legislative Assembly, within three months of the end of each year, a report specifying the number of persons who have been administered with a caution and the nature of the matters for which the cautions were administered.”**

Mr. Speaker, the report is prepared by Commissioner Walton for the year ending December 2024. I certainly would like to apologise for the late laying of that but, other than that, Mr. Speaker, it is self-explanatory.

The report speaks to 21 cautions being administered to adults. Offences include:

- causing fear or provocation of violence;
- assault occasioning actual bodily harm;
- youth cruelty to a child;
- theft;
- insulting the modesty of a woman;
- ferocious dog;
- disorderly conduct;
- possession of an offensive weapon;
- attempted theft;
- damage to property;
- common assault;
- drug possession, (ganja); and
- drunk and disorderly persons.

That's the nature of the offences, Mr. Speaker. In passing, the Commissioner of Police thought it would be helpful to point out the eight juvenile cautions that were administered during that reporting period as well, so they are laid out in the report.

I thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

2024-2025 Annual Report of the Standing Public Accounts Committee

The Speaker: The Chairman of the Standing Public Accounts Committee, the elected Member for George Town East.

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart, Elected Member for George Town East: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable Parliament, the 2024-2025 Annual Report of the Standing Public Accounts Committee.

The Speaker: So ordered. Does the Honourable Chairman wish to speak to the report?

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: Briefly, Mr. Speaker.

Just to point out to Members that the report covers the period from the 7th October, 2024 to the 31st December, 2025. This was really a bridge year for us. What we've done is aligned the annual report date to coincide with the government's year-end so it will be consistent with that.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, this report details all the activities undertaken by the Public Accounts Committee. I'd like to thank all the Members for their contribution and I would like to specifically mention and thank our clerk, Tishel McLean.

[Desk thumping]

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: She was new to the role in 2025 yet she fit right in with the rest of us; made a very positive contribution and was able to pick up very easily and understand the Committee's operations. She has been an excellent clerk to the Committee and I just want to commend her for that.

[Desk thumping]

Cayman Islands Airports Authority – 2020 Annual Report

The Speaker: Minister of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing & Infrastructure.

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks, Minister of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing & Infrastructure, Elected Member for North Side: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to lay on the Table of the honourable House, the 2020 Annual Report.

The Speaker: So ordered. Does the Honourable Minister wish to speak to the report?

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Mr. Speaker, no sir. It is self-explanatory.

The Health Insurance Commission 2024 Annual Report – 1st January–31st December 2024

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Health.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, Minister of Health, Environment & Sustainability, Elected Member for West Bay Central: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present to this honourable House the Annual Report of the Health Insurance Commission and

audited financial statements for the 12-month period ending 31st December, 2024.

The Speaker: So ordered. Does the Honourable Minister wish to speak to the report?

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Unlike what my colleague just said in terms of it being self-explanatory, which it is, from the Ministry we deemed it necessary to share a little about the Health Insurance Commission.

The Cayman Islands Health Insurance Commission is an oversight body given the authority under the Health Insurance Commission Act to monitor and regulate the health insurance industry of the Cayman Islands. The functions of the Commission include:

- assessing and monitoring of premium rates;
- monitoring the conduct of approved insurers;
- resolving complaints; and
- advising the Minister on matters relating to health insurance, including advice on amendments to the Health Insurance Act and Regulations.

Mr. Speaker, during 2024 there were six external outputs that were successfully delivered on behalf of the Health Insurance Commission:

- health insurance complaint resolutions;
- the administration of the Segregated Insurance Fund and number of insured persons;
- public education campaign focused on health insurance;
- the enforcement of the health insurance legislation;
- the provision of policy advice and reports to the Health Insurance Commission and the Ministry of Health, Environment and Sustainability; and
- on-site inspections.

Mr. Speaker, in 2024, the Commission handled 7,798 work orders, which included policy terminations, high-risk applications, individual reports, complaints, and enquiries. Of that number, approximately 59 per cent were either resolved or closed.

Notably, 3,647 policy terminations were investigated and successfully resolved so that employees were able to retain health insurance coverage; 883 applications were also processed on behalf of persons with high-risk conditions including pregnancies, allowing them to obtain health insurance coverage despite their pre-existing medical conditions.

Mr. Speaker, this annual report does not include the 2024 financial performance reports for the approved insurers, as the financial year ends on different dates for several of them. We are currently

working in the Ministry on ensuring consistency through legislative amendments in order to prevent future delays to the submission of the financial performance reports.

Since 2006, the Commission has been responsible for administering the collection of contributions from the approved insurers for the Segregated Insurance Fund, referred to as SIF. For clarity, Mr. Speaker, the SIF consolidates the mandatory contributions from approved insurers and helps our government cover healthcare costs for indigent, uninsurable, or under-insured persons. The monthly contribution for individual policyholders is \$10 for those who have an individual policy, and \$20 for those who have dependents. These mandatory collections are included in policyholders' premiums and the revenue deposited into the Ministry of Health, Environment and Sustainability's executive revenue bank account.

Mr. Speaker, the 2024 draft financial statements were submitted on the 16th of April, 2025, to the Office of the Auditor General. The audit did not raise any significant issues, except for the previously mentioned delay in producing the financial performance report for the annual report. The financial statements present fairly in all material aspects, and it was noted that the total revenue collected by the Segregated Insurance Fund from approved insurers during the year for 2024 was \$6,911,620 compared to \$6,603,830 for the period of 2023. Expenses representing these fees for 2024 totalled \$8,000; therefore, the net revenue for the 12-month period ended 31st December, 2024 was \$6,903,620.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to mention that the net assets of the fund are always zero as all the funds collected, less the operating expenses, are deposited to the Ministry.

Regarding the number of insured persons, Mr. Speaker, the Health Insurance Commission reported an increase throughout the year, starting with 79,077 persons in January 2024 and ending with 81,093 persons in December 2024, based on the information submitted by the eight approved health insurance providers.

As part of our commitment to provide high-quality healthcare services to all our people, we are closely monitoring the indigent persons through the National Health Insurance System database, which is maintained and monitored by the Health Insurance Commission, based on the information provided by the Department of Children and Family Services.

In December 2024, there were 2,282 indigent persons. As of October 2025, that number increased to 2,436, with 784 of those persons considered as temporarily needing assistance and the remaining 1,652 persons being classified as permanently or indefinitely needing assistance.

The Commission continues to educate the public and provide essential information regarding health insurance and its governing legislation through

the DHRS [Department of Health Regulatory Services] website.

In 2024, the Superintendent of Health Insurance participated in a panel of experts at the Chamber of Commerce's Economic Forum to discuss topical health insurance and healthcare-related issues.

To ensure that all health insurance companies are meeting prescribed conditions, the Commission is issuing approved insurer certifications each year based on completed applications. In 2024, from the application submitted, four received conditional certifications which are being monitored for compliance throughout the year.

In an effort to ensure that all health insurance contracts comply with the benefits required under the standard health insurance contract, the Commission carried out inspections on each approved insurer. These inspections included requests for walkthrough demonstrations by the Health Insurance Commission inspectors to ensure that appropriate systems were in place. During 2024, the Commission found that one approved insurer experienced challenges with the processing of claims and retention of staff. This finding allowed the Commission to closely monitor this insurer throughout the year to ensure they were able to honour their obligations to their customers and healthcare providers.

The Commission is also responsible for regulating and monitoring the standard premium rate for the standard health insurance contract, often referred to as SHIC. In this regard, during 2024, the Commission did not receive any applications from the approved insurers to increase the premium rates.

As a government entity, the Commission also abides by the Freedom of Information Act [FOIA] and is obligated to process release of information requests. During 2024, the Commission received 15 FOI requests, all of which were processed, closed, and updated.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the Health Insurance Commission's achievements and thank them, particularly:

- the Health Insurance Commission;
- the Department of Health and Regulatory Services team; and
- the Director of the Department of Health and Regulatory Services, Mr. Mervyn Conolly, who is also the Superintendent of Health Insurance.

Also, as we go in to celebrate Women's Month, [to thank] the team of women. We have the Deputy Director, Ms. Melissa Berry, a proud Caymanian with a clinical nursing background who has recently been appointed to her role; three health insurance inspectors — Ms. Rosandi Weatherford, Ms. Alicia Connolly and Ms. Jacqueline Golding-McDonald; and Assistant Health Insurance Inspector Ms. Tiffany Gilbert, for their hard work and commit-

ment. Mr. Speaker, all of those staff are Caymanians, save for one who is a permanent resident.

I invite the Members of this honourable House to review the report in more detail. I assure this House that the Ministry and Health Insurance Commission continue to work in cooperation with all stakeholders in the healthcare and health insurance sectors to ensure that patients have access to high-quality healthcare and services.

Thank you for your patience. I know it was a long statement but it's been a long time since the public has heard what the Health Insurance Commission has done, unlike my colleague who tells what his people are doing all the time — he does that very well; so I wasn't saying in any way that my colleague didn't have anything to share for his amazing team that he is so proud of.

Thank you, sir.

**Ministry of Planning, Agriculture, Housing,
Infrastructure, Transport & Development –
Charting Sustainable Futures –
2023 Annual Report**

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing & Infrastructure.

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Thank you sir.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table of this honourable House, Charting Sustainable Futures — 2023 Annual Report for the Ministry of Planning.

The Speaker: So ordered. Does the Honourable Minister wish to speak to the report?

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Mr. Speaker...

[Laughter]

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: I will keep it short, sir, and just thank my staff from the Ministry for all the hard work they have done, and everybody that's in the department for all the good work that they have been putting forward. There are good things in that and as I always say, the report is self-explanatory. I've learnt that from the best, the lady from Cayman Brac East.

Thank you so much.

URGENT QUESTIONS

The Speaker: None.

PREMIER'S QUESTIONS

The Speaker: None.

The House is suspended for one hour.

Proceedings suspended at 2:45 p.m.

Proceedings resumed at 3:49 p.m.

The Speaker: This honourable House is back in session. Please be seated.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to your attention that the House is not quorate.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Madam Clerk, question time.

[Pause]

**QUESTIONS TO MEMBERS
OF THE GOVERNMENT**

NO. 49

**SCHEDULE TO CLOSE AND REPAIR THE
ARTIFICIAL TURF OR SYNTHETIC GRASS AT THE
GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

[Pause]

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Mr. Speaker, thank you. The question is: Can the Honourable Minister of Education & Training please say if there is an approved schedule to close and repair the artificial turf or synthetic grass at the Government Primary Schools?

The Speaker: Honourable Minister for Education & Training.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin, Minister of Finance & Economic Development and Education & Training, Elected Member for West Bay North: Thank you Mr. Speaker.

The answer: The artificial turf field at Theoline L. McCoy Primary School (TMPS), Bodden Town, has been formally assessed and determined to require full replacement. It is important to note that this field is also used by the community for sporting activities. The heavy usage of the field by the school and community has led to significant wear and deterioration beyond its useful service life.

The project has been prioritised within the Department's facilities programme. Procurement documentation is currently being finalised in accordance with the Public Procurement Act and associated regulations. Upon completion of this stage, the project will proceed through the required competitive procurement process to ensure transparency, value for money, and minimal disruption to school operations. Implementation is anticipated within this current budget cycle.

As an interim safety measure, a qualified vendor has been engaged to carry out targeted repairs to the most affected sections of the TMPS surface. These works are addressing identified trip hazards and reinforcing high-wear areas to ensure the field remains safe for student use while the replacement process progresses.

With respect to the other Government Primary School artificial turf fields, recent inspections confirm that they remain structurally sound. These sites are scheduled for programmed refresh works as part of routine asset maintenance. This includes replenishment of infill material, seam and edge reinforcement, brushing, and minor surface levelling to extend lifespan and maintain compliance with safety standards.

The Ministry will continue to monitor all synthetic surfaces under its facilities management framework to ensure they remain safe, functional, and appropriately maintained.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

Supplementaries

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

I want to thank the Minister for his comprehensive answer. What I will say in terms of the use of that field, which is heavily used as the Minister alluded to, is they use it about six hours per day, even through the weekend. I don't know what we would be able to do, even after it's repaired; what kind of policies we can put in place to try to ensure that it is maintained and not overused.

Something that has been suggested with these types of fields, Mr. Speaker, is weekly drag brushing to infill compaction to keep the fibres upright, and professional infills and top-ups every year. I thank the Minister for his comprehensive answer.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, certainly the notes made by the Member will be taken on board with the maintenance, not just of this field but indeed other fields. Also, Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, something we have not necessarily enforced is the type of cleats that you can wear in some of these fields, so we are going to be reinforcing the educational aspect to ensure that we get the useful life that our communities and schools deserve.

Some people would say just shut them down to the community, but it's not that simple. These fields are heavily used and a key part of our communities and a key part of how we try to ensure that we not only build community, but have a safe and healthy population.

FINANCIAL YEAR WITH A SURPLUS AND, IF SO, THE AMOUNT OF THE SURPLUS

The Speaker: Member for George Town East.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask question No. 50 standing in my name and it is directed to the Honourable Minister of Finance & Economic Development. Can the Honourable Minister for Finance & Economic Development say whether the government ended the 2025 financial year with a surplus and, if so, what is the amount of the surplus?

The Speaker: Honourable Minister for Finance & Economic Development.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, once we called Parliament, I knew one question was going to be asked and it's this one.

Mr. Speaker, Ministries, Portfolios and Offices submitted their 2025 financial statements to the Office of the Auditor General by the 28th February deadline for examination. During the audits, the Office of the Auditor General will likely determine that adjustments need to be made to the preliminary indicative surplus. In addition, the preliminary indicative surplus does not yet reflect the full adjustment of the actuarial valuation of the defined benefit pension plan. This valuation is typically finalised after the submission of the financial statements to the Office of the Auditor General.

The most recent preliminary estimate of Core Government's 2025 surplus is \$43.7 million [sic]. Mr. Speaker, the fact that there is a preliminary estimate of the 2025 surplus being \$43.7 million does not mean that it was bound to occur.

The preliminary surplus results from the fact that the current Government took decisive action to arrest a trajectory that was heading to a deficit result. The decisive action undertaken by the current Government in respect of the 2025 financial year involved specifying expenditure reduction initiatives, which included the following:

1. maintaining a pause of all non-essential recruitment through 31 December 2025, to allow for Government's budgets to be reset to sustainable levels for the 2026/2027 budgets. Where recruitment is absolutely essential (whether permanent or temporary, including via temporary/recruitment agencies), requests should continue to go via the Deputy Governor in accordance with the then guidance from the Portfolio of the Civil Service;
2. reducing spend on supplies and consumables by a minimum of 10 per cent of forecast expenditure. Suggested areas of

NO. 50

WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT ENDED THE 2025

reductions included, but were not limited to official travel, professional fees, and security services;

3. where possible, reducing expenditure for Outputs from Statutory Authorities and Government Companies by at least 4 per cent of forecast expenditure;
4. reducing expenditure for Outputs from Non-Governmental Suppliers by at least 5 per cent of forecast expenditure;
5. reducing expenditure for Transfer Payments by at least 15 per cent of forecast expenditure; and
6. prioritising, suspending or deferring capital projects not yet contractually committed, to ensure Capital Expenditure and Investments yield reductions of a minimum of \$50.0 million – with the aim to not exceed \$102 million for 2025.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker

The Speaker: Member for George Town East, you wanted a supplementary?

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: No. No supplementary from me.

Supplementaries

The Speaker: Member for George Town Central.

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

I want to say thank you to the Honourable Minister of Finance for that very significant surplus — very contrary to the projections of a \$27 million deficit. With that being said, Mr. Speaker, can the Minister outline these cutbacks? How much did it add to in total, which capital projects did they cut back on, and the amounts?

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Finance & Economic Development.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The cumulative total of the expenditure reductions outlined were as follows:

- \$20 million in personnel costs;
- \$14 million in supplies and consumables; and
- \$11 million in the outputs to SAGCs.

Now, Mr. Speaker, those reductions assisted with us achieving the surplus; however, it is also very important to note that included in this year's surplus were some historic levels of revenue. Mr. Speaker, we saw the relevance of revenue in things like stamp duty and driver's licenses fees because, obviously, as people saw the announcement of the revenue measures,

a disproportionate amount of transactions was reported to me; above \$2 million was registered in the month of December. Under the current legislation, you can renew your driver's licence up to three months in advance of it expiring, and so we saw an uptick in the number of persons who are not Caymanian coming forward to renew their drivers' licence which were within that three month window.

The Speaker: Honourable Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, thank you so much.

I thank the Honourable Minister for those upticks. I'll be diving deep into that tomorrow in my debate, so I'll leave it for now; but the Minister said there were savings in capital projects that caused a surplus.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Well, Mr. Speaker, maybe he can clarify what he said because I heard him say cost savings on capital projects and as far as I know, capital has nothing to do with surpluses or deficits.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, I tried to pause between items 5 and 6, but I don't think the Member for George Town Central picked up on my pause.

I outlined something I had outlined to this House from last year, because as you all recall in Finance Committee and during the budget process, I outlined the expenditure reduction and overall reduction package the Ministry extended out to the entire government. That item was just to ensure that as I was outlining all the expenditure reductions I also did not inadvertently leave that out for fear that the Member for George Town Central would have then said that last year I did announce what the capital target was as well; but it has nothing to do with the surplus or deficit. It is just on the capital side and— for the Members' sake: In the last two decades the vast majority... I think in fact, Financial Secretary?

I stand corrected, in the last ten budgets, for example, no government has actually ever spent the entirety of its capital budget. We go out and say here are all the capital plans, but the fact is we are very rarely able to get all those projects to delivery so, the vast majority of what was saved on capital were for projects that simply did not come to fruition. For example, the submarine cable. Classic example. It was in the budget, it was for millions of dollars, but had not even reached the procurement stage by the time we took office. In fact, that project is one that is still outstanding and underway.

However, just to say that the record I spoke to was in stamp duty collections for the month of De-

ember and was \$29.3 million; a record monthly collection for the year 2025. That pushed us over the top and we wound up with an annual record collection of \$132.5 million in stamp duty.

The Speaker: Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm a bit confused by the Minister's answer. I just got the electronic version, so forgive me for not being as in tune; my computer was a bit slow.

Mr. Speaker, the question asked about what the government's actions were to the surplus and I don't understand the thinking of why the Member would want to include the capital outlay, expenditures and investments in this answer other than to distort the interpretation of the government's spending or lack thereof, because that has nothing to do with the answer but I digress, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister say if they've had a large uptick in persons prepaying, what that now does to their projections for 2026 and 2027, since all the people rushed to pay in advance? I'm quite sure their revenue measure projections for 2026 would have calculated the number of persons based on the population, but now that they've paid all the money in 2025... I recall the projections in the budget are depending on an extra almost \$10 million over the two-year period. Maybe the Minister can tell me what the plan is because I'm not an economist, but one would assume that your numbers are not going to be the same in the years to come as a result of their prepaying.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Member's last comment is perhaps why the motion he's bringing tomorrow is so flawed. Economists rarely tell you this because economists are backwards looking people who can predict very little about the future — that's forecasters. Economists tell you what happened while forecasters project what's going to happen; they are two very different disciplines. However, having said that, I included item 6 because I wanted to be transparent. I went back to what I said originally to Finance Committee and I didn't want to leave it off.

The second thing is, and I don't want to get very technical, but any reduction in capital means there's going to be less depreciation, which is on the operating side of the government's financial statements. It shows up in the Profit & Loss which impacts the surplus deficit — but I digress. I won't go into that because it would have been an immaterial number admittedly.

Mr. Speaker, let me be clear, everyone could not rush in December and get a new driver's licence. Under the legislation, you can only renew if you're three months out from expiry. There is no way for us

to scientifically say how many people were within that band, because obviously driver's licenses expire throughout the entire year. Mr. Speaker, your driver's licence may expire in July, the Serjeant's may expire in April; neither of yours would have qualified. Let's just say, if Mr. Bryan... he's a bad example because he wouldn't have had to pay the higher amount. Let's just say, if an individual's expired within the 90 days of them going to pay, those persons could pay the current rate, only them. If your driver's licence was expiring 12 months from now, you couldn't just show up and say, *oh, I want to pay it early*.

The Member for George Town Central's fear, which I'm sure is him being a good legislator and wanting the best for the country and the best revenue for the country, I'm sure it's a genuine fear.

In all seriousness, right now we are looking at the database along with the good Minister responsible for DVDL [Department of Vehicles and Drivers' Licensing] because I did tell the Minister and his team that I do want them to do the work to see what sort of impact this would have had. The fact is, unless you wound up with the vast majority of people's driver's licence expiring in the first quarter, which is not the case, what they have told me is that traditionally their revenues have been very much focused more toward the centre of the year. That makes sense because that's when many persons who are coming on work permits actually come to Cayman, just before busy seasons, et cetera; and that's in financial services and tourism. They don't have any fear that it is going to be any huge disproportionate amount, but we're going to do that work and we will get that sort of analysis done because they can run the information in their database. Everything that we're doing and have done is about the capabilities of the DVDL and the DVDL continuing to do good work.

What I can say, Mr. Speaker, is that at this point I feel very confident in where we are. By April, God willing, when we come back to Parliament, I'll have another good update on the state of public finances.

The Speaker: Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker; in light of knowing we want to move on because we have a number of questions, I'm just going to wrap it up with two more.

I don't think I got an answer there other than the fact of a definition of what an economist and a forecaster is — and that was wrong by way of definition, but we will deal with that tomorrow as well.

I did hear him say there is no way for us to really say how much, so he doesn't know if this is going to cause a negative impact on his forecasting budget but my last question, Mr. Speaker. The majority of the numbers he highlighted were the cost savings that had to do with hiring, and he did say some official

travel; I believe they went around the world a couple of times since the election, but we're not going to talk about that.

The Speaker: Make the question.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Hiring, official travel cutbacks, support for the Ministries and transfer payments, but Mr. Speaker, if I recall correctly the government made some significant purchases before the end of last year that would have affected the outcome of the surplus. Recently there was an article in the paper which I'm very happy the government has finally tried to address —

Point of Order

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, on a Point of Order.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to make sure. That's a capital amount; I don't want him to now mix up capital with the surplus deficit. I'm just trying to be helpful to my good friend, the Member for George Town Central.

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

The Speaker: Ask a question, please.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: I want to thank the Honourable Minister for that clarity. He just confirmed they have purchased that building. I didn't even get to say what I was going to say in the story, but I guess the media can now confirm because the Honourable Minister by way of a slip has confirmed.

The Speaker: Please ask your question Member for George Town Central.

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

Should I conclude then that the majority of the savings had to do with hiring in the civil service and that was what caused the projected deficit? Is that what the Minister is saying?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: No, it was a projected deficit. Mr. Speaker, just for clarity for the Member so he can answer it correctly. There was a projected deficit. He said the good Government came in and made all kinds of changes and slowed down the projection of this deficit.

The Speaker: Ask the question.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: I did sir. He wanted clarity.

The Speaker: Let him answer it, then.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: You got the question now? Okay.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This is how Parliament should go; nice and smooth. Let me say and let me repeat and let me line them up:

- savings on personnel - \$19.985 million;
- savings on supplies and consumables (and I gave some examples of supplies and consumables) - \$14 million;
- savings on outputs to SAGCs - approximately \$11 million.

There were savings in those areas because of the actions taken by government.

For full transparency, there were two areas where we did not meet our target: supplies from non-governmental suppliers and transfer payments, but he asked for a flavour of where we had savings that resulted from the government's actions, so those are the areas. I didn't want to go down the road of saying that the majority was from personnel. It's the single biggest item at \$20 million, but supplies and consumables saved us \$14 million and outputs to SAGCs another \$11 million. Those two combined are more than the amounts in the area we call personnel.

Let's make sure we're clear on one point: when projections are done, they are done on the basis of what Chief Officers and CFOs say they are going to do by the end of the year. When the Ministry of Finance requests feedback from all the various ministries, obviously we won't know, for example, exactly what they are projecting to do in the Ministry of Health. Their Chief Officer or CFO has to say what their intended activities are going to cost. We stress test them if we see something that looks unusual, so when persons come back and say, *here's what we are projecting to do*, altering the course of what you're projecting to do saves you money.

In other words, if I said that by the end of this year we were going to spend (let's use a simple number, Mr. Speaker) \$100 million on personnel costs, included in that \$100 million was net additional hiring that was going to be \$20 million. If I say to the Ministry, *look, getting to the \$100 million may not be sustainable, let us try to save and cut back. Let us take 10 per cent off that and only spend 90*; you're still spending more, but you're actually saving on what the projection was that we would have reported a month ago.

I don't want the Member to go down the road of cutbacks as in people leaving the system. The cutback is compared to what your projection was. If you project out to spend more and we say no, let's not go

down that plan and not spend that amount, then that impacts what your forecast is. A forecast is just that: A result of what everyone across the civil service has said they're going to do. You accumulate all of that and it becomes your forecast.

The Speaker: Next question.

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

The Speaker: You said that was your last question.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: No, sir, I said I had two. I can happily give you the Hansards if you like. I said two questions, sir, but I am at your mercy, sir.

The Speaker: Next question.

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

Just for clarity, the member said \$19.9 million, \$14 million and \$11 million. Am I correct?

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Yes, sir.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: That's \$44.9 million, correct?

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Yes.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Your surplus now is exactly \$14.9 million, and your answer is that the government is going to have a \$14.8 million surplus.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: \$44.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Exactly \$44.8 million surplus and the savings were \$44.9 million. I just want clarity on the numbers because they look almost the same, off by \$100,000.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, let me go through this again.

On personnel costs we have approximately \$20 million in savings; approximately \$14 million in supplies and consumables; and \$11 million in outputs for non-governmental suppliers. The areas where we did not meet our targets: for non-governmental suppliers we were over \$6.2 million and for transfer payments \$6.8 million — we exceeded the amount.

The Speaker: Next question, Madam Clerk.

DAYS USED BY CAYMAN AIRWAYS' EMPLOYEES FOR THE YEARS 2016 - 2025

The Speaker: Honourable Member for Bodden Town West.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask question No. 51 standing in my name, which reads:

Can the Honourable Minister say

- how many vacation days were Cayman Airways employees entitled to for the years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025; and
- how many vacation days were used by Cayman Airways employees for the years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Gary B. Ratty, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, the answer:

Annual vacation entitlement is structured on a graduated scale based on length of service with employees accruing additional vacation days as their tenure with the airline increases.

The scheduled leave allotment in effect at Cayman Airways is as follows:

- 0-2 years' service – 10 days;
- 3-4 years' service – 12 days;
- 5-7 years' service – 15 days;
- 8-10 years' service – 18 days; and
- Over 10 years' service – 22 days, except for pilots who receive 30 days per year.

The number of days Cayman Airways employees were entitled to for the years 2016 – 2025 is as follows:

Year	Total Employees	Vacation Days Entitled (Total)
2016	482	8,194
2017	464	7,888
2018	436	7,541
2019	428	7,704
2020	393	7,074
2021	355	6,390
2022	359	6,464
2023	376	6,714
2024	411	7,398
2025	405	7,590

NO. 51 ENTITLED VACATION DAYS AND VACATION

The number of vacation days used by Cayman Airways employees for the years 2016 – 2025 is as follows:

Year	Total Employees	Vacation Days Used (Total)
2016	482	7,784
2017	464	7,493
2018	436	7,164
2019	428	7,318
2020	393	6,720
2021	355	6,070
2022	359	6,140
2023	376	6,378
2024	411	7,028
2025	405	7,210

Across the workforce, employees utilise approximately 95 per cent of their annual vacation entitlement each year on average. The remaining balance, which amounts to approximately 5 per cent, is typically carried forward and is expected to be taken within the first three months of the following year. Vacation requests may occasionally be deferred due to operational needs, and in such instances, the unused leave is carried forward on that basis.

Supplementaries

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town West.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Honourable Deputy Premier for that comprehensive answer.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I'm trying to understand what the typical workweek is for Cayman Airways employees.

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, if I could provide that in writing to the Member for Bodden Town West, sir?

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Mr. Speaker, actually I know the answer is 40 hours. The point I want to get through to you, Mr. Speaker, is that, if memory serves me right, in the public service the average work week is 37.5 hours and I believe in Cayman Airways it is 40 hours; over a 52-week period that 2.5 hours difference each week adds up. Cayman Airways is an SAGC, a government-owned company, so they're still public servants. What I'm really trying to understand by the questions I asked is how their benefits compare to other public sector entities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Next question, Madam Clerk.

NO. 52

SICK DAY INCURRED BY CAYMAN AIRWAYS' EMPLOYEES FOR THE YEARS 2016 – 2025

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town West.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll try to abbreviate this question a little.

I rise to ask question No. 52 standing in my name. The question is directed to the Honourable Deputy Premier and reads: Can the Honourable Minister say how many sick days were incurred by staff at Cayman Airways for the years 2016 through to 2025?

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The answer:

The average number of sick days per employee per year fluctuated between 2 and 5, with the actual breakdown for the years 2016 to 2025 recorded as follows:

Year	Total Employees	Sick Days Used
2016	482	1,053
2017	464	1,251
2018	436	1,333
2019	428	1,496
2020	393	896
2021	355	1,207
2022	359	1,608
2023	376	1,351
2024	411	1,637
2025	405	1,941

The Speaker: Honourable Member for Bodden Town West.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Honourable Deputy Premier for that answer. It will be used as part of a big analysis looking at SAGCs and government departments that actually have shift work compared to those that don't have shift work.

Thank you very much.

NO. 53
AMOUNT SPENT ON OVERTIME BY CAYMAN
AIRWAYS FOR THE YEARS 2016 – 2025

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town West.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask question No. 53 standing in my name and again, I'll try to abbreviate it. Can the honourable Minister say how much Cayman Airways spent on overtime for the years 2016 through to 2025. Thank you.

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, the answer.

In 2016, Cayman Airways spent CI\$1,531,340 on overtime payments, rising to CI\$2,072,495 in 2025. The actual breakdown per year is as follows, and it should be noted that the amounts include unavoidable holiday pay as well as pay for any work outside of rostered hours that became operationally necessary.

Year	Overtime Expense (CI\$)
2016	1,531,340
2017	1,461,040
2018	1,298,121
2019	1,659,540
2020	728,211
2021	594,114
2022	1,361,792
2023	1,869,996
2024	2,232,429
2025	2,072,495

Supplementaries

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town West.

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Honourable Deputy Premier for that comprehensive answer.

Just one follow-up question, Mr. Speaker, through you to the Honourable Deputy Premier. Can you say whether those overtime calculations were done using a 37.5-hour or a 40-hour week?

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, if I could provide that in writing to the Member for Bodden Town West, sir.

The Speaker: Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Mr. Speaker, if I could just raise two points — one is more general to let the House know that the Member for Bodden Town West and I discussed a range of his questions in relation to HR practises across the civil service and across the public authorities.

In certain cases, some of the information could not be obtained by the authorities and supplied to Ministers in the timeframe that the question was asked; but what I've mentioned to the Member for Bodden Town West is that we'll be working closely with the civil service to have a more standardised, universal HR practise throughout which will be included to comment on. In each of these cases, instead of having supplementary questions and answers delivered piecemeal, we'll just have a project that we'll work on together.

That might assist with some supplementary questions but at the risk of questions going over an hour, I'd like to move a motion to suspend Standing Order 36(3) to allow questions and answers to exceed one hour.

Suspension of Standing Order 36(3)

The Speaker: The motion is that Standing Order 36(3) be suspended to complete the questions on the Order Paper today. All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Standing Order 36(3) suspended.

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town West

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

I want to thank the Honourable Premier for his contribution a while ago.

The Premier is correct, he and I did speak. One of the things that triggered these questions is that, as we approach the 10-year anniversary of the Public Authorities Act that was supposed to harmonise many of these things across the public sector, we realised that different departments and different SAGCs were treating things differently.

In a small island, as people talk, we realised that much work needs to be done in terms of harmonising many of these so we are in agreement in that

regard, but I will give way to the Member for George Town Central who would like to ask a question.

The Speaker: Member for George Town Central.

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

A procedural highlight as well as a question. Normally, because we want the listening public to be a part of their democracy, we bring as much support as we possibly can so that supplementaries can be asked on the Floor of the House. Following up in the writing — the public never hears it; there's a purpose for questioning, so be prepared for follow-ups and not just what is presented on the Order Paper.

Mr. Speaker, with that being said, can the Honourable Minister say why there was a jump from 2021 to 2026? We see the figures in the answer from 2016 to 2021 were deescalating, and then in 2022 it jumped from close to \$600,000 to \$1.3 million, continuing to \$2 million by 2025. Can the Minister say whether, while requesting this information, he had conversations with his team, board, or CEO that he would like to share because it stands out quite prominently.

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, I assume the Member for George Town Central is referring to overtime pay.

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

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: I see the figures that he's talking about. I know it was during COVID so that might be the difference with the jump there. The CEO is in the building; if you would like him to come in, maybe he'll have an answer for that.

The Speaker: Do *you* want to invite the CEO? It's your invitation, not the Member for George Town Central's.

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I invite the CEO to come in at this time.

The Speaker: See if you can find the CEO for Cayman Airways. I don't see him in the [Chamber].

Is the CEO for Cayman Airways within the precincts of Parliament?

[Pause]

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, the time questioned by the Member for George Town Central was during COVID and our airline's operation was severely hampered at that time; that's why there

was such a big decline in overtime pay for those two years.

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town West.

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

Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the CEO for Cayman Airways is here; I can direct this question to the Minister and hopefully get an answer.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Honourable Deputy Premier. With Cayman Airways operating on a 40-hour work week while other government departments are operating on a 37.5 hour work week, how impacted are Cayman Airways employees or how much are they not receiving as a result of having two different sets of work weeks? Thank you.

[Pause]

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, the CAL [Cayman Airways Limited] employees' work week is 40 hours, so they earn 7 per cent less per hour than most civil servants.

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town West.

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

Mr. Speaker through you to the Honourable Deputy Premier. I remember Cayman Airways employees making a sacrifice during tough times when government was struggling. They basically agreed to go to the 40-hour work week as opposed to the 37.5, and that was more than ten years ago.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Honourable Deputy Premier. Is there any consideration by the Cayman Airways Board to revert employees back to the 37.5 hours? I think we can all agree that for the last ten years, they have given much more than was expected of them. I also thought it was supposed to be a temporary measure.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, it has consistently been contemplated by successive boards, but the airline has never been able to fund it.

The Speaker: Next question.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: Oh, sorry. Member for Cayman Brac East.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly, Elected Member for Cayman Brac East: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll try my best to formulate it into a question.

Would the Honourable Deputy Premier, in consultation with the Premier and the Minister of Finance, look at this extra 510 hours that Cayman Airways employees are working (if my calculation is right) when you compare the 37.5 to 40 hours and utilise some of the unexpected surplus to pay these hard workers?

[Crosstalk]

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for Cayman Brac East for the question and we'll take it under advisement.

**NO. 54
AMOUNT SPENT ON DUTY ALLOWANCE,
BROKEN DOWN BY DEPARTMENT, FOR THE
YEARS 2016 – 2025**

The Speaker: Honourable Member for Bodden Town West.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask question No. 54 standing in my name and it reads as follows: Can the Honourable Minister say how much did Cayman Airways spend on Duty Allowance broken down by Department for the years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025? Thank you.

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, I recognise that the Member requested figures broken down per department. That entails additional work which Cayman Airways is in the process of compiling, and I give the undertaking to provide it to the Member in writing once that exercise has been completed. In the meantime, I am able to provide the total amounts spent on duty allowance per year, in aggregate, as follows:

In 2016 Cayman Airways spent CI\$271,730 on duty allowance payments, rising to CI\$312,303 in 2025. The total breakdown per year is as follows:

Year	Duty/Standing Allowance (CI\$)
2016	271,730
2017	277,409
2018	290,507
2019	306,085
2020	311,012

2021	289,373
2022	356,309
2023	288,637
2024	301,355
2025	312,303

It should be noted that these amounts include a standing differential paid to Senior Management Pilots, incremental to their base salary, to reflect administrative duties beyond the scope of line flying.

Cayman Airways pays duty allowances to non-pilot staff and other personnel infrequently; such payments are generally temporary and issued only when operationally necessary.

The Speaker: Next question.

Sorry. Member for Cayman Brac East.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Mr. Speaker, not necessarily a question; I'll make it more of a procedural point and beg your indulgence. I think I only got part of the answer because there was a whole paragraph or two that were not here. I just want to find out whether they haven't been circulated or whether it was just done on an ad hoc basis.

The Speaker: Can you ensure you distributed the whole answer?

[Pause]

Supplementaries

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Member for George Town East.

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: Just to ask a follow-up question to the Deputy Premier and Minister. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister could tell us how many senior management pilots receive the incremental bonus — how many people are actually providing administrative services to the company in addition to their line flying.

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Thank you. There are approximately six online supervisory pilot positions; six in management and six who are full-time employees who were pilots.

**NO. 55
CAYMAN AIRWAYS EMPLOYEES OVER THE AGE
OF 65, BROKEN DOWN BY NATIONALITY, FOR
THE YEARS 2016 - 2025**

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town West.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask question No. 55 standing in my name. The question is directed to the Honourable Deputy Premier and reads: Can the Honourable Minister say how many Cayman Airways employees were over the age of 65 as of December 31st for the years 2016 through to 2025, broken down by nationality — that is Caymanian versus non-Caymanian. Thank you.

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, the answer.

Between 2016 and 2018, Cayman Airways only had Caymanian staff aged 65 and over remaining in their employ, with headcount increasing from 3 employees in 2016 to 4 in both 2017 and 2018.

In 2019, two Work Permit/Right to Work holders were introduced bringing the total number of persons employed over the age of 65 to 7 (5 Caymanian employees and 2 permit holders).

From 2020 to 2023, the number of Caymanians aged 65 and above increased steadily from 6 in 2020 to 18 in 2023, while Work Permit/Right to Work holders remained stable at 2. The total headcount correspondingly rose from 8 in 2020 to 20 in 2023.

In 2024, Caymanian staff aged 65 and over increased to 20, with Work Permit/Right to Work holders remaining at 2, resulting in a total of 22 employees.

In 2025, employment of Caymanians aged 65 and over further increased to 23 and Work Permit/Right to Work holders also increased by 1, bringing overall headcount to 26, comprised of 26 Caymanians and 3 non-Caymanians.

Looking at the period 2016 to 2025 in its entirety, the data shows consistent growth in the number of employees aged 65 and over, which rose from 3 employees in 2016 to 26 in 2025. This was driven primarily by annual increases in the number of Caymanian employees, which grew from 3 to 23 over the period. The number of non-Caymanian employees remained constant at 2 during that time, only increasing to 3 in the past year.

The table below outlines the number of staff aged 65 and over employed by Cayman Airways between 2016 and 2025 and shows the breakdown between Caymanian and non-Caymanian employees, together with the total headcount.

Year end	Caymanian (65 + Caymanian & Status)	Work Permit / Right to Work (65+)	Total Employees 65+
2016	3	0	3

2017	4	0	4
2018	4	0	4
2019	5	2	7
2020	6	2	8
2021	8	2	10
2022	13	2	15
2023	18	2	20
2024	20	2	22
2025	23	3	26

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town West.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Mr. Speaker, through you, I want to thank the Honourable Deputy Premier for that answer and I guarantee you'll be hearing more about this in Finance Committee.

Thank you.

NO. 56 RELOCATION OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS CRAFT MARKET

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Member for George Town Central.

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

Mr. Speaker I rise to ask question No. 56 standing in my name on the Order Paper. Can the Honourable Minister state whether the Government intends to relocate the Cayman Islands Craft Market and if so, to what location and what is the proposed timeline for this relocation?

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, the answer, and thank the Member for George Town Central for that. The Ministry of Tourism and Trade Development does not currently have any plans to relocate the Cayman Islands Craft Market.

Supplementaries

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, for purposes of record, I would offer the Minister the opportunity to confirm that once more.

The Speaker: No, you can't do that. If you have a supplementary ask, but you can't question the integrity of the Member's answer.

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

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

The Speaker: Minister of Planning.

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: If I may speak just to give some clarity on what the Member is talking about. The craft market sits behind the Parliament here; the Member knows that the management of Parliament itself is looking for the expansion of that land to the back. It wouldn't be fair to say that neither the Government nor the Tourism Ministry is looking to move the craft market.

For clarity, it is us within the management of Parliament who are looking to move the craft market. We are asking for the land for the expansion of this Parliament, so just to be clear, it is the management of this House that has written to me, as the Minister of Lands, identifying the location for the expansion of this building; and because of that expansion we will have to see that the craft market is moved somewhere else.

With all due respect to the Minister of Tourism, the Deputy Premier would not know that because he does not sit on that management board. When the Member is asking the Minister to double down, he's asking him about something that he's not aware of, sir. I hope that clarifies it.

The Speaker: Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Member for George Town Central.

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

I think this is a classic case of Government not talking to each other. How in the world can one side be—?

The Speaker: Do you have a supplementary question about the craft market?

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

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Mr. Speaker, in all fairness, sir; the Member mentioned something again, and I am obliged to answer him again.

Parliament has written to me to ask —

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, a matter of Standing Orders. Mr. Speaker, nothing has been said on the record for the Member to respond to, so I don't understand—

The Speaker: He has asked my permission to respond and I have given him permission.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Sorry, I didn't hear you give permission, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Pay attention. Continue, Minister of Planning.

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Mr. Speaker, again, the Parliament has written to me. It is my team's responsibility as part of the Ministry of Lands to look at the square footage that the Parliament is requesting and then for me to bring a Cabinet Paper to Cabinet where all of my colleagues will then know what is happening because they do not sit on the Management Council.

Only those who sit on the Management Council would know what is happening when it comes to the land in the back of Parliament. I just want to clarify it; it's not that nobody in the government knows what's going on. That particular item has not reached Caucus and Cabinet stage yet for the decision on it. I just want to clarify that, sir.

The Speaker: Next question, Madam Clerk.

NO. 57

INVOLVEMENT IN THE ANNUAL DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TOURISM OFFERINGS

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question in my name to the Honourable Deputy Premier, Minister of Tourism. Can the Honourable Minister say if the Department of Tourism or the Ministry of Tourism is involved in the annual development of new tourism offerings for tourists and does this process involve local stakeholders?

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Gary B. Rutt, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker thank you, and thank you to the Member for Bodden Town East for that question.

The answer: Both the Ministry and the Department of Tourism are involved in the development of new tourism offerings, particularly those involving local/Caymanian stakeholders.

The Ministry's involvement is provided through the Visitor Experience Development Grant Programme, also known as (VEDG) which was launched in 2024 to diversify the range of tourism experiences available to cruise and stayover visitors in the Cayman Islands. The programme is available to Caymanians only and provides grant funding of up to C\$50,000 per successful applicant to support the de-

velopment and accelerated growth of small and micro-tourism businesses.

In addition to financial assistance, successful applicants are afforded access to structured training and capacity-building initiatives delivered in collaboration with the Cayman Islands Centre for Business Development (CICBD) and other strategic partners. Participants also benefit from access to the Department of Tourism's market research data to inform business planning and strategic decision-making.

I would be pleased to provide the Member with details on how the programme is administered, along with the number of Caymanians who have received funding since the programme's inception.

The Department of Tourism also plays an active and ongoing role in the development and enhancement of tourism offerings throughout the year, and they work with a wide range of local stakeholders. These include eco-tourism initiatives, cultural tourism and festivals, facilitating partnerships between local operators and international travel trade and supporting Sister Islands initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, noting that product development is a year-round function involving structured engagement across government, private sector, and community partners, I would be happy to provide specific examples from each of those categories to the Member in writing.

Supplementaries

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you to the Honourable Deputy Premier for that comprehensive answer.

The reason for the question, Mr. Speaker, is that we speak all the time about trying to create new entrepreneurs in Cayman, while at the same time trying to keep the spirit alive and ensuring that Cayman remains competitive. I remember a few years ago, at the FCCA [Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association] office in Florida; it was one of the questions they brought up to the Cayman team that was there, what was our structure in terms of creating new products or offerings for tourists to be able to do. As we know, we don't have any mountains or streams or anything else, so we have to do what we can.

I think it is a missed opportunity, Mr. Speaker; with the Cardinal Avenue road newly paved, I think we should constantly have Caymanian entrepreneurs selling food, crafts, and singing. There should be a lot of entertainment. It should be a very—

The Speaker: Ask a question.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank you for that latitude, Mr. Speaker; I really appreciate it. Does the Honoura-

ble Deputy Premier have any plans to do anything with Cardinal Avenue?

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Gary B. Ruddy, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I'd also like to thank the previous Minister of Tourism because he was instrumental in the VEDG Programme.

When you speak about Cardinal Avenue, I would also like to see some of our local artisan crafts, musicians and some of our good Caymanian cooking on that street as well; but I guess [with what] I learnt today about the Cayman Craft Market, we may have to open and expand that a little bit as well. I thank you for that suggestion.

The Speaker: Member for Cayman Brac East.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Honourable Deputy Premier say what Sister Island initiatives, if any, have been supported and if none, how can stakeholders access it for this two-year budget period?

Thank you.

[Pause]

Hon. Gary B. Ruddy, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the Member for Cayman Brac East for that. We work along with the District Admin and we have a DOT [Department of Tourism] office over in the Brac and Little Cayman as well. There were a few participants from Cayman Brac in the VEDG Programme who were awarded, and we will continue to work with them on other initiatives as well.

The Speaker: Member for Cayman Brac East.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if I could get an undertaking from the Honourable Deputy Premier to give it some advertising so the Member for Cayman Brac East would have at least some knowledge of what's happening in the Sister Islands.

The Speaker: Deputy Premier.

Hon. Gary B. Ruddy, Deputy Premier: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Thank you for that Honourable Member for Cayman Brac East. I appreciate that and we will.

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Just for clarity, Mr. Speaker. Can the Honourable Deputy Premier please say whether it is an internal committee that provides the VEDG programme?

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, just give me one minute, please.

The Speaker: Yes. No problem.

[Pause]

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker thank you for that time. Successful applicants would be subject to the following conditions:

- Awards up to \$50,000 will require the provision of evidence. Example, quotes and/or invoices confirming how the grant funding will be utilised.
- Once approved for the grant, successful applicants would be required to submit evidence that the funds are used solely for business operations; otherwise, cessation of funding and/or repayment of funds received will apply.
- Applicants must comply with all requests for documentation related to expenses. Successful applicants must participate in workshops provided by the Cayman Islands Centre for Business Development and the Cayman Islands Department of Tourism.

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

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

Mr. Speaker, the reason why I'm asking all of these questions is that I know we talked some 20 years ago about the Go East initiative.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Whenever the seas are rough in George Town, we come to Spotts, which is almost Bodden Town. I can say that as a government we bought many beach properties in Bodden Town and other districts. I want to understand what the Deputy Premier's position is in terms of trying to grow some of this local tourism so that we can have more opportunities in Bodden Town and the eastern districts.

The Speaker: Deputy Premier.

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Thank you Mr. Speaker and the Member for Bodden Town East. Thank you for that.

The Go East Initiative has been a collaboration between myself, the Ministry of PLAHI [Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing & Infrastructure] and also the Member for East End because we realise we have much to offer out there, like the new public beach we

have in Pease Bay. The Minister from PLAHI and I — especially with him in public transport — are trying to send more people out that way, including to North Side to see the caves and other areas out there as well.

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank you so much for that.

I keep saying it all the time, Mr. Speaker, in terms of missed opportunities for improving our tourism product. There is a lot of history in the first capital. When you look at the Mission House, it is very important because it is what started the churches in Cayman, that very Mission House right there. It started the first church in Cayman with Wesleyan, and when Wesleyan left, the Presbyterian came and has been here for 170 years.

There's also the first Teachers' College, the first sun dial — there are so many firsts in Bodden Town central that we could really make a tourism product of. I think we're missing some opportunities for us to write a story and to tell the tales and to have guides on trolleys et cetera throughout the district. Just another offering.

I've been mentioning it for some time now. Every country I go to, including Puerto Rico and even Cuba, has the 'first capital' or old capital areas as a tourism product. Just something for your consideration.

The Speaker: The Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Gary B. Rutty, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for Bodden Town East for that and I do agree. It is the first capital. There's much history there; we can go from Pedro Castle all the way up; we have much to offer there. I look forward to working with him as well to enhance the tourism product in Bodden Town and the Go East initiative.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Mr. Speaker, while I have a chance to grab the mic, if you will allow me, many people in this honourable House don't even know that Bodden Town had two movie theatres. We used to play in it — we probably destroyed it.

[Laughter]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: It was one of the first places for electricity, right there where the old civic centre is.

The oldest house in the Cayman Islands, the Nixon House, which we transported from Nixon Way in George Town, is sitting right there by the Mission House. I think there is a real opportunity for us to do something to improve upon our product.

I don't know what more we can do with George Town. I think people want to come out and

have that experience, especially with that new public beach that we got.

There's another opportunity in Bodden Town. Where the old Edge was, there's a long stretch of land where we bought three or four pieces of beach property. We could turn that into a fish-fry area or something that tourists can attend. There are so many things that we can do, but I think sometimes the government needs to assist in trying to help create some of these opportunities for young, budding entrepreneurs.

The Speaker: Just a procedural matter we have to take care of. We have to suspend another Standing Order. Honourable Premier.

Suspension of Standing Order 14(2)

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I move that we suspend Standing Order 14(2) that we not break at 5 p.m. but instead break at the end of questions.

The Speaker: The motion is that Standing Order 14(2) which requires a break at 5 p.m. be suspended and we break at the end of question time. All those in favour, please say Aye. Those against, No.

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Standing Order 14(2) suspended.

The Speaker: Next question, Madam Clerk.

NO. 58

PUBLIC HEALTH'S PROCEDURE FOR MANAGING HIV POSITIVE WORK PERMIT HOLDERS

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town West.

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

Mr. Speaker. I rise to ask question No. 58, standing in my name, directed to the Honourable Minister of Health, Environment and Sustainability. The question reads: Can the Honourable Minister say, what is the process and/or procedure(s) by Public Health for dealing with or managing work permit holders who are granted a work permit when they are HIV positive?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks, Minister of Health, Environment & Sustainability, Elected Member for West Bay Central: Thank you, Mr. Speaker,

Mr. Speaker, the answer: When a person has a reactive HIV screening result (that is, a preliminary positive test), whether through a private provider or a Health Services Authority clinician, the case is reported to the HIV Coordinator within the Public Health Department at the HSA [Health Services Authority].

Upon notification, the Coordinator will inform the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) / Director of Primary Health Care (DPHC) at CIHSA and then contacts the patient to arrange confirmatory testing, provide counselling, initiate contact tracing, and implement other appropriate public health follow-up measures.

Once the case is laboratory-confirmed, the Medical Officer of Health will formally notify the Director of WORC [Workforce Opportunities & Residency Cayman] in writing, advising that an individual has been diagnosed with a communicable disease of public health interest.

WORC will then contact the person and ascertain whether they have adequate means, including insurance coverage, to meet all costs associated with the condition.

Supplementaries

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town West.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I want to thank the Honourable Minister for that answer.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Honourable Minister. I'm trying to determine where the monitoring of these individuals comes in, recognising that there was a time when if you were HIV positive you could not get a work permit. We changed that policy to allow people with HIV to get a work permit, and I understand from my research that the policy was changed because it's now an issue that can be managed; but who is monitoring that person to ensure they maintain an undetectable viral load which is not transmitted.

The reason I ask is because there has now been a recent incident in one particular community, where I understand that one person has basically infected as many as six persons with HIV. That's why I'm trying to understand the monitoring process.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Health.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Mr. Speaker, if the Member could give me just one moment to consult with my team.

[Pause]

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Mr. Speaker, thank you.

To answer the Member, there is ongoing monitoring through the Health Services Authority with the HIV coordinator. If the patient is virally suppressed, their monitoring is every 3 to 6 months. They're under the care of a doctor, so there are frequent tests to monitor their viral loads.

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town West.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the Honourable Minister for that answer.

Through you, Mr. Speaker to the Honourable Minister, what is the policy for Cayman Brac in terms of monitoring?

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Mr. Speaker, again, I ask for just a moment to double-check.

[Pause]

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Mr. Speaker, it's the same process. They are monitored through a doctor; they would be under a doctor's care in Cayman Brac and those findings would need to be reported to Grand Cayman.

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town West.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Mr. Speaker, I give way to the honourable Member for Cayman Brac East.

The Speaker: Member for Cayman Brac East.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can the Honourable Minister responsible for Health say whether or not any reports from Cayman Brac have been received by her good office within the last 12 months?

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I can say to the honourable Member not directly to my office, but I will liaise with the CMO to see whether she's aware if there has been any thus far.

[Pause]

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Mr. Speaker, I have been directed to some advice I received earlier today, when we were discussing this as it relates to how the data is collected.

Due to the sensitive nature of HIV data and the relatively small numbers involved, such information is not routinely published in detail. When reported publicly, it is typically presented at rates of per 100,000 population and often averaged over several years to protect confidentiality. To specifically say

what has been reported from Cayman Brac that is along the lines of what would be provided.

The Speaker: Member for Cayman Brac East.

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I acknowledge and appreciate the difficulty the Honourable Minister may find herself in based on the sensitive nature of the information, but seeing that Cayman Brac has about 2,200 persons, when you hear that six persons were infected, I would hope that work permit has been cancelled.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Mr. Speaker, what I can say to the Member is that, as we move forward into establishing a public health unit and later a public health department, one of the primary purposes of it is for collecting the data of health statistics of our Islands so we can ensure that we are able to track, monitor, and in this instance maybe even prevent some of these illnesses from arriving on our shores.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Mr. Speaker thank you.

I know it's not the Minister's responsibility, but she may still have the answer in terms of temporary work permits and three-month work permits. Was there an amendment done whereby persons still do not need a medical for a temporary work permit?

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Mr. Speaker, if I could just say to the Member that question No. 64 on this Order Paper allows the Minister responsible for that area to answer that question for you.

NO. 59 UPDATE ON THE GOVERNMENT'S SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask question No. 59 in my name to the Honourable Minister for Health, Environment and Sustainability. Can the Honourable Minister provide an update on the government's solid waste management plan?

The Speaker: Minister For Health, Environment and Sustainability.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Mr. Speaker, the answer: The Government continues to advance its comprehensive approach to modernising solid waste management, and I am pleased to provide an update on the work underway.

In November 2025, Cabinet approved policy guidance for the development of a national recycling programme and a long-term solid waste management solution. This approval provides the strategic framework necessary to support structured planning, governance design, and future procurement preparation.

We are also in the final stages of concluding the key residual items and thus our involvement with the previous ReGen project. These close out discussions are progressing steadily and will formally conclude the Government's involvement in that initiative.

In parallel, we have initiated the early development of two critical pillars of our long-term strategy: the national recycling programme and the broader national solid waste management solution. Although both initiatives are still in their early phases, the foundational technical work is actively progressing. As part of this, the project team is updating the waste flow and waste volume analysis to ensure that future planning is guided by and grounded in current data.

With respect to governance, for the recycling programme and the long-term solution specifically, the project team is shaping the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the establishment of a steering committee and associated working groups. This body will take responsibility for the business issues associated with the project and oversight of its development. As such, it will comprise of a diverse cross-section of representatives from key government ministries and agencies, as well as private sector representation.

The FFR sets out the parameters for the government in the planning, development, and execution of projects; as such, this steering committee is in alignment with the same, especially for such a complex and national priority project. Their analysis and recommendations will directly inform the scope and structure of the long-term waste management solution and guide the national plan to be developed. The project team has projected to commence engagement with this committee by the end of March 2026 — that's this month. This is deliberate and methodical work; it is essential that the national plan be built on current data, best practise standards, and a clear understanding of the needs of our Islands over the coming decades.

The Government remains committed to delivering a modern, comprehensive and resilient waste management system, and the steps now underway are key to achieving that outcome.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Supplementaries

The Speaker: Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Joseph X. Hew, Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister for that comprehensive response.

Mr. Speaker, just to ask the Minister if the Ministry and the Department are still comfortable with the timelines and lifespan of the current landfill.

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Health.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't want to put on Hansards that I am comfortable. I am certainly not comfortable, but we don't have any new concerns that have arisen. We still feel that we are on target and we have capacity.

The Speaker: Next question.

NO. 60

POLICY DECISION ON THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH (DEH) WHEELED BIN PILOT PROJECT

The Speaker: Member for Red Bay.

Mr. A. Roy Tatum: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask question No. 60 standing in my name to the Honourable Minister of Health, Environment and Sustainability. Can the Honourable Minister advise what policy decision has been taken following the completion and evaluation of the Department of Environmental Health (DEH) Wheeled Bin Pilot Project in Prospect, which commenced in September 2023; and if no decision has yet been made, what factors are preventing the Government from determining whether the programme will be continued or expanded, and by what date a final decision will be made?

Thank you.

The Speaker: Member for Health and Environment.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A fun fact, in the Ministry we call it the "Wheelie Bin Project", but I guess we'll stick with the question which really relates to the Wheeled Bin project.

Mr. Speaker, the answer: The DEH is preparing a business case for a phased rollout of the wheeled bins for residential garbage collection across the Cayman Islands. The business case will be completed by the end of March 2026 and the results of the business case will determine whether the wider introduction is to be implemented.

The Speaker: Member for Red Bay.

Mr. A. Roy Tatum: I thank the Minister for that answer, Mr. Speaker, and look forward to hearing what comes of it. Thank you.

NO. 61
INCREASING THE STAFF COMPLEMENT
OF THE ROADSIDE LITTER CREW

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town West, you've been designated.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask question No. 61 standing in the Member for Bodden Town East's name, to the Minister for Health, Environment and Sustainability. The question reads: Can the honourable Minister say what is the staff complement of the roadside litter crew; has this total ever been increased and are there any plans to increase the staff complement?

Thank you.

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Health, Environment & Sustainability.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The answer: The Director of the Department of Environmental Health has advised that there is no staff complement assigned exclusively to a dedicated roadside litter crew. At present, six persons are assigned to roadside litter collection activities, and four Environmental Health Officers are assigned to litter investigations and enforcement.

Litter collection functions are carried out by existing collections personnel across all Islands and districts, primarily along main roads and highways, on a weekly schedule aligned with residential waste collection.

Over time, staffing within the Department has increased to ensure the continued delivery of essential residential waste collection services, which has allowed for greater operational attention to litter collection activities.

At this stage there are no plans to further increase the staff complement. The Government instead intends to address the issue through legislative measures, including the proposed Litter (Amendment) Bill, 2026, which I will be presenting to this honourable House.

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank you and thank you to my Bodden Town West colleague for stepping in.

Mr. Speaker, I see the answer from the Minister saying that at present there are six persons assigned to the road litter collection activity. The reason

I asked is there's been many complaints in terms of the litter, and they blame the politician for not keeping the district or constituency tidy or otherwise. We all get the complaint and it is almost impossible for that small litter team to be able to provide the type of service that is needed, especially during the rainy season when the grass grows so fast.

I will leave the Minister with the task of trying to find the funding to increase that. I think they will recognise that it's necessary.

The Speaker: Next question, Madam Clerk.

NO. 62
FILLING IN OF THE LAND TO THE NORTH
OF THE NEW PEASE BAY CEMETERY

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

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

Question No. 62 in my name. Can the Honourable Minister of Health please say when the land in the new Pease Bay cemetery in Bodden Town will be filled in to the north of the property?

The Speaker: Minister of Health and Environment.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Mr. Speaker, the answer:

The Department of Environmental Health typically undertakes land filling on an as-needed basis, coinciding with the construction of burial vaults to ensure works are carried out in a practical and cost-effective manner.

Accordingly, the area is developed incrementally rather than in a single phase based on operational requirements and the availability of funding; notwithstanding this approach, we are planning to fill and level the land at the Pease Bay Cemetery by the end of summer 2026.

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Honourable Minister for the answer. Not really one that I was hoping to hear in terms of the method — incrementally filling the area.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make a suggestion to the Honourable Minister. We looked for a property for a very long time for a cemetery in Bodden Town, and as the Speaker and many persons in this honourable Parliament would well know, most Caymanians want to be buried in the traditional sand on the beach.

At the time we bought the property straight across the road, but we thought that it looked good as a wooded area for a camping site that we would get smart and put the cemetery on the other side of the road; but then many people complained they didn't want to be buried in a swamp. The thing about being

buried in the swamp is that when people see the swamp, it actually reminds them much more. They don't know if they're the ones being buried, but if they're burying someone, they see the swamp.

That is why I differ in terms of the method, Mr. Speaker. I think that if we filled it out and let it set, demuck it and fill it properly, in my mind then it would be out of sight, out of mind. I don't know when we're moving to stacking or how that is going to work, because I know it has been approved, the stacking of vaults.

The Speaker: Do you have a question or is it just a suggestion?

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: The question is, would the Honourable Minister reconsider or speak to the team? There was a little confusion on whom to put the question to, because I know there is a split responsibility of the Ministers wherein one manages and one bills.

I think it would be better to just fill it right out and let it set, because it's getting too close. Just last week I had to bury a Bodden Towner who was very upset that they couldn't be buried in Bodden Town and had to be buried in Prospect. That is happening very regularly now because when they go there, they say there wasn't any space for the pallbearers to walk on the side.

I think it is an honouring moment for people and I thank you for your latitude in me asking a non-question.

[Laughter]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: I think the Minister understands.

The Speaker: Alright, so we'll leave it there.
Next question.

NO. 63

IMPLEMENTATION OF IMMIGRATION (TRANSITION) (AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION) ACT, 2025

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition and elected Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I promise I won't be split in any capacity.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask question No. 63 on the Order Paper standing in my name. Can the Honourable Minister say when will the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2025 come into effect and state the causes for the current delay in its implementation?

The Speaker: Honourable Minister for K and Employment and Immigration.

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

The Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2025 is scheduled to go live on or around April 1st, 2026.

Additional legislative considerations were the main drivers of the delay in implementation which are being addressed in the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2026, which is to be debated in this Meeting of the House.

The Amendments contained in the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2026 have direct implications for the Immigration (Transition) (Fees) Regulations, 2026 as additional drafting refinements were identified as necessary to strengthen the language and particularly ensure that the Department of WORC has the ability in the principal Act to prescribe fees for expedited services.

Furthermore, it was essential to ensure that all related legislative instruments and approvals take effect concurrently, in order to preserve regulatory coherence and avoid any implementation inconsistencies.

These factors collectively contributed to the delay, however, the amendments are necessary to ensure the implementation is effective, compliant, and sustainable. The Ministry and Department teams remain committed to progressing this matter.

Supplementaries

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank the honourable Minister for that answer. I had part of the answer already via email from the Honourable Minister, but I had already filed the question by that time, plus I think it's not only for me but for the public to know.

My follow-up question, Mr. Speaker regards the forecasting for the work permit fees from your team to the finance team. While making the budget for 2026-2027, when was the implementation date recorded for the increase in fees? If you want me to elaborate, I can explain to you why I'm asking the question.

The Speaker: Honourable Minister for Caymanian Employment & Immigration.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: The forecast date, Mr. Speaker, was March 1st, 2026.

The Speaker: Member for George Town Central and Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you Mr. Speaker, as I suspected it was 1st March.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister say whether he has spoken with the Ministry of Finance or the Finance Minister as to this delay and what it will do to the Government's projected revenue for 2026?

The Speaker: Honourable Minister for Caymanian Employment & Immigration.

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

Yes, we have. The Minister of Finance was part of the coordination of the additional amendments that we needed to bring in. He's outlined in his summation that we've got additional revenue from the IDs issued by DVDL; they came in a little higher in 2025, so additional revenue was generated from there. Our responsibility now is to ensure that these fees aren't delayed any further and we can get them in on or before April 1st.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, if I might just elaborate...

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, on a matter of procedure, is the Member asking a question?

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: I need to elaborate on the answer you received.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, the Standing Orders do not give that permission, unless you have given. I haven't heard the Member ask this honourable House for that. This whole display of explanation...

The Speaker: When a Member stands up, I have to recognise him and ask what the purpose of him standing is, so give us time. Minister of Finance?

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, I beg leave of the Chair to elaborate.

The Speaker: Leave is so granted.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the Member for George Town Central would want to have a comprehensive discourse.

Mr. Speaker, just to add to what the Minister said, because the Member for George Town Central did mention the budget and the projected revenues. In going through the detailed submissions, the Ministry of Caymanian Employment indicated that, given the consultative process and the fact that they weren't going to make it to Parliament until now, we would therefore have a delay in implementation. There are

two reasons why I'm not particularly concerned at this stage.

1. We found that the number of persons who have dependents on work permits in the Cayman Islands was actually more than it was in the original submissions, which were yielding more than \$500,000 dollars more. That alone gave me good evidence that even though we were delayed, we would still make up some money on the shortfall.
2. In the preliminary January results, we have beaten January of 2025 by a significant portion on stamp duties; which therefore, Mr. Speaker, evidences that persons over \$2 million are more than capable of paying the additional fees.

The Speaker: Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I thank the honourable Member for the details.

I have to direct the question to the Minister. I don't know if you would give indulgence to allow the Minister of Finance to further elaborate, but speaking of the shortfall, my question is: with the shortfall of what I would now say is exactly one month (from March 1st to April 1st), what is the estimated shortfall that would have been collected that will now not be collected as a result of the delay?

The Speaker: That's way outside the question.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, we are circling outside the area but we want to be as transparent as possible. Given expiry of work permits and persons coming up for PR [Permanent Residence], it is not a science because it doesn't happen by taking the number and dividing by 12.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: No, no, no. The projections are based on total; you're asking me about the shortfall. I can't accurately now speak to the shortfall, but we are waiting to find out exactly once we see the implementation date. At that point, we will have a better idea by looking at the database, as to the numbers of work permits that have come up for renewal in the first quarter so please, if the Member would give me a little bit of wiggle room to look at those numbers in that level of detail.

The Speaker: Member for Cayman Brac East.

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

Through you to the Honourable Minister. I wonder if you could say in reference to the first sentence in his answer which refers to the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2025 being scheduled to go live on or around 1st April. Seeing that April 1st is Tom Foolery's day and it's traditionally used for pranks, I wonder if I could get an undertaking from the Minister and his government to bring it or take it forward one day, because it's a very important piece of legislation and not a very appropriate date.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: I beg to offer that clarification, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: So granted.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you.

To the honourable Member for Cayman Brac East, I spotted that when reading the draft answer before it was submitted and told the Minister, since it said on or about, it gives you the flexibility. We will *not* be starting it on April Fool's Day.

The Speaker: Next question, Madam Clerk.

NO. 64

WORC'S PROCEDURE FOR MANAGING THOSE GRANTED A WORK PERMIT WHEN THEY ARE HIV POSITIVE

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town West.

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

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Honourable Minister. I rise to ask question No. 64 standing in my name which reads: Can the Honourable Minister say what is the process and/or procedure(s) by WORC for dealing with or managing work permit holders who are granted a work permit when they are HIV positive? Thank you.

The Speaker: Minister for Caymanian Employment and Immigration.

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

When a person is confirmed HIV positive, the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) notifies the Director of WORC in writing, advising that the individual has a communicable disease of public health concern. At this stage the Department of WORC determines whether the individual has adequate private health insurance which covers their medical needs.

WORC then contacts the employee to confirm whether they have adequate health insurance or another way to cover all medical costs. If they do not have the necessary medical insurance coverage, WORC immediately reviews the person's work permit

in line with the Immigration Act and relevant public health considerations.

Each case is assessed individually. If the person cannot afford the required medical treatment, or has uncontrolled HIV, WORC may refuse a new work permit or revoke an existing one.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Supplementaries

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

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Honourable Minister for that answer.

Through you, Mr. Speaker to the Honourable Minister. Is the Minister aware of any situations or cases where work permits were refused or revoked because of a person being HIV positive?

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town West, I don't think the Minister can give such an answer under confidential information of medical records.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: That's fine, I'll ask another question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Honourable Minister. Once a person has insurance — and recognising that insurance premiums are paid monthly; what is the monitoring process to ensure that a person remains financially compliant whereby they are able to either afford the medical treatment or their insurance is up-to-date to receive the treatment?

Thank you.

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Caymanian Employment and Immigration.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is often done by the HSA team or Public Health, not by WORC.

The Speaker: Honourable Member for Bodden Town West.

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

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask for a little leeway in advance. I recognise that this policy changed because one of those big law firms decided to challenge it and we basically capitulated as with many other things. The question I want to ask through you, Mr. Speaker to the Honourable Minister, is there any policy or anything being looked at, because while I recognise that confidentiality and protecting data are important, inside this Parliament, we are charged with protecting Caymanians and I want to understand what is being done or is proposed to be done to protect our people in this regard.

We need to recognise that some people may be able to afford the treatment when they arrive on the island, but it doesn't mean that with inflation, et cetera, they can continue to afford the treatment; and now we are putting members of the community at risk, as in the case that recently happened.

The Speaker: Minister for Caymanian Employment and Immigration.

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

The Government is going to have to review of the Public Health Act as per section 35 which states:

**"35. The Governor [sic] may make regulations to provide for —
(f) control of employment of persons suffering from or suspected of being affected with a sexually transmitted disease."**

The Department relies heavily on the advice of the Chief Medical Officer who will make the determination as to whether the individual is high risk to the public.

The Speaker: Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can I ask the Honourable Minister, what is the purpose of doing a medical before a person gets a work permit?

The Speaker: Minister of Caymanian Employment and Immigration.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Speaker, can the Member repeat the question, please?

The Speaker: Member for George Town Central and Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

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

Can the Honourable Minister say what the purpose of having a medical examination done is, as a prerequisite to getting your work permit approved?

The Speaker: Minister of Caymanian Employment and Immigration.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Thank you Mr. Speaker.

It's to give our team at WORC the opportunity to refuse or deny or defer a work permit based on the person's health conditions until we are informed or at least collaborate with the health department.

The Speaker: Member for George Town Central and Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

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

Can the Honourable Minister say if there are any other transmitted diseases other than HIV that are deemed as something that can be used to deny your work permit; and if so, what are they?

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Tuberculosis is one that comes to mind, but I think this is something the Minister of Health can weigh in on as well.

The Speaker: Member for George Town Central and Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, this is not a trick question. I'm happy to get it in writing if the Ministers do not have it available.

I would ask your indulgence and [ask] for the Government to reconsider this because, sadly, reports now are that persons who are on work permit could have caused Caymanian nationals to contract... It is a sensitive area of risk and I think the Government needs to reconsider some of the legislation around it.

The Speaker: That's a statement, not a question.
Member for Bodden Town West.

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

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be a bit cute now and ask my question in this format. Through you, Mr. Speaker, would the Honourable Minister agree [with] section 16 of the Cayman Islands Constitution Order 2009 that deals with non-discrimination, which reads:

"16. (3) No law or decision of any public official shall contravene this section if it has an objective and reasonable justification and is reasonably proportionate to its aim in the interests of defence, public safety, public order, public morality or public health."

Would the Minister agree that such non-discrimination policies as the Constitution deals with; that deal with public health, are something we can deal with and would the Minister agree it is something that needs to be dealt with now, once and for all?

Thank you.

The Speaker: Minister for Caymanian Employment and Immigration.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for his question.

I believe that our country has every opportunity to protect itself from anything that's going to harm our citizens and certainly our visitors. I believe that going forward, the goal for us is to absolutely take a

look at our Public Health Laws when it comes to things like HIV and tuberculosis and so forth, and that's going to be a collaboration between our Ministry and the Ministry of Health.

I want to assure that our goal is not to disenfranchise anyone or to discriminate based on whether a person has such a disease, but my goal is to continue to support that our citizens should be protected at all costs.

The Speaker: Next question.

NO. 65

FEEDBACK FROM BUSINESS COMMUNITY REGARDING THE IMPACTS OF THE NEWLY IMPOSED MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

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

Question No. 65 in my name to the Honourable Minister of Employment and Immigration. Can the Honourable Minister say whether after 60 days of implementation, if his Ministry or Department has received any feedback from the business community on the positive or negative effects of the newly imposed minimum wage increase of 45.83 per cent?

The Speaker: Minister of Caymanian Employment and Immigration.

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

The minimum wage was increased on 1st January 2026, after remaining stagnant for the last 10 years at \$6 per hour. The current increase of \$2.75 per hour equates to an additional \$110 per standard 40-hour work week.

Having met with a wide cross-section of the business community, feedback has not been negative; instead, we have primarily received employee queries to confirm the amounts they would be due. Frequent meetings are held with the business community on a wide range of employment matters and feedback is continuously welcomed.

Supplementaries

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for his answer. I'm happy to hear the feedback has been positive, though it seems from what you mentioned that the positive feedback was from the employees.

I want to take some things into consideration in terms of the increase. With the increase of 45.83 per cent, it's approximately \$400 additional per month, especially for some domestic workers. On top of that or coupled with it, there will be an increase in filing fees up to some \$500 in certain areas — I stand to be

corrected there; but it's Caymanians paying these fees, Mr. Speaker.

I want to ask the Honourable Minister about what is happening out there. Obviously, I'm a social butterfly so I get around... I shouldn't say I get around.

[Laughter]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: It's not a good thing to say it, but maybe it's true.

If people don't know, businesses are reducing their hours to compensate, so they're actually paying almost the same thing or back to square one. They're paying \$8.75, but they're not giving the same number of hours, so I don't know if we are winning in that regard, but persons out there are complaining and I don't know what to do now. Obviously, it's been done.

An increase was necessary, but it is hitting persons whose salaries have been stagnant, and I'm not sure what the government is going to do. Maybe I'm just a scored record, but I wonder if anyone from the Government can say whether this is a concern of theirs.

The Speaker: Minister of Caymanian Employment and Immigration.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you to the Member.

Just last week we met with about 50-plus members of the business community, all to do with immigration reform or continued efficiencies at immigration and at no time did any of those organisations (some small, some very large and some middle-tier) talked about the increase of the minimum wage.

Though I understand for some families there's some hardship with maintaining a domestic helper, the goal for us is to always ensure that business is expanding. The question that my team often gets continues to be, *business is expanding, what are we gonna do to ensure that our department keeps up with the pace?* That's one of the major aspects that my team and I have been working on since I've taken office. I absolutely acknowledge that there are challenges with folks not being able to afford a helper, and I'm hoping that as we continue to increase business in our country people are certainly being paid more.

To clarify what the Member discussed about the admin fees — the admin fee for a domestic helper has gone up by \$50; it was \$100 and it's gone up by \$50. There have been minimal complaints about increases in that specific area because the majority of persons fall in that area including domestic helpers, landscapers, construction workers and certainly a number of folks who work in the tourism sector. There have really not been many complaints in terms of the admin fee increasing by \$50.

As I said, we are taking it case by case. I have made myself and my team very accessible. Every

week I speak with the Director of Labour and Pension and we consistently talk about any inquiries that folks are making at his department and as I said, it's been quite minimal in terms of complaints.

The Speaker: Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. Thank the Minister for that response.

What I want to say is about the cost of living, Mr. Speaker. The numbers I got from the statistics office showed there were a number of Caymanians making less than \$2,400 per month. There's apparently over 3,000 Caymanian, which is about 15 per cent of employed Caymanians, who actually make less than \$2,400 per month. If they need a domestic helper, which you really can't give up or adjust their hours because of traffic, et cetera, you leave in the dark and you come back in the dark and most people can only afford one domestic helper...

I'm not hearing the empathy that I need to hear in terms of what persons are suffering through out there. We can have these meetings in these offices, but we're not going to catch the people who are actually suffering; \$400 increase for a person whose wage is stagnant. I don't want anybody to ever say that I never thought that persons needed an increase in the minimum wage. That is not what I'm saying. I'm saying what are the Government's plans now in terms of moving up to the next tier of persons, since we've already tackled the minimum wage because what we have now is a situation where there's more money to send back home for persons who were adapted to \$6 per hour and were not complaining because they found a way to make it, whether that's stacking or otherwise; and I say that kindly.

The Speaker: Can you get to the question? I'm giving you some room but ...

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: I really appreciate it, but this is very important because people are suffering; \$400, you know? It's moved from \$1,080 to about \$1,500.

The Speaker: I know and I think you made that point at least 5 times now.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: I want to hear someone who has empathy, because people are suffering silently; they don't know what to do. They can't leave their job any earlier, and they can't do without their helper. We have people suffering.

I think we need to work on the next tier of workers who are making more than \$1,500 for an increase in those areas. I can't tell you I know what the answer is, Minister, but we have an unintended consequence possibly; a real situation whereby persons

really needed a minimum wage increase but now it has affected [other] persons.

Thank you for your latitude, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Next question, Madam Clerk.

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

The Speaker: Oh, sorry. Member for George Town Central.

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

The Speaker: Last question on this item.

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

Can the Honourable Minister say, when the government decided on the implementation of the minimum wage, was there a discussion between his Ministry and the Ministry of Finance in respect to the cumulative effect of the new fees and the minimum wage, and their potential impacts on our society by way of inflation?

The Speaker: Member for Caymanian Employment and Immigration.

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

Yes, the Ministry of Finance was consulted but there was [also] a comprehensive study done on the minimum wage. There was a minimum wage committee which included the Statistics Office as well, who did a comprehensive research on companies, big and small, within the Cayman Islands; and there were a number of stakeholder meetings hosted.

I think everyone in this Chamber read the minimum wage report; that is what I was told. I came in and found the minimum wage report. Our goal was to see whether that impact would change, so our government went back through the minimum wage report. A Cabinet Paper was then implemented that included the Ministry of Finance's collaborative effort.

The Speaker: Next question, Madam Clerk.

NO. 66

INFLATIONARY EFFECTS ON THE ECONOMY RESULTING FROM THE PROPOSED INCREASES IN TAXES INCLUDED IN THE 2026/27 BUDGET

The Speaker: Member for George Town East.

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Final question for the evening. We all breathe a sigh of relief.

[Laughter]

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask question No. 66 standing in my name on the Order Paper to the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Development. Can the Honourable Minister for Finance & Economic Development say whether the Government undertook an assessment by the Economics & Statistics Office (ESO), or other competent body, of the likely inflationary and other economic effects on the economy of the Cayman Islands, resulting from the proposed increases in taxes included in the 2026/27 budget approved by Parliament in December 2025?

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Development.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the question.

Mr. Speaker, no government introduces revenue measures or increases existing fees lightly. The NCFC [National Coalition for Caymanians] Government recognises that additional fees and taxes can place pressure on residents and businesses. New revenue measures are therefore considered carefully and only implemented to support essential public services and to maintain the long-term fiscal stability of the Cayman Islands Government.

In response to the honourable Member's question, no specific economic impact assessment of new revenue measures contained in the 2026/2027 budget was undertaken. As is customary, discussions on the proposed revenue measures for the 2026/2027 budget were held with Caucus and relevant ministries, portfolios and offices, supported by revenue forecasts from the government's revenue unit and estimates provided by Chief Officers and Chief Financial Officers. The ESO contributed its usual economic analysis relating to existing revenue trends and broader macroeconomic conditions.

The vast majority of revenue measures were discussed and agreed upon with relevant industry stakeholders. In some instances, the specific revenue measures in the budget were direct recommendations of industry partners. The honourable Member for George Town East will be familiar with this long-standing practise, having previously served as Minister of Finance himself.

Whilst a formal economic assessment of new revenue measures was not undertaken, the government nevertheless considered broad economic factors, including potential impact on households and businesses, and the fiscal sustainability of the government. The measures were deliberately targeted primarily to impact the financial services sector in order to minimise direct impacts on average residents or local businesses while supporting the government's fiscal objectives.

The government remains committed to responsible fiscal management, transparency, and ensuring that future decisions continue to balance economic stability with the funding available and required to deliver essential public services.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Roy M. McTaggart: No further questions from me, sir. I thank the Minister.

Supplementaries

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Honourable Minister say if the inflation rate that was outlined in the SPS as well as the budget documents, which we all know (I think), is 2.9, was calculated with the revenue list that was approved later on after the budget?

Whether the ESO in their inflation calculations considered the revenue measures that were presented to Parliament in the budget, because the intel I've received says they did not have knowledge of the revenue measures, so they could not have been considered.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, I certainly can undertake to discuss the matter in detail with the Director of the ESO in regard to his department's projection on the inflation rate in the domestic economy and provide the answer to the Member in writing.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, he's asked me a specific question as to what was in somebody's head at the time and I can't tell him what was in somebody's head at the time.

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

I am genuinely not trying to play games with this topic with the Minister. One must assume that the Honourable Minister of Finance would know whether or not, when the SPS and budget document was being presented to Members of Parliament, whether he gave the ESO, which he's in charge of, this new revenue package for them to consider when they are making the calculations for the inflation rate. If the Member can't answer that today, I am truly concerned because he's the one fully in charge of it — and I don't want it in writing, Mr. Speaker; I want the public to hear it today. Can the Member answer, please?

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, I can't be concerned about what concerns the Member for George Town Central.

What I can tell the Member for George Town Central is my budget had legal practitioner fees, Cayman Islands Institute of Public Accountant fees, bank

licence fees, liquor license fees, Special Economic Zone Certificate fees, Local Companies (Control) Licence fees for realtors and developers, Exempt Trade and Business Licence fees, fund annual return filing fees, land transfer taxes for those transactions over \$2 million, and immigration fees.

In terms of the absolute detail, those increased filing fees are:

- annual work permit fees under \$2,100 - increased from \$100 to \$150;
- work permit fees between \$2,101 and \$10,400 - increased from \$100 to \$250 (All of us would agree that's not the small man); and
- work permit fees over \$10,000 [sic] – increasing from the flat fee of \$100 to \$500.

Again, I don't know an average Caymanian that employs anyone whose work permit is over \$10,500.

Persons applying for permanent residency - Eight-year, application fees —

- annual work permit fees of \$2,100 and under — increased filing fees from \$1,000 to \$1,500;
- annual work permit fees between \$2,101 to \$10,400 – increased filing fees from \$1,000 to \$2,500;
- annual work permit fees over \$10,400 - increased filing fees from \$1,000 to \$5,000.

Again, I don't know any average Caymanian who would be impacted by that.

Filing fee/ flat fee/ application fee for persons with certificate of residency by independent means remains unchanged with a flat fee \$500, but the grant went from \$100,000 to \$200,000 and there was an increase in the amount that had to be invested. Again, no impact on the average Caymanian.

Mr. Speaker, when we go down to trader licenses, insurance licence fees, virtual asset fees, motor vehicle drivers licence fees — these fees were announced publicly. I spoke to everyone in the Ministry and as far as I'm aware, everyone in the Ministry knew these fees were coming into effect. The Member has said to me that he knows; he said he has it on good authority, thus, the reason for my answer. I cannot assume that the Member's good authority is not a good authority. Now he's asking me to contradict his good authority.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: I am simply saying, Mr. Speaker, that these fees were widely known. I will ask the question again.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: These were publicly known, yes. I did not hide one single fee. The fees were being discussed among Caucus and among the entire team.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: I do not know how they calculate their inflation rate and therefore, I can only tell you that these fees were the fees that were announced publicly. The Member will have to recall and know that there is a huge difference between these fees and how an economist (who is a scientist) has to then calculate the impact on inflation.

The Speaker: That brings us to the end of question time. I would like to make an appeal to all Members that when we are doing question time tomorrow we try to reduce the preambles, because the Standing Orders allow one hour for questions and we've spent the better part of two and a half hours on questions today, so I would just ask people to be a little more succinct if we want to get through all 18 questions. The alternative is, we have one hour. Whatever questions are not asked in that hour get on the next day. If we finish for the day and the questions have not been asked publicly, the Standing Orders provide for them to be answered in writing.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Speaker: No, but if it wasn't asked, they don't have to answer it. We have one hour in the Standing Orders which we all say we want to enforce and we want to abide by. The point I'm making is: let's try to reduce the preambles particularly on supplementary questions, because I think if we checked the records we would see that we spent more time today on preambles than actually asking supplementary questions. I really would like to see all 18 questions done each day.

Thank you all very much. The House is suspended for one hour.

Proceedings suspended at 6:28 p.m.

Proceedings resumed at 7:35 p.m.

The Speaker: This Parliament is now in session. Please be seated.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT

The Speaker: None.

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

FIRST READINGS

IMMIGRATION (TRANSITION) (AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION) BILL, 2026

The Speaker: The Bill is deemed to have been read a first time and is set down for a second reading.

HEALTH INSURANCE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2026

The Speaker: The Bill is deemed to have been read a first time and is set down for a second reading.

HEALTH INSURANCE COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2026

The Speaker: The Bill is deemed to have been read a first time and is set down for a second reading.

SECOND READINGS

IMMIGRATION (TRANSITION) (AMENDMENT AND VALIDATION) BILL, 2026

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Caymanian Employment and Immigration.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the Second Reading of a Bill entitled Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2026.

The Speaker: The Bill has been duly moved. Does the Mover wish to speak?

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

The Speaker: Honourable Minister for Caymanian Employment and Immigration.

Hon. Michael S. Myles: Mr. Speaker, this past December I brought the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2025 to this honourable House for debate. An extensive consultation was conducted on the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2025 which included town

hall meetings, radio appearances, small meetings with stakeholder groups and a full 28-day consultation. Today, I bring to you three amendments to the initial Bill.

First, it was determined after the Bill had been approved by the Members of Parliament, assented by Her Excellency and published in the *Gazette* that the transitional provisions included in section 37 of the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2025 had inadvertently excluded certain categories of persons.

This meant that a new 20-year qualifying period would apply to them instead of having the current 15-year qualifying period apply. The qualifying period is a time after which someone may apply for the right to be Caymanian. It was not the intention to disadvantage persons who fall within these categories. The members of the NCFC Government wholeheartedly agreed that the current 15-year qualifying period would apply to them and this update is not to change the spirit of the Law but to provide clarity to ensure that it is applied as intended.

Mr. Speaker, let me be clear on this point. The amendment does not open the gates to new applicants nor does it broaden the criteria for who may apply. What it does, and only what it does, is to ensure that those persons who had already made an application at the time this amendment commences are properly afforded the benefit of the existing 15-year qualifying period rather than being inadvertently swept into the new 20-year timeline. It is a matter of fairness and honouring the reasonable expectations of those who had already lawfully set their foot upon the path.

Second, while preparing for the commencement of the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2025 the Ministry of Caymanian Employment and Immigration has continued working in earnest with the Attorney General's Chambers on the various regulations relating to the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2025.

Through this process, it was determined that various powers needed to be included in the principal Act relating to the Workforce Opportunity and Residency Cayman's (WORC's) ability to charge for express fees. For over 15 years the government has been offering the opportunity for the temporary work permits to be expedited in their process for a fee; however, we have found that while this express fee was set out in the regulation, the fees were not enabled in the primary legislation, the Immigration Transition Act.

This was uncovered as the legal drafters were establishing the express fee for the grant. The WORC department plans to offer the opportunity for work permit grant fees to be expedited. The Ministry and the Department of WORC recognise that processing time for work permit grants does not meet business needs; as such, companies and individuals have been

resorting to submitting a temporary permit when [what] they actually want is an expedited grant.

To reduce the 40,000 temps the Department of WORC processes every year, we are working to meet the needs of our private sector in two ways.

- (1) We are operationally committed to ensuring that work permits are processed more quickly, in general, in the absence of a Caymanian candidate; and
- (2) Where there is a genuine need, we will be offering the opportunity to expedite a work permit grant which will incur an expedited fee — the one change to allow express fees will cover the nature of both express fees.

Third and finally, it was determined that the Ministry of Caymanian Employment and Immigration needed to urgently amend the Immigration (Transition) Act (2022 Revision). The Members of the NCFC Government took the opportunity to request that a deeming provision be included in the Bill confirming that persons born in the Islands on or before 26th March, 1977, have the right to be Caymanian without having to apply to the Cayman Status and Permanent Residency Board or the Director of WORC to confirm the same. Imagine being born in these Islands, your roots stretching back many generations and yet the moment you apply for a job in the private sector, walk into a government office to open up a business, apply to become a Notary Public, apply for a government scholarship, apply for financial assistance in a time of hardship, or try to obtain a National ID, to be told you must first submit an application to the Department of WORC along with an affidavit and other supporting documents, then wait for the Director to confirm what you already know: that you are Caymanian.

Mr. Speaker, this is the daily indignity faced by Caymanians as of right; our “*Caymanianness*” is never in question until the moment we need to exercise it and in that moment, we find ourselves having to apply to be acknowledged as Caymanian. The Premier's decision to waive the customary 28-day public consultation period for this clause reflects the Government's recognition that Caymanians, as of right, have waited long enough for this matter to be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill is broken into seven different clauses. I will now seek to outline the amendments included in the Bill.

Clause 1 provides a short title and commencement of the legislation.

Clause 2 amends the principal Act by repealing and substituting section 27, which provides for those categories of persons who are Caymanian as of right. The effect of the amendment is to insert a new category of persons born in the Islands on or before the 26th March, 1977. The existing categories in the principal Act remain.

Research conducted by the Ministry of Caymanian Employment and Immigration determined that because the principal Act references prior law for the meaning of Caymanian status, the relevant earlier statutes [which] historically determined when birth in the Cayman Islands conferred status include:

- British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act 1914, which provided automatic British subjects' status if born in the Cayman Islands before 1949;
- British Nationality Act 1948, which continued automatic British subjects' status by birth in the Cayman Islands between 1949 and 1968;
- The Caymanian Protection Law, 1971 and its later 1984 version set out criteria for when a person born in Cayman is Caymanian. For example, requiring one Caymanian parent on domestic conditions depending on the era.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, persons born in the Cayman Islands prior to 1969 have automatically been considered Caymanian. Thereafter, persons born in the Islands had to meet certain criteria in order to qualify for the right to be Caymanian. It is through an administrative practice and not legal statute, Mr. Speaker, that persons born in the Cayman Islands between 1st January, 1969 and 26th March, 1977 are accepted as Caymanian on the basis of that birth alone without needing further parental status documentation. There are approximately 2,618 persons born in the Cayman Islands between 1st January, 1969 and 26th March, 1977.

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to section 29 of the principal Act, children born on or after 27th March, 1977 are not automatically considered Caymanian just because they were born in the Islands. They must meet statutory criteria to have the right to be Caymanian. For example, a parent with Caymanian status under the applicable law in force at the time of birth.

Clause 3 amends the principal Act by inserting after section 71A a proposed new section 71B. The proposed new section 71B provides that regulations may provide that services may be expedited in respect of the processing of an application and that a person who is desirous of being provided those expedited services shall, in addition to any other fee payable under the legislation relating to the application, pay the relevant prescribed express fees.

Mr. Speaker, the clause also provides that where a decision on an express application is not communicated within the specified time frame, the express fee shall be refunded; however, that entitlement to refund is not without qualification. Where the delay in processing is attributed to the applicant themselves, whether because the application was submitted incomplete or because legal or regulatory obligations require the applicant's compliance before the matter can proceed, no refund shall be due. To put it

plainly, if the Department does not deliver within the time promised, the applicant will have the express fee returned; but if the delay arises from circumstances within the applicant's own hands or from a statutory or regulatory process that must run its course, the fee shall not be refunded. That is a fair and reasonable balance, Mr. Speaker.

Clause 4 amends section 72(2) of the principal Act by repealing paragraphs (fa) and (fb) and substituting proposed new paragraphs (fa), (fb), (fc), (fd) and (fe). The proposed new paragraphs empower the Cabinet to make regulations that —

- (a) provide that services may be expedited in respect of the processing of applications;
- (b) prescribe express fees payable under the legislation by a person or category of persons for the provision of expedited services in respect of the processing of applications;
- (c) prescribe the time or the intervals at which prescribed fees and prescribed express fees are payable under the legislation;
- (d) provide for the refund, waiver or reduction of prescribed fees and prescribed express fees, which may include the circumstances under which those fees may be refunded, waived or reduced; and
- (e) provide for an exemption from the requirement to pay prescribed fees and prescribed express fees, which may include the circumstances under which the exemption may be granted.

Clause 5 amends section 83A of the principal Act to make further provision for certain transitional matters. The clause repeals and substitutes section 83A(4) and (5), and proposes new subsections (4), (5) and (5A). The effect of the proposed new section 83A(4) is that certain specified categories of persons will not be affected by the coming into force of section 10(a) and (b) of the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2025 which requires persons to be legally and ordinarily resident for an increased period of time before the person is eligible to apply for the grant of Caymanian status.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, a person will not be affected by the coming into force of the abovementioned provision if, as at the date of commencement of section 10(a) and (b) of the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2025 —

- (a) the person has substituted an application or is the subject of an application for one of the following specified areas of permanent residence, and that application is subsequently granted:
 - (i) For 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.

- (ii) For a Residency and Employment Rights Certificate by virtue of marriage to or civil partnership with a Caymanian or permanent resident.
- (iii) For a Residency and Employment Rights Certificate pursuant to section 39 of the principal Act, as the dependant of a Residency and Employment Rights Certificate holder.
- (iv) For a Certificate of Permanent Residence for Persons of Independent Means.
- (v) For a Certificate of Permanent Residence for Dependants of Persons of Independent Means, as the spouse, civil partner or dependant of a holder of a Certificate of Permanent Residence for Persons of Independent Means.
- (vi) To be a British Overseas Territory Citizen by virtue of a connection with the Islands, by registration or by entitlement under the British Nationality Act, 1981 or any Act preceding, amending or replacing that Act.
- (vii) To be listed as a dependant on the Residency and Employment Rights Certificate holder.
- (viii) For leave to remain in the Islands under section 111(4) or (4B) of Customs and Border Control Act (2024 Revision); or
- (ix) For asylum under section 111(3) of the Customs and Border Control Act (2024 Revision), by virtue of being a dependant child under the age of 18 years old of a person granted leave to remain in the Islands under section 111(4) of the Customs and Border Control Act (2024 Revision); and
- (b) the person's right to reside permanently in the Islands, the person's grant of leave to remain in the Islands, the person's Certificate, or the person's grant of asylum is in force.

The proposed new subsections (5) and (5A) provide that applicants for, and the holders of certain Certificates and certain grants of permanent residence are not to be included for the purposes of transitional arrangements set out in proposed new section 83A(4). The persons who are not included are those who have either applied for or who have been granted —

- (a) a Residency Certificate for Persons of Independent Means;
- (b) a Residency Certificate for Retirees;
- (c) a Certificate of Direct Investment or a Direct Investment Holder's (Dependant's) Certificate;

- (d) a Residency Holders (Dependant's) Certificate; or
- (e) permanent residence under any earlier law in circumstances analogous to paragraphs (a) or (b).

Clause 5 also makes provision for transitional arrangements in respect of persons who may require a refund of an express application fee submitted prior to the commencement of clause 3 or 4 of this amending and validating legislation. The clause provides that where on the date of commencement of clause 3 or 4 of this amending and validating legislation, a person has paid an express application fee in respect of an application for a temporary work permit, any refund of the express application fee would be dealt with as if neither clause 3 nor 4 of this amending and validating legislation had come into force.

Clause 6 provides for the validation of the payment of the express fees to, and the charging and collection of express fees by the Director of WORC without statutory authority, for expedited services provided under the principal Act prior to the commencement of clauses 3 and 4 of this amending and validating legislation. The clause provides that the payment, charging and collection of those fees are validated and considered as lawfully charged by, paid to and collected by the Director of WORC, as if the Director of WORC was empowered under the principal Act as amended by this amending and validating legislation to charge and collect those fees.

Clause 7 provides that the validation of the express fees referred to in clause 6 does not affect any order or determination made by a court with respect to express fees charged by, paid to, or collected by the Director of WORC for the provision of expedited fees prior to the commencement of clauses 3 and 4 of this amending and validating legislation.

Mr. Speaker, it is imperative that the proposed changes set out in this Bill be implemented in order to guarantee that the deficiencies that have been outlined are dealt with in a prudent and swift manner.

I wish to thank my Ministry staff, Director Scott and his staff at the Department of WORC, the staff in the Legal Drafting Department, and certainly any others involved in bringing this Bill which seeks to ensure that the legislation is fit for purpose.

I therefore commend the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2026 for favourable consideration of this honourable House, and urge my colleagues to support its passage.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker,

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

Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I await the lectern before I start my contribution.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in my capacity as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the Shadow Minister for Immigration and Caymanian Employment to respond to the Bill currently before this honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, immigration is the heartbeat of our socioeconomic framework. It requires precision, transparency, and above all, the trust of the Caymanian people; yet, the manner in which this legislation has been brought to this Floor and the validation it seeks raises serious questions about the Government's commitment to those very principles.

Mr. Speaker, we must address the "urgency" that is becoming the hallmark of this administration. Everything seems to be urgent. This Bill was published in the *Legislation Gazette* on 20th February, 2026. Today, just days later, we are expected to pass it into law and I dare not talk about the fact that we were still deliberating 60 minutes before Parliament started today. By parliamentary convention and by our Constitution since the 2020 amendments, this House expects a 28-day notice period for non-emergency legislation. The Government argues that they must rush this to meet the April 1st implementation deadline; but let's look at the calendar. If the Bill had been allowed to sit for [the] 28 days required under our rules and conventions, it would have matured on March 20th. The government could have respected the vital democratic process allowed for proper public scrutiny and still pass this law in time for the April 1st start date.

Mr. Speaker, I truly want to think the best of this Government. I really do, but their actions make me question whether their contempt for parliamentary oversight is accidental or deliberate, because it is coming across as being calculated moves on their part, and the message being sent is that scrutiny is unnecessary and accountability is optional. This is not how a serious government behaves, and it's definitely not how democracy is meant to function. Mr. Speaker, it is no wonder that they have chosen to bring this Bill on April Fools' Day because that is exactly what it seems they take our people for. With this kind of behaviour and conduct, it's like they think that we wouldn't notice or we wouldn't mind being treated as fools, I mean.

Mr. Speaker, the Government seeks to bypass the standard consultative obligation by invoking the mantle of urgency; however, we must be clear, there's a profound difference and distinction between a matter being important and a matter being urgent. The government is currently conflating the two, Mr. Speaker, using the former to excuse a self-inflicted crisis of the latter. While the Premier still has the power to sign a certificate, doing so for a Bill that is simply late rather than [for] a genuine emergency like financial crisis or natural disaster, matters of national secu-

ity, immediate financial collapse, or unforeseen legal vacuums, it is being argued as an abuse of the Standing Orders.

Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 2(2) of the 2025 Revision which Sir Alden McLaughlin worked so hard to complete before retiring from this honourable Parliament states that in cases not provided for, the House should look to the practise of the UK House of Commons. In the UK, “urgency” is strictly interpreted and rarely used for routine legislation, providing for a strong precedent for the argument that administrative “unreadiness” does not equal a national emergency. It was never intended to be a buffer for administrative delays or a remedy for a Minister who has simply failed in his preparation for Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, we are witnessing what I would term “administrative default”. When a government waits until the 11th hour to introduce complex legislation, the resulting urgency as they call it is not a product of external crisis but of internal inefficiencies. If we allow the lack of preparation to constitute urgency, we are effectively granting the Executive the power to switch off the necessary public scrutiny whenever they find it inconvenient — it is a very bad and potentially dangerous precedent to set.

As our Standing Orders underscore, the stages of Bills are important. From First Reading straight through to Royal Assent, they are designed to ensure that any errors that could be there are caught in time before they affect the people; by truncating this process, the government is not just rushing a Bill; it is potentially manufacturing a bad law that will inevitably require further correction at the taxpayer's expense. Public consultation is not a grace or favour or gift from the Minister but a procedural right of the people, and to suspend it without legitimate external triggers such as a court order or a genuine state of emergency is, in my opinion, a breach of the social democratic contract [we have] with the people we govern. We cannot allow the Government to use its own administrative procrastination as a tactical shield against public criticism. To do so would be to accept that the Government's calendar is more important than the public's voice.

Mr. Speaker, as I said before, they could still have met their deadline and as far as I'm aware, it's because of their calendars that they could not come back to Parliament later on. Let us not sacrifice the long-term robustness of our statutes for the short-term convenience of a disorganised Minister. Important Bills such as this one, the Immigration Bill, demand more scrutiny, not less. A Bill that is too important to wait is precisely a Bill too important to get wrong.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to turn now to clause 2 which expands the definition of Caymanian as of right, and includes those who were born in the Islands on or before March 26th, 1977. Now, while we recognise the need for clarity, whether the Government has measured the scope of this amendment is a key question here. The Government has acknowledged to us that

there are going to be some people who will get unintended rights to be Caymanian when and if this Bill is passed, but yet they can't tell us how many.

It is crazy to think that the government would consider any changes in a law that would give away our national rights as a Caymanian. Though I know this amendment will help many Caymanians who have found themselves in the peculiar circumstances of the many different sets of immigration changes over the decades; an easier pathway to prove that they are Caymanian — and we in the Opposition support that principle, Mr. Speaker.

We know the many people who, because of our Overseas-Territory complexities, have been caught in the difficulty of proving by a simple document that “I am Caymanian”; but I also know, Mr. Speaker, that we could have figured out another amendment to give the same results to those Caymanians without giving away the status of Caymanians to an undisclosed number of persons. That's the disappointing part, Mr. Speaker. They can't even tell me how many; the only thing I've got as indication is “a small number”.

Mr. Speaker, clause 6 seeks to validate the collection of express fees that were taken from the public without statutory authority. The Department of WORC was charging and collecting money for expedited services without legal power to do so, and we are asked to retroactively bless this shield from government and allow them to be able to verify and validate the previous collections. Truth be told, Mr. Speaker, of course, we support this clause; but instead of this piecemeal approach, what the government needs to do is to conduct a holistic clean up exercise across all government departments to ensure that all fees collected across the civil service are legally sound before we face a massive class action lawsuit. We can't continue to do it only when a Bill is coming for amendment, someone is going to catch on in some other area within the service where fees are being collected and they don't have the legal statute to do so, and by time we get here to change it, they're already in court — and we all know the example I'm talking about.

Mr. Speaker, we also have to address within this amendment, and the transition of the immigration changes that the government is proposing, the human element. We are receiving intel that the staff don't feel properly prepared to deliver the magnitude of these changes. During the last budget debate, the Minister insisted that staffing was adequate after I asked him if he needed more support, yet we're being told that applications are being backed up because staffing is insufficient to meet these policy shifts.

Mr. Speaker, I say this with my whole chest, *it is unfair to pressure those hard-working civil servants into a rushed transition without the moral, financial or personal support they require to deliver the government's policy*. I gave the government and the Minister

enough opportunity that the Opposition would support more employees, more financial support for his Ministry to make sure this exact thing that we're hearing now does not happen; but the Government refused it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to some things that maybe the Honourable Minister can clarify by way of policy. The government has expressed to its Minister on many forums as well as the Premier, talking about a good employer carrot-incentive express service for good employers who hire Caymanians. I get the principle. It's a principle that can be supported. People who focus on Caymanians and prove so, but the benefit they get is express services — they get to go in front of the line.

Mr. Speaker, what is the difference if you can simply pay for it? Why would a person feel motivated to say, *I'm going to be a good corporate citizen* outside of the moral right to do it when they can just pay for it? If you can understand the dilemma there, you'll see that the incentive for being a good corporate citizen and focused on Caymanians will not be a strong pull or driver when you also have to pay for express services.

Mr. Speaker, interestingly enough, my Honourable Leader and I were just saying that there's going to come a time where the system is going to be clogged just by those who can afford to pay it and the small businessman who may not have the extra money to get in front of the line will be stuck waiting for a long time like everyone else because it's going to become the norm to just pay and get upfront. What about a family that's desperate for a domestic helper to care for their loved ones? Hopefully, they will consider that.

Mr. Speaker, another point that I hope the Member can highlight. I know — and we support this, I don't want it to be taken out of context Mr. Speaker — the intention of this clause 2 amendment is to assist Caymanians born before 1977 to have an easier process of proving who they are; but Mr. Speaker, I haven't even heard anything about the people who were born after '77. They still have to go through the headache, the demoralisation feeling of having to say, *I got to prove that I'm Caymanian*. That same argument is the principle they are using to support this change to ease the burden of a Caymanian being disrespected by applying, while at the same time risking the fact of giving an undisclosed number of persons Caymanian status without them deserving it.

Mr. Speaker, my third point — I'm trying my best, Mr. Speaker, to do good politics.

The Speaker: You're doing good politics, but you got to debate the Bill that is before the House, not things that may or should have been included in the policy.

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

Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, I'm trying my best to do good politics. In my duty to my colleagues and my Leader, I reached out to the Honourable Minister requesting the opportunity to sit and discuss these proposed changes with the hope of an opportunity to ask the relevant questions and propose different viewpoints so that once we get to Parliament, we don't have to go through this animosity. I wrote an email in the most positive way I possibly can.

I got a response from the Honourable Minister which was very detailed Mr. Speaker; the logical reasons for it, et cetera, and though I accept and I appreciate it, the issue is he doesn't understand that consultation and communication is a two-way street. It's not just what he says to us, it's [also] what we want to request by way of information and understanding. The thing that really confused me which was so oxymoronic was the Member said—

Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I see... Is there something wrong?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, if there is something that I have done against the Standing Orders, please highlight it because oxymoronic is not a bad word. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[The thing that really confused me because it was so oxymoronic] was the fact that the Minister said in his wrap up to his reply email to me as we were trying to communicate Opposition to Government, was that he is happy to meet and discuss after we pass—... After the sitting of the House, the Bill is finished, you know? We would have done gotten to Committee Stage, Third Reading, voted on it, and passed it, and then he wants to discuss it; and I'm going, *am I reading this right? I am asking for us to sit and discuss it. Maybe the Opposition is missing something*. You know what I had to do, Mr. Speaker? I had to call the Chief Officer. I said, please help me understand this better because we don't want to argue. Matter of fact, we support the rest of the Bill and these things that we're trying to highlight could have been delivered in the spirit in which it's intended; but no, we're being told, *we can meet you after the sitting of the House*.

Mr. Speaker, while we are talking about all these changes I want to say that yes, immigration is important and before I get curtailed about the scope of the debate, because that's becoming stricter these days, (I just hope it's applied to everybody), maybe the Government needs to start talking about the thing most Caymanians really want to hear about in respect to the immigration changes and that's the points system. It is the greatest safeguard that Caymanians are concerned about because it has the biggest implications that ripple effects throughout our community. Just to give you one example: the current point system gives you points for buying property while we're

having a property and housing crisis. Mr. Speaker, that's what we in the Opposition want to hear about.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, we do support a modern immigration system, but we are finding it difficult to support a culture and a government of shortcuts that ignores parliamentary conventions and manufactures definitions of urgency where none exist.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues on the other side: pause, slow down. I was once told by my director at Cayman 27, Ms. April Cummings, "*take one step back to make two steps forward*". We are already seeing amendments to amendments to a Bill — again. We went through that the last time. Mr. Speaker, let us pause. Let us do the work properly. Let's do it in the daylight where the people can see and with the full support of our civil service and the people whom we serve.

Mr. Speaker, I'll leave it there and thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this Bill.

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

Member for West Bay West.

Mrs. Julie J. T. Hunter, Elected Member for West Bay West: Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. Mr. Speaker, today this honourable House considers an amendment to legislation that speaks directly to who we are as a people, how we govern ourselves and how we prepare the Cayman Islands for the future — with responsibility, respect and integrity. This Bill stands firmly on the principles of fairness, clarity, and responsive governance. It's not reckless reform, contrary to what some of the Opposition might try to infer. It is not ideological experimentation. It is a careful correction, and I need to say that again: it is a careful correction. When we find things that are wrong and we need to correct them, this government is about correcting and good governance. It is thoughtful modernisation.

In recent weeks, we have been told that many of the records of our modern immigration system do not date back any further than the 1980s, so some of these laws that we are correcting now, Mr. Speaker, go back to the 1970s. If there are things that need correcting, then that is what we are doing as a Government; and it is precisely that kind of measured leadership the people of these Islands mandated us and that is why we were elected. That is what the NCFC government is all about.

Mr. Speaker, responsible governments do not govern by slogans; they govern by fixing what needs fixing, clarifying what needs to be clarified and strengthening the institutions that we are abiding by so that they serve both today's citizens and tomorrow's generations — and if I need to say that again, I can say it another way, but maybe you all got that. That is exactly what this Bill achieves. We are clarifying

ing Caymanian status and protecting identity through law.

Mr. Speaker, the most important provision before us today is the recognition of Caymanian status as of right for individuals born in the Cayman Islands on or before 26th March, 1977. I don't know who likes to be told as a Caymanian, as a generational Caymanian, that they need to go and prove they are a Caymanian. Mr. Speaker, I don't think either of us like to do that. We are trying to correct something that has been thrown upon us because we have grown to such a stage in these Islands that some of the legislation that we had needed to be updated so that we as generational Caymanians do not have to go and get a piece of paper to say that we are Caymanian. We never had to do that before, and we need to correct those kinds of inefficiencies and whoever created those kinds of systems.

We don't want to repeat history; we want to correct it, and this amendment does not invent history, it respects history. It does not expand entitlement; it affirms belonging. For too long, individuals whose connection to these Islands is unquestionable have faced unnecessary legal ambiguity; in other words, they have long connections to the Islands, but they are now being questioned. That uncertainty should never have persisted. The law must reflect reality and the reality is that those born here during that constitutional period are Caymanian by right, not by discretion, not by favour, but by law.

Mr. Speaker, national identity is strengthened when our laws are clear and just. Certainty restores dignity and that is something we are trying to do with this law. We are trying to restore the dignity to generational Caymanians who somehow feel that they don't have a place in their own country — some of us refer to them as "*nowhereans*", okay?

[Desk thumping]

Mrs. Julie J. T. Hunter: Mr. Speaker, national identity is strengthened when our laws are clear and just. Certainty restores dignity; certainty restores confidence; and certainty ensures that no Caymanian is left navigating grey areas about their own homeland.

[Desk thumping]

Mrs. Julie J. T. Hunter: This government believes that protecting Caymanian identity begins with real clarity and legal clarity, not confusion. We are modernising immigration innovation with responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, the Cayman Islands is a modern economy operating in a fast-moving global environment. Our immigration system must therefore be fair and functional. This Bill introduces a lawful framework for expedited immigration fees, an option for those who require urgent processing to voluntarily pay an express fee while preserving standard processing for

everyone else. Let me be clear: no applicant loses access; no Caymanian is displaced; no fairness is sacrificed. What we introduce is efficiency.

Mr. Speaker, innovation in public service is not a betrayal of tradition. It is a duty of good governance and that is what the NCFC Government is all about. When systems work efficiently, businesses operate with confidence, workers experience less uncertainty, and government resources are used more wisely. The NCFC Government was elected to modernise responsibly and that is precisely what we are doing; for too long, we have had a status quo that we were not pleased with. That is why the people of this island decided to go in a different direction and elect leaders who they felt would go down a different path, and that is what we are doing. We are modernising responsibly.

Mr. Speaker, where technical deficiencies have been identified in the collection of past express fees, this government has chosen transparency over avoidance. Despite the Opposition choosing to focus on what has not been done and past mistakes — which we can all say mistakes were made in many governments; we are not about looking and saying what you did and didn't do. We are choosing to innovate and find solutions for those past mistakes. We do not hide from legal gaps, but correct them when we find them.

[Desk thumping]

Mrs. Julie J. T. Hunter: Validation ensures certainty, protects public finances from unnecessary litigation, and regularises administrative practises while fully preserving court decisions already made. The judiciary is respected, the rule of law is upheld, accountability remains intact; that is what responsible leadership looks like, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill does not grant unchecked authority. Instead, it strengthens safeguards. Cabinet is empowered to establish regulations governing express fees including refunds, waivers, reductions, and exemptions. These provisions ensure transparency, fairness and accountability. Good governance requires structure. Fees must be grounded in law, guided by regulation and subject to oversight. This legislation does exactly that. We are not centralising power, we are regulating it responsibly.

Mr. Speaker, another cornerstone of this legislation is fairness to those already within the system. Individuals who applied for or obtained residency or permanent status under the existing laws acted in good faith. They made life decisions based on the rules that existed at the time; through its transitional provisions, this Bill protects their legitimate expectations, while ensuring the system evolves responsibly. Responsible government does not move the goal posts after the game has begun. That balance, Mr.

Speaker, reforms without injustice, reflects governance with integrity.

Mr. Speaker, practical governance matters. This Bill will improve processing efficiency, it will reduce administrative backlogs, it will enhance service delivery, and it would also generate revenue that can be reinvested into stronger immigration administration — and we have heard much about what that stronger immigration administration is expected to be. We know that there are some things that we still have to work on. We know that there is still much backlog, but we are working through the backlog. We have put processing in place to address that so we know that we are not putting our head in the sand; but we are also advising that there are things that may have gone wrong, but we are correcting those things. Efficiency is not merely administrative convenience; it is economic stability. When immigration systems function predictably, employers can plan better, workers experience less uncertainty, and the wider economy benefits.

Mr. Speaker, the people of the Cayman Islands did not elect this government to preserve inefficiency or tolerate ambiguity. They elected us to govern with responsibility, with respect and with integrity; and yes, they elected us to innovate where reform is needed, and that's exactly what we are doing. Some of the Opposition will frame reform as a risk. We see reform as stewardship. Some of the Opposition would prefer hesitation. We choose careful progress because responsible leadership does not wait for systems to fail before acting; it strengthens them in advance.

Mr. Speaker, immigration policy is ultimately about balance. It's protecting Caymanian identity while supporting economic vitality; its ensuring fairness while enabling efficiency; it's respecting tradition while preparing for the future. This Bill achieves that exact balance. It clarifies who we are, it improves how we govern, and it strengthens confidence in our institutions.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, this legislation reflects the values of this Government and the mandate given to us by the people — responsible decision-making, respect for the rule of law, integrity in governance, innovation in service of the Caymanian people so this Bill will correct ambiguity, modernise administration, protect rights and strengthen our immigration framework for the future. *It strengthens our immigration framework for the future.* It can only get better after this.

For those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I commend the Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2026 to this honourable House and I urge all Members to support the passage of this Bill. I also want to commend the team that, along with the Honourable Minister, put this together; they worked so very hard and diligently to put this together for us.

Thank you very much team, I appreciate all that you have done.

Thank you, fellow Members.

[Desk thumping]

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

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 rise to commend the Minister of Caymanian Employment and Immigration and his team for bringing this important Bill to this honourable House. Of particular significance to me, Mr. Speaker, is clause 2, the provision recognising those who were born in these Islands on or before the 26th of March 1977 as Caymanian by right.

Mr. Speaker, let me be clear on this. I support this change. I support it wholeheartedly and I support it urgently. Our people must be empowered through core legislation that recognises them for who they are.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine: Today, Mr. Speaker, we begin addressing a problem that has existed for nearly 50 years. This wasn't something that just cropped up overnight or in the last year. This has been a problem for the last 50 years and that is the unacknowledged status of generational Caymanians within our own systems.

It has taken decades for this gap to emerge, and we must not imagine that a single line of legislation, a single report, or a single system linkage will resolve every longstanding issue. This will require time, and it will likely require future refinements, but above all, it will require resolve — so let us commit to teamwork, Mr. Speaker; the Government and Opposition, the civil service and departments working intentionally and collaboratively to address this age-old issue.

At the very least, we must ensure that the intended beneficiaries of this Bill truly benefit, Mr. Speaker. Across this whole House we understand why this matters. For far too long, generational Caymanians have found themselves in the unacceptable position where their immigration status on paper does not reflect who they are nor their contribution to the country they helped build, and that must end. Today, I want to address three specific points:

- (1) What the government can do immediately to confirm Caymanians with clear family ties to this land;
- (2) How interoperability between the General Registry and the Identification Register

can confirm a child's immigration status at birth; and

- (3) How linking the Identification Register with the Elections Office can improve efficiency and accuracy in maintaining address and contact information.

Mr. Speaker, when our Islands had a population of 3,000, everyone knew everyone; at 10,000, we still did; even at 20,000 and 30,000, faces of families and the connections were familiar; but today we have a much larger society, and growth and economic expansion have transformed us. It is no longer possible to recognise bloodlines on sight. Mr. Speaker, we once asked a simple but very powerful question. *Who you fah?* That meant: who is your mother; who is your father; what family you belong to; are you Caymanian and how are we connected? That question carried heritage, history, expectation, and identity, Mr. Speaker. In those days, we did not require formal confirmation processes, we knew who was Caymanian, we knew who was not, and when newcomers arrived we welcomed them with Caymanian hospitality, kindness, love of country and community spirit; but growth demands institutional maturity, which was once informal, must now be formalised.

Mr. Speaker, it is inappropriate and frankly unjust that a Caymanian who has held a trade and business licence for 30 or 40 years must now prove to the government that they are Caymanian, in order to renew the same licence. The *are you Caymanian* question is valid, but the deeper question, Mr. Speaker, is who should bear the cost of answering it, the citizen or the government?

Under my Ministry, we have launched the My eID programme and the response has been exceptional. Mr. Speaker, for the first time, many Caymanians, particularly our youth, will be able to hold an identity card that unequivocally states their immigration status. Even as a simple, physical card the My eID provides many significant benefits including: inter-island travel; school and examination registration; the proof of Caymanian Status for employment, and government and residents' discounts, and senior citizens concessions; and for first-time Caymanian home buyers the stamp duty waivers. It's also an identification for financial transactions and money transfers; voter registrations and voting; drivers' licence applications and renewals; company registrations; and the list goes on and on, Mr. Speaker.

In just one month, we've had 1,100 individual registered interests with over 700 applications being received, and we are expanding our operations in Grand Cayman and also establishing production capability in Cayman Brac; however, in the numbers I just mentioned, we have identified a gap — approximately 20 per cent of applicants who identified as Caymanian have not yet been formally confirmed within the WORC system. This does not reflect their heritage; it reflects deficiency in our data, our records,

and our processes. The public's reaction upon hearing that *you are not yet confirmed by WORC or by Immigration* has been clear and understandable. Some say, *I was born here before 1977; I don't need no confirmation*. I would like to see anyone inside this Chamber go and tell my father at 92 years old that he needs to go get confirmed. He goes to church but I'm sure they're not *gonna* like what he's *gonna* tell them.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Isaac D. Rankine: He's 92 this year; still baking still riding his bicycle, and still doing everything, sir.

Others were told that they didn't really need to apply particularly when they were confirming their own children, but that is not the case, Mr. Speaker. The confusion around this particular issue must end and it must end now so I want to thank the Minister and the Ministry of Caymanian Employment and Immigration, and the WORC team for the collaboration with my Ministry, eGovernment and the Computer Services [Department], because significant technological advancements are on the way to modernise immigration systems and online services.

Based on records, there are just over 14,000 individuals born before March 26th, 1977 — but we're not talking about the gap; we discussed it today in the room — who are not yet recorded or confirmed within the immigration systems. That's over 6,300 males and 7,600 females; and because there are no current linkages between Immigration and the General Registry — birth and death records, we do not know how many of these individuals are deceased as yet.

Mr. Speaker, once this Bill is passed and assented to, I believe it is reasonable to expect a coordinated deeming exercise to update records accordingly. Departments must establish the necessary system linkages to cross-reference both birth and death records with immigration data so that both living and deceased Caymanians are properly recorded as Caymanian-by-right. From this pool of confirmed ancestors, future confirmation for descendants will become far more efficient and straightforward. Additionally, there are families whose children are confirmed through public school registrations or scholarship processes yet, Mr. Speaker, their parents or grandparents were never formally recorded in immigration systems.

There are spouses who obtain statuses through marriage while their Caymanian spouse was never formally confirmed. How can that be right for people, Mr. Speaker? These individuals are identifiable and verifiable, and for those not automatically captured under this legislative amendment, but who have confirmed Caymanian family members, I would request the creation of the simplest confirmation request form in our history requiring only: full name, date and place of birth, name and date [of birth] of the confirmed family member and the relationship. Govern-

ment should be able to complete the verification process behind the scenes. Where our government already holds the data, the burden should not rest on our people, Mr. Speaker.

For far too long, the different government departments have made independent determinations about immigration status. This has to stop, Mr. Speaker. Recognition as a Caymanian-by-right must be permanently and authoritatively reflected within the WORC system. Our people should not have to carry multiple birth certificates from department to department. Secure digital interoperability should allow verified information to move; not the citizen. Mr. Speaker, there is no reason why Lands and Survey, the Ministry of Finance, or the Department of Financial Assistance should have to independently verify Caymanians who are eligible, where authoritative information already exists. We have technology. We must align our systems and draw a line in the sand, and that's what we are doing here today.

The issue of ghosts or undocumented Caymanians, those Caymanians by heritage, but unconfirmed in our records must not continue into future generations; however, through interoperability between the General Registry and WORC we can, and should, be able to confirm a child's immigration status at birth, in many cases, so when they get their birth certificate, it says "Caymanian" — and that will be all they need, Mr. Speaker. Whether through a delegation provision under the Caymanian Protection Act or through real-time interdepartmental workflows, the outcome is what matters: a birth certificate that reflects at issuance the confirmed immigration status of that child. We should not be asking individuals in their 40s, 50s, 70s, or even in their 90s to prove whether their parents were domiciled at the time of their birth. Confirmation should occur at birth going forward when records are fresh and the data is available. Mr. Speaker, we have enough unconfirmed Caymanians. We don't need to create any more, sir.

In the longer term, I have asked the Department of eGovernment to collaborate with the Elections Office to explore secure linkages [between] the identification register and WORC's systems. The goal is straightforward: enable real-time verification, address updates, and transmission of contact information between departments, from elections to the identification register or vice versa. A verified residential address benefits not only financial institutions conducting KYC [Know Your Customer], but also elections and other public services dependent on accurate records. We have the technology, Mr. Speaker; we need to use it. Modern governance requires integrated systems and again, citizens should not have to update their addresses multiple times across multiple agencies.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I envision a Cayman where every child's immigration status is confirmed at or shortly after birth; where every Caymanian voter is formally recognised within the immigration records; a

single reliable source of truth on immigration statuses that supports government decision-making; where no Caymanian is ever again required to repeatedly prove they belong in the country of their birth and their heritage.

Mr. Speaker, this initiative is not merely administrative reforms. It's about dignity, it's about identity, it's about justice; so let us fix this properly, sustainably, and let us ensure that never again will a generational Caymanian exist as a ghost within their own country and their own country's records.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It wasn't my intention to speak, and I am actually fanning the paper because the ink is drying on it.

[Laughter]

An Hon. Member: It's true. I just saw him writing.

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: I have the unique ability of being able to write 10 pages in 10 minutes.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: I won't be long, Mr. Speaker. I thought I should get up as a former Minister seeing that some of this work had been done whilst I was there. This amendment and validation are long overdue, Mr. Speaker. There have been many attempts to solve this vexing matter, but it never seemed like something that served a whole Caucus and so we could never get full consensus to move forward.

Far, far too long, Mr. Speaker, many Caymanians who believe they are Caymanians — that's the thing — never had any rights in this country and couldn't be confirmed as Caymanians, considered as ghosts as many have said. I am happy that finally, a group, the NCFC, could agree to move forward with this amendment and validation.

[Desk thumping]

Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour: We will never get it perfect, Mr. Speaker, but I don't like the *are you Caymanian*, question — I keep asking, who would you rather be Caymanian? Is it the man off a plane with no connections, or someone who is connected to us?

I have my personal view, Mr. Speaker. I believe if we want to boost our population, we should really connect with our family members from the Bay Islands and connected islands. That's my personal view, from my great-grands. That is one way. Do you know, Mr. Speaker, you would know this more than

many in here — and I'm not saying that you've aged; in the '30s and '40s, they brought in men to boost the population. I was told by some of those men, one of whom was my grandfather.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, I get up to show my support because too many Caymanians are caught up in this and I don't want any of them to be disenfranchised. I want to thank the Ministry staff who have been working on this for years now. Thank you. Thank you.

The next step is confirmation at birth, and I know they are working on that also. Step by step, little by little, we'll get it done. Let's move along with this. It has my support. [There are] too many people with university troubles, work worries, and family woes from this foolishness, Mr. Speaker. The real goal is for us to move forward with advancing our Constitution and having more autonomy over our affairs. Some may not want to hear that, but that's the way we need to go. This world is maturing too much to be treated like children, and this helps.

It won't be perfect, Mr. Speaker, but it is moving in the right direction. It has my full support, and I ask Members to lend their support to it also. [Again,] it's not perfect, but it is the right step in the right direction — especially when my name is showing up on the list.

[Laughter and desk thumping]

The Speaker: I caught Hon. DaCostas' eyes first. Sorry.

Hon. Nickolas T. A. DaCosta, Minister of District Administration & Home Affairs, Elected Member for Cayman Brac West and Little Cayman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just as I was about to fall back into my chair.

I know you asked us earlier, Mr. Speaker, to debate specifically about the Bill but *[Singing] precious memories how they linger*. Mr. Speaker, one precious memory that I have in my head right now is the contribution from the Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition because he is the only member who has spoken so far from the Official Opposition. It's very interesting to hear my good friend speak about urgency becoming the hallmark of this Administration, of this Government.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to remind the listening public that in the last administration, the same section that was used for this Bill — which is a pretty simple Bill, Mr. Speaker, just to validate and to provide relief to our Caymanians born in the Cayman Islands — was used for several Bills as well. It was used the latest in December 2024 for Financial Services Bills, and not just Bills that perhaps shored up the industry, made it stronger. That suite of Bills was to raise fees; increase revenue for government, and the Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition was a part of that

government that saw that as urgent. If that was urgent, this, that directly helps Caymanians born prior to 1977, is also urgent.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Nickolas T. A. DaCosta: Also, Mr. Speaker, as I said, the Bill is quite simple. It's a validation and amendment Bill. You're validating fees that you saw were being collected; you want to regularise them. Pretty common practice.

Not only does the declaration go outside of parliamentary procedure — [I] just demonstrated it has been done in this Parliament for lesser matters; but it's also a common practice with this validation and amendment Bill: —

- 2021 - Public Service Pensions (Amendment and Validation) Bill;
- 2023 - Terminal Charges (Validation) Bill, 2023 which was actually from the Ministry of Tourism and Ports at that time;
- Public Lands (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2023;
- 2024 - 10 Bills for validation, all for fees;
- 2025, it continues.

Where we see gaps, we fill them, Mr. Speaker. Not only this Government, the previous government as well — where we identify the gaps, we fill them.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that the Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition didn't appreciate when he asked for an update on a Private Member's Motion on decriminalising speeding in no wake zones and, he was told, *we're working on it. We are going to tell you about it soon.* Pretty sure he didn't appreciate it. Well you see, Mr. Speaker, the urgency that is the hallmark of this government is to show the people, to show this Parliament that we are not just working, we are demonstrating that work. Which is why you may complain that we have brought amendments after the Bill was passed — and more amendments will come; but, Mr. Speaker, we are demonstrating that where we find something that needs to be fixed, it will be fixed, it is being fixed, and that's what the Bill before us is. We identified something in this phase — this Minister, the Ministry, [and] this government identified it — and that's what we are doing.

The Immigration (Amendment and Validation) Bill is to fix problems that have always existed, and again, we are delivering on the fix for that. Through this Bill, Caymanians born in this country prior to the 27th March 1977, will automatically be deemed Caymanian-as-of-right no longer needing to complete an affidavit which requires a signature from a parent, (which is getting more and more difficult), but we need to recognise... I'm probably the only person in here born after 1977.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Nickolas T. A. DaCosta: This law could affect many people we know. It helps many people we know and that is what our goal is being here, Mr. Speaker. To help people in real practical ways, to not have more ghost Caymanians running around the place but to solve that issue.

Mr. Speaker, before I end or continue wherever the Lord leaves me here, I want to associate myself with the words of my colleague, the Minister for Culture; my colleague, the Minister for Caymanian Employment and Immigration; my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary and Member for West Bay West; and my colleague, the honourable Member for Bodden Town East.

Mr. Speaker, as I started off, this Bill was a simple one so I thought. Validating fees, deeming persons born in this country prior to March 1977, who we all know are Caymanian, yet here we are. Here we are, fighting about it again, but one thing is for sure, we can fight about it; but through this, and through anything else that comes, this Government will continue to fight for Caymanians and the rights they deserve.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Honourable Deputy Governor.

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I shall also be brief.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to focus my remarks on the transitional provisions of the law, the deeming provisions, and I would crave your indulgence just to update the Parliament on what's happening with the civil service and the term limits that we undertook to implement.

Mr. Speaker, first, I want to congratulate the Minister for his dedication and commitment to do exactly what the people asked a year ago — to bring about immigration reform. I commend the team in the Ministry, the team in the department, legal drafting, everyone. I want to make a special mention of our Director of WORC, Mr. Scott over there. His parents reminded me in Cayman Brac that 20 years ago, I told them that Mr. Scott would be head of immigration one day and here he is, an outstanding young Caymanian.

[Desk thumping]

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Franz I. Manderson: We are very proud of our director. He and I worked together for many, many years and I can say without reservation that he is an outstanding Caymanian — dedicated, honest and capable. We're very proud of you, Jeremy, very, very proud.

Mr. Speaker, I got several messages when the Bill came out, most of them focused on the transitional provisions and whether it was the right thing to

do. Mr. Speaker, I have been in immigration for 28 years. I've seen so much immigration reform and I can say that every time we change the Immigration Law there are transitional provisions to protect persons whose applications were currently in the system that if we were going to then change the criteria, their applications would be considered under the previous legislation. Now, Mr. Speaker, that has to be right.

If you think about it very carefully, the current provisions, for example, permanent residence, say that you must invest, I think, over \$2 million in developed real estate so someone who comes here, they buy a property for \$2 million, they submit their application for permanent residence, the government decides to change the criteria and says, *no, it now must be \$5 million*, if that person then has to meet a new criteria, what are they supposed to do? Well, I guess you could sell the property you have and try to buy a new one. Mr. Speaker, that's not how we want to operate; that's certainly not fair to anyone, so I think the transitional provisions are correct. It is consistent with what we did with previous legislation and it's not opening the floodgates or making it easier. The people who have put their applications in are simply being judged by the rules which were applicable at the time they submitted their application.

Mr. Speaker, the deeming provisions which are, you know, very emotive — immigration is a very emotive topic. Everyone wants to get it right. Everyone wants to see our people protected; we have had long discussions about this in Caucus and in the committee room and I think what is clear is that the deeming provisions are there simply to allow people like myself not to have to run down to immigration and get a letter saying *Franz, you are Caymanian*.

We are not creating any new Caymanians; we're not doing anything like that. The law said if you were born in the Cayman Islands you were a Caymanian. Our grandfathers decided that was not a good idea and they changed the law, but they couldn't make the law retroactive, so that was the law at the time of my birth — simply being born in Cayman made me a Caymanian. As the Minister of Culture said, you know, his dear father should not have to go down to immigration after living in this country for 90 years to get a letter to say you're a Caymanian.

If there's one thing that I've heard from the public is: *please make it easier for us to prove that we are Caymanian*, and that's exactly what the government is doing today. I think people just need to step back a bit and understand it for what it is. We are allowing people who have been born in this country at a time when the law allowed them to become a Caymanian simply by being born here, to be able to prove much easier than now that they are a Caymanian. That's it, Mr. Speaker, pretty simple.

Mr. Speaker, term limits for civil servants. I crave your indulgence just for four minutes. I came to the House last year and an amendment was made to

the Public Service Management Act that would allow for regulations to be made to introduce term limits in the civil service. That project is nearing completion.

We presented to Caucus, I think, last week, so when the national legislation that has been delayed a bit comes into force, we will also enforce our provisions which mirror much of what is in the national legislation. Mr. Speaker, for the first time in our history, the entire working population of the Cayman Islands will be governed under one system. There will be term limits in the civil service the same as there are in the private sector.

Just to give a very short recap. They will come into force and on that date every non-Caymanian in the Service will have a term limit. We have put provisions so that we can designate certain provisions for Caymanian's only. We have put provisions in there for myself and the Governor to be able to exempt a civil servant from the term limit provisions for up to two years, which has to be reported to Cabinet. Cabinet will have the authority to exempt a class of persons. For example, if there's a shortage — well, actually there is at the moment — a global shortage of teachers, with the support of the Minister of Education we could decide to exempt teachers from term limits for two years, three years, whatever, until the shortage is sorted out. My plan was to have a rollover of two years, which has not worked; there was much feedback on that, so I'm just going to keep it the same one year as it is done nationally.

Mr. Speaker, we have completed that work; it will happen. I want to thank the government and everyone for their support in getting us here. This started way back when, and it has been a really joined up effort. I see my friend, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, smiling. He and I had many good conversations about this. Again, we all wanted the same thing and now we are here.

Mr. Speaker, to wind up, I think this piece of legislation is absolutely needed. It gives the people of the Cayman Islands a win — and Mr. Speaker, you know, they deserve a win. People have been saying for a while they are not getting a win. This is a win for the people of the Cayman Islands. The transitional provisions mean that the government is keeping its promise to people to be fair and transparent with those who are applying for applications. As I said, Mr. Speaker, once the government puts into place the new Immigration Act for the private sector, the civil service will do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

Leader of the Opposition.

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

Mr. Speaker, I was leaning back in my chair. I certainly can't sing, but I do have precious memories as well. In fact, I might have been thinking of some of those when I was leaning back, sir. I know the debate has taken a detour of sorts and I won't be long, sir, but the Member for Cayman Brac West and Little Cayman failed to recline in his chair but jumped up to contribute to this. I had no intention of speaking; I wanted to make sure we got out of here before 12 o'clock, 1 o'clock before the Deputy Premier lost his ride again — because you know he doesn't have a driver, sir.

However, I had to rise on this occasion because my memory, Mr. Speaker, on that instance of the Financial Services Bills that were deemed as important by the government at the time, I remember calling the now Premier who was on the Opposition side to ask, is there anything that has to be done before the end of the year? He said, *yes, there are these very important financial services Bills that have to be done before the end of the year*. He said nothing about fees, Mr. Speaker, as was inferred by the Honourable Member, because I'm certain by then the now Premier was planning his campaign and he would not have included or supported Bills that would have added to the revenues for the government at the time because the PREFU [Pre-election Economic and Financial Update] was coming out. I'm sure he would not have supported Bills just for revenue, but in fact, these were financial services amendments that were promised by the Cayman Islands Government in order to keep the [Islands] off the grey list and were promised to be delivered before the end of the year. That was my understanding, Mr. Speaker.

Now, I would have thought that perhaps the Member for Cayman Brac West and Little Cayman may have known this in his capacity as Caucus Secretary, but my memory in that area is a little grey; perhaps he was already in Cayman Brac campaigning, sir.

I just wanted to raise those things from my precious memory and to say that we on this side, as my Deputy said, are not complaining; we're not saying that the transitional aspects of the Bill aren't needed. We're just saying that there is a difference between urgent and *oh, we forgot*. That's all we're saying, sir. This could have been delayed. We could have done many things, but we're past that. I'm not going to get into that. I'm not going down that road, Mr. Speaker, but just to say that that was our position. Not for everyone to jump up and defend and say, *oh, you know, what are you guys thinking over there, transitional acts have to happen, blah, blah, blah*. Well, you know, we literally got briefed on this Bill not even 30 minutes before Parliament was to start, sir, you had to come in to say, *Listen, Parliament has to start*. We had to go back during the 5 o'clock break to complete the briefing, and that is all we are saying.

That is all we are saying, Mr. Speaker, simply that; rushed. We're saying this is not urgent; these are

mistakes you made or oversights, whatever, whatever. Let's take our time to understand this. Let us have an opportunity to digest it. Let us have an opportunity because we don't have any staff to check with some of our supporters in the private sector to help us understand some of the concerns as well. That's all we're saying.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to clarify that this is where we stand on this. We understand the issue, we understand the problems; we're just concerned about the course taken.

Thank you.

Mr. A. Roy Tatum: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly won't be long.

Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully. I listened very carefully. Much flowery language but what it seemed to me, Mr. Speaker, was that there was a pretence that we in this House did not receive Notice of an amendment to the Amendment to remove that same clause 2 because on the Government side, they had started to have concerns as to whether it was workable or not. There are concerns about 1972 or 1977 being the date, and a bit of legislation that somebody somewhere had a strike through.

We're pretending that we didn't — as we just heard — meet behind closed doors for one hour, to an hour and a half, addressing those concerns. We're just papering over all of that, sir; and I do not want the public to be left thinking it was just Opposition. My good colleague for George Town Central (very passionate) was in that room with all of us when we were discussing these concerns. I don't know how we can pretend the conversations didn't happen. I honestly don't.

There was a conversation about whether we need a sunset clause; the eID is the best solution going forward — and I agree, I have mine. We haven't heard it yet tonight, and I think I have this correct — conversations about those 1,621 people who we're looking to resolve this issue for may still need to produce a birth certificate. If I have that wrong, the Minister can correct me in his winding up. I say that, sir, and I have other things I could say, but I won't. I hope in his winding up the Minister will address the fact that there were concerns and how we ended up.

A concern also, Mr. Speaker, was that there is a risk that there would be people who were transitory through the Islands who may have been born here with no real connection but yes, the law at the time may have allowed them to be Caymanian. Some of those people may be able to come back now and become Caymanians if they so choose. I think we agreed the risk was deemed to be small. We're not telling the public that; I'm telling the public that and I hope the Minister addresses it in his wind-up because the public deserves to know, Mr. Speaker.

There are concerns out there. There are people in the public who do not understand; they weren't

privity to the conversation we had today in terms of trying to alleviate some of our minds. I was [vacillating], would I abstain, would I vote; but in the end, in my own head, I decided the risks are small [but] the benefits are great. It will not solve the issue — as I think the impression is being given — in terms of individuals not needing to still prove they are Caymanian or require a piece of paper. If I'm wrong, the Minister can tell me so in his wind-up.

Mr. Speaker, I won't go any further with that, but through you, Mr. Speaker, I will implore the Premier and any person designated to be Premier going forward, not to repeat what we have done in pretending that, at least possibly one Bill might have been important but was also urgent — importance and urgency are not the same thing. The Health Bills we are going to be debating, I will leave them be but I will say this, the certificate that arrived, that stated that this Bill and others were urgent, *nobody can fool me to think they were urgent; they were not.*

Mr. Speaker, the Constitution of the Cayman Islands gives the public a right that some don't even know they have: before Parliament can vote on any new law, that law must be published for 28 days. Mr. Speaker, you might remember, because you were there, you were part of the delegation in the UK where it was decided by those of you able to make decisions and bring them back, that we would increase that from 21 days to 28 days. It was increased; such is the importance of that time frame. We didn't lessen it. It was [increased] from 21 days to 28 days.

Those 28 days, Mr. Speaker, give the public time to read proposed legislation, understand what it means, and the ability and time to raise concerns before it becomes law. The 28 days is a window of time between the intent of Parliament in bringing a new law and the decision of the Parliament as to whether or not that law gets passage. That window of time does not belong to the government, it does not belong to the Opposition; it belongs to the people of this country.

There's one [exception] for that window to be closed — one. The Constitution allows one exception: if the Premier certifies in writing that a matter is too urgent to wait 28 days, Parliament can proceed immediately but this is, and I know you know it, Mr. Speaker, an exceptional power. It was designed for genuine emergency situations where delay would cause real harm to public safety, financial stability, or legal compliance. It was never intended and would never have been intended as a shortcut for legislation that is simply a priority that the Government wants to pass before public debate can develop.

Importance is not urgency, Mr. Speaker; a Bill can be significant, but it must still wait the 28 days. The test is not whether the legislation matters or is important but whether the delay itself would cause serious harm. That question has not been answered. In this case, the Urgency Certificate has been issued

and Parliament is being asked to proceed without the public having had their 28 days.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on but I won't belabour the point; it has happened. I just ask that next time we start to consider this we think long, hard, and carefully about this possible slippery slope that we may be going down whereby we can possibly start saying everything is urgent and will be brought, and the public does not get their 28-day window.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much and I thank my colleagues for listening to me.

[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?

Minister of Planning.

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Mr. Speaker, thank you. As everyone else said they will be very short, I plan to be very short too.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill in front of us today has been one that previous administrations have looked after, and we all said we weren't going to play politics with; but again, I found myself [remembering] what Mr. Bush told me once: *it depends on how you treat me. I come with two different papers, one on the left and one on the right; and how I feel that morning [determines] which one I goin' read.*

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of Opposition just went after the Member for Cayman Brac and insinuated that he was misleading in talking about the fees, but Honourable Leader, it is very easy; everything said in here is recorded so we can go right back to exactly what was waived. The Bills were on the 9th December, 2024 [were] the Banks and Trust Companies (Amendment) Bill, the Companies Management [Amendment] Bill; a number of these Bills are in the Hansards that were waived. That is what the Member for Cayman Brac was referring to — and they were all about fees.

Are we saying today that it was okay to waive all of them back then with no problem, but because we want to fix one for Caymanians today, we are *gonna* play politics with it. We're going to kick it around and say, *oh yeah, unna shouldn't bring it.* Is it because they didn't bring a motion to the House and got it done in time? Is that what they are worried about?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: You said, Mr. Speaker, that certain things trigger certain people's nerves and whoever the cap fits, let them wear it; whoever it was...

Mr. Speaker, I also heard many things here tonight, half of which attacked the Member who's

bringing the Bill more than actually deep diving into the Bill. I don't have to stand here and protect the Member — I think the Member can do that quite [well] on his own; but

Mr. Speaker, some of the same Standing Orders we have today, which were brought back and changed by Sir Alden... Back then, I remember the Member for George Town Central and I arguing that we didn't support them, but all of a sudden they are good. Don't forget you and I were in the same boat. We argued then that we did not support those Standing Orders. Not because you're on one side in a different household, now you will say that you support them. We continue to say that we didn't support it.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: No. It was me and you; and there are more of us who can get in the boat too if they want to get into it.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Well, if you want to pick out which one you thought that you should support and didn't support... I remember us having that argument around by that back door saying we can't go in there and support Alden with this today.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Oh, you didn't like that one either — starting at 2 o'clock. Yeah, we should have continued starting at 10:00; we would get more done. We probably would have been out of here by now.

An Hon. Member: Amen!

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: That's where it would have been.

Mr. Speaker, this validation Bill has to be sorted out. How many times have we heard Caymanians talk about, *I shouldn't have to go to nobody to apply to say that I'm a Caymanian*. All of us agree. I didn't see any amendments coming here, so I [thought] *boy, no one made any amendments to the Bill, everybody must be in agreement with it*, then I hear the Member for Prospect [sic] jump up and talk about all that happened in the back room and about this and that that went on in the back there.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Red Bay, sorry. I apologise to you, Member. The Member for Red Bay jumped up and talked about everything that happened in the back room, when he was the same one there saying he was supporting it too; and then you come out here on the mic and say something different tonight.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: No one ever said the conversation never happened, but you said there [that] you were supporting it and I hoped when you got here you would support it too.

Mr. Speaker, that's what's wrong with us sometimes, though. Good amendments, we just need to stop playing politics with it. We are playing politics with Caymanians' lives. We put arguments in front of it. We try to put delay tactics in certain things. We don't need to put delay tactics; this is something we need. We know the people's mandate already. Do you think the Honourable Premier would have just brought this Bill if he didn't know what the people felt — if we didn't know the pulse of the people?

Mr. Speaker, we know the pulse of the people. That's what the people elected us for, to go and do their work. We don't have to come back to them every single minute with every little piece because we know. When we campaign we hear from them exactly what needs to be done. This is just a stall tactic. Every minute for them to get something ahead and try to stop it, stop it, stop it. All the Members opposite here said they're going to support this.

Mr. Speaker, I made so many notes on this thing here tonight that, *Jesus' peace*, the ink *nah* dry on some of them now.

Mr. Speaker, we argue... well, I can't say we argue. I don't know if they agree with the express fees or not, but Mr. Speaker, I want to remind them it's the same Caymanians who own the businesses that are going to apply for the express fees. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you, I have a group chat with almost every business owner in the eastern district and I tell you they support this so when you talk about public consultation... They had a meeting right next door.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Their listening tour. That should've been their public consultation; but that meeting was about campaigning. That's probably what it was; it wasn't about this Immigration Bill. If it was about the immigration Bill come up and tell me I'm wrong and I'll apologise to *unna*. Well, it was only *unna* there anyhow, talking to *unna* selves.

[Laughter]

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Mr. Speaker, we know what we need to do. The express fees, everyone whom I have asked, told me, *Minister, please put this in place. We will support it*. I know business owners in East End whom I've talked to who said, *listen, please, because I need to get my work permit quicker. I'm having a hardship. I need to be able to move faster*. The Government has found an express lane to be able to make this work for them. That's all. It's for our people,

our Caymanians, our young entrepreneurs who want to continue to do business, who want to be able to just pay a fee to get the service they need.

Sometimes I don't know who the Leader of Opposition is anymore. The Leader of the Opposition said he hadn't planned to get up — then he wants to get up and attack my little one from the Brac.

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: The Premier gave him that name first.

Mr. Speaker, what I want to say tonight is that we should have been much further ahead on what we were doing here and everybody just wants to put in their fluff and go on with it and say, oh what is good, what is bad and whether... Again, if we sat and debated the substance of the Bill and what the Bill was pertaining to, how much further would we have been. Started pre-ambling all over the place and telling us about everything else that has not one single thing to do with this Bill. They say when the truth hits you, you feel no pain. Are you mumbling over there?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Well, next time, be careful when you attack my little one from the Brac.

[Laughter]

Hon. Johany S. Ebanks: Don't go at him.

Mr. Speaker, this poor old paper I'll just throw it in the garbage tonight 'cause it is done; worn out.

Mr. Speaker, let me shut this down too. We know it is an important Bill. We are here to deliver for the people and that is what this validation Bill is all about. I think the Member for Prospect summed it up very clearly, very clearly; and I think in his wrap-up debate he will have to do so again, because it seems like not everyone understands it. Hearing the tone that was set tonight made me prepare for the other Bills I have coming down the road too — how I need to deal with them moving forward. I won't talk about it but I plan to deal with them in a different way. I will ensure they are set in very clear guidelines that each of us could follow.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I want to say that I put my full support behind this amendment to this Immigration Bill. As some people rightfully said, we may have to come back and make changes, but the thing is we realised the problem, we brought it here, we tried to fix it; but it seems like some people just want us to leave the problem as is and don't do anything about it. This may not be the last fix to it. You may have to bring another fix again, but that's what legislation is about and that's what legislators are about, continuing to amend Bills as we continue to see the problems that we face. Yeah, it's not every day that

we *gonna* find that we get it right here because if we got it right we wouldn't be here debating that Bill now. Why didn't they find the problems when they had it all this time? Who was the immigration minister back then? Mr. Hew? Okay. He said it wasn't him.

Mr. Speaker, what I'm saying is that we found a problem, we're here to fix the problem and we continue to move on, and if they find a problem with the Bill later on they know what to do, they can make an amendment to the Bill and bring it back to the Government and the Government can decide whether we need to make the changes too.

With that, Mr. Speaker, it is now... Oh God, it's a good thing I got a driver. I'm going to sit down now. That is my rant on this Bill for tonight. Again, Minister, I give you full support.

You come back? Mr. Speaker, I'll catch him in the next one.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: Minister of Finance and Development.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Mr. Speaker, having been away from the House for 12 years, there are a number of observations that I've made coming back. There are some Members who just have to talk. They oftentimes don't know what they're talking about, but they have to talk. *The wisest man is a man who knows what he doesn't know.* Unfortunately, wisdom and discernment are not prerequisites to making it to this House; sometimes it's just pounding up your mouth, making a lot of noise. Then, once we get here, we refuse to tell the public what's most important about their democracy. We like to talk around the democracy.

I lived in a time when there were 21 days for Bills. We want to prove our worth? Member for Red Bay, you talked about the 28 days? Why don't you join all of us and find out how many comments we actually ever get? You see, dressing stuff up to make the public feel like you're giving them something when it's really of no value; because you just want to make it feel good — but I'm used to it because it's what I fought for 12 years. Same way we got Single-Member constituencies. Same approach I saw from the red party for 12 years when I was here. Twelve years later, it's the same MO [modus operandi]; it's the same MO today, as it ever was.

Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no doubt in any of our minds, and there ought not to be, that if we went to the public and we explained to the public a number of very simple but sometimes hard to hear things...

Our current immigration regime, as has been practised for 50 years, has been that a member of the public who was born in the Cayman Islands can apply to be deemed a Caymanian and get three affidavits and be granted Caymanian status. There is no electronic system or record to prove it. The Immigration

Department now, and the Immigration Department for the last 50 years has been doing this. That's a fact. That's a fact. Let's just deal with the facts. That's what they've been doing because once a person gives the affidavits, there is no way for them to disprove the affidavit.

Let's break it down simply: a person who was in the Cayman Islands between the 26th March, 1972 and 26th March, 1977, who bore a child in the Cayman Islands, that child, once the person was domiciled or ordinarily resident here, is automatically deemed a Caymanian. When they come with that affidavit, our immigration department does not have the records to say, *yes, your parent was on a work permit*, because being on a work permit would mean you're domiciled or legally or ordinarily resident. Can't disprove it.

Another person who may have been born here but whose parent was here on vacation, for example. They were visitors; not domiciled, not legally or ordinarily resident. Should that human being... Let's just say you have someone right now who's 55 years old, 54 years old, 53 years old, and they're living in Timbuktu. They come to the Cayman Islands; they get the three affidavits because let's say mom knew some persons who lived and worked here. Let's just say they worked at the Holiday Inn — we all remember it, fond memories. Heard about precious memories? There's a precious memory, the old Holiday Inn — and they get the affidavit. Right now, as we speak, the Director of Immigration cannot disprove the affidavit. If he can't disprove the affidavit and it's accompanied by a birth certificate, you're deemed a Caymanian. That's just the fact. That's a fact. That's where we are. That's another part of this colossal mess we have in this country called immigration.

Now, we then as the current group of legislators meet, we talk, we talk, we talk, we go back, forward, up, down, we go around the mulberry bush, we chop it down, we plant it back and then we come out here and we say, *you know what, we need to beat up the government, we need to do this, we need to do that*. Those are the facts about who can be deemed a Caymanian — a birth certificate and three affidavits, nothing called a computer system. Back then, there was no IT [information technology] system; from 1972 to 1977 there was no immigration system. There's no immigration database. It did not exist — all paper records.

The genesis of the confusion: There exists a piece of paper. From what we have been told accurately from the Deputy Governor, from the time he was Chief Immigration Officer and others who have led this department is that, during their training they were handed information which included a piece of paper that has a law, but the number 1972 was crossed out and replaced with 1977; 1977 has been practised so much so that it is now in current legislation. Over the decades we've actually moved to the point to enshrine that year in legislation.

Let us ask ourselves, however we've interpreted it, whether 1972 was right or wrong: is there a person who has ever been deemed a Caymanian or those to come, that the Cayman Islands Government would have legal authority to revoke or say no to once they have their affidavits? The answer is, no. The answer is plainly, no. I have sympathy up to the point that we did only have the conversation today. I don't have too much sympathy because, let me be 100 per cent clear, I only had the conversation yesterday. That does not give me a reason to now say that we ought not to deal with the situation at hand.

Let me now play this out. The government says, you know what, even though we know it's urgent for us to regularise the collection of express fees; even though we know it's important for us to get on with this business, let us publish it for 28 days. Let us get to the bottom line of, we need to play through these 28 days. All of us ran less than 12 months ago. Given what we know about immigration and given what we know about our Caymanian people and the fact that, as it was said earlier, we finally need to give generational Caymanians a win.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: How many generational Caymanians, once it is explained to them simply and plainly as I just did? Anyone who's going to apply for this under those provisions is going to be deemed even without us doing this because if you're coming to apply, you're going to get your three affidavits. Nobody is going to saunter down to the immigration office and not get their affidavits. They're going to have the affidavits lined up. They're going to have their affidavits lined up. Who is going to be able to say that the affidavit is incorrect? We don't have the systems to disprove what they're saying.

The Member for Red Bay invoked me to speak because he said that we needed to explain this to the people and we needed to be truthful. He glossed over it so let's get down into it. Let's go point by point, let's deal with telling the people the truth. It has been a colossal mess. It *is* a colossal mess.

The Member for George Town Central said to tell the public how many are going to get through. Firstly, the 1,600-plus who were born in that era, the department and the database that records births is a public database. In other words, just like the lands' registry, any member of the public can go and request a certificate and therefore it's not covered under the Data Protection Act. We were shown the list in the committee room. Every one of us sat through must be 30 minutes of scrolling through that list. While scrolling through, I did not see anyone who gave me pause. Even some of the Hispanic-sounding names when they were called out, I said, well, I know that one; people said, who's that? I said, he is a Northwest Pointer. A sample of 19, imagine if we got another 15,

20, 30 Caymanians, we easily could have picked up a small committee of about 50, gone through that list and we could have specifically answered the question that the Member for George Central has asked.

Let's deal with the risk. All of us admit that in looking at the list, we can see just from a cursory view that the vast majority — I am going to say 90-plus per cent — were names we recognise: Bushes, Boddens, Ebankses, Anglins, McGaws, Seymours, Rankines, Hews, McTaggarts, Saunderses, Tatums, Bryans, McFields, Hunters, Mandersons, Millers, Parchments, Myleses, Scotts, DaCostas. We saw [them all] on that list, so the fact is we all know from the outset that the odds of anyone on that list not being qualified to be in it are extremely small.

Now, let's deal with whether someone who was on the list was not necessarily qualified to be on the list. If they were born to a visitor on 1st March 1976, and showed up yesterday with three affidavits saying, I hereby swear that I know that X (the name of the mother) was living and ordinarily resident in the Cayman Islands on the same date 1976 — and you simply have to find three people to do that, there is no way for our current immigration regime to deny the person once they have that birth certificate. As of yesterday, anyone could have shown up to do it. The fact is there is no load of people out there who are in that position who are going to just wash up or have just washed up to Cayman. The very, very few people who are in that category are somewhere else on this planet; if God has kept them alive, they are somewhere else on this planet.

The next question would be, but now that we're passing this in this fashion whereby you don't have to have the three affidavits, could there be some people out there on the planet who are paying so much attention to the Cayman Islands and the Parliament and what's happening in our country of 88,000 — because remember we are always on CNN and Fox News; Reuters picks up everything we do. We're always on Al Jazeera, all our stories are always on BBC. For the record, I said that very sarcastically, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, the odds that one of these individuals — if there are any, because the fact is we actually don't even know if there are any. That's one of the things we really don't know; of the 1,600, whether there's one who was born to someone who was not settled, because everybody could have had a settled parent.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: No, there may be. We were told there may be a small number because we could use the law of averages. The law of averages would mean there more than likely would have been a small amount. I agree with that, Member for George Town Central. That's the law of averages — but even within

that small amount, how many of them are going to be somewhere on this planet saying, *you know what? I didn't want to go get the three affidavits, you know, but now that they have done this, I'm going to show up to the Cayman Islands to claim Caymanian status.* People who would have been interested in coming to the Cayman Islands would have looked, and it would have been very easy.

One thing about technology, technology is so beautiful because I wanted to convince myself of a couple of things yesterday when we were made aware of this, and I challenge all of you right now to actually do this. If you Google right now, “deeming of persons born in the Cayman Islands before 1977” you'll be shocked at what comes up. Make sure you turn on the AI version on your Google.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: No, I just wanted the information. This wasn't about the speeches, this was to get and glean the data.

Mr. Speaker, when I saw that, I was so surprised that it produced the answer that we were discussing in the Caucus yesterday. That's how technology works, my friends. At the end of the day, we think that whatever small number there could be that those persons, if they were interested in coming to the Cayman Islands, have not investigated what they would have needed to do? They would have done it, colleagues, so I can feel 110 per cent comfortable we're not posing any risk to our people.

On the upside, we're getting their business done. We need to move on with immigration reform. The Minister has more work to do. This needs to get passed because we need to move on. I think this point was made earlier. There is more work to be done on immigration before we're finished, and we need to continue this good work. All of us ran on immigration reform — all of us passed, all of us ran on immigration reform. All of us, every one of us. Let's get on with the people's work and let's stop getting in here and beating and pounding up on each other. Be nice. Come on, folks. Come on.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Yeah, that's true. I was reminded, I was reminded by a legend who used to be here 12 years ago when I was here, Mr. Anthony Eden. Let's stop “*p-effing*” around. That is so true because there is no need to be doing that with something that all of us can agree on, colleagues. The public reposed their trust in us; if we can't collectively agree to say, you know what, yes, 28 days is in the Constitution right now but, given what we have in front of us, let us collectively go out on the Floor of the House and say, you know what, this is important

enough for us to be able to go and agree. Let's just get the business and the work of the people done.

The other point is, Mr. Speaker, given the fact that we know there are many Caymanians who want to access and need to access a number of important services, but most of them stand on a point of principle that they are not going to submit an application to be deemed. Some of them sit in this Chamber — one of them is Mr. Saunders.

I can tell the world that we were given the presentation on the National ID. I received a lovely email inviting me to apply. I responded to said lovely email. I then received another lovely email to say, *Minister Anglin, we're sorry but you're going to have to get confirmed. You need to get regularised.* I am not going to be ashamed. *I ain't gonna be no hypocrite*, I'm 54 years old; no time for that. I told the Minister *sorry, I won't be getting the ID.* I refused to go to be deemed a Caymanian. I am Rolston Malachi Anglin, born to Malachi McClurn Anglin and Arlee Clovena Anglin, and I can trace my ancestry for generations in this country. As a point of principle, I do not have the ID because I refuse to go and apply for the deeming department in this country, which is immigration, to deem me such that I already know that I am.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: I refused; so if we can give this to Caymanians 28 days earlier, I say let's do it.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Caymanians deserve it and we know that the people on this list are our people. They are our people. When I looked at it, so many of them I can remember from primary [school], from Miss Izzy's school — a couple of my friends from Miss Izzy's school are there.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: That ought not to be a surprise.

We do need to continue this work to find multiple ways to deem our people Caymanian and I think all of us agree with that. We need to continue to work to find ways. All of us have even said things like, *can't we use the elections list* — and since we're here, and we said we would tell the public the whole truth, the fact is: right now as we speak, because of our legislative framework, the Department of Immigration cannot use the elections list to deem us Caymanians. When we get registered, we get registered under a different format. We get registered by filling out a form to say we are proposing to be election candidates. Immigration has been a mess and it's a mess because of a multiplicity of reasons.

The British Nationality Act was often changed without reference to Territories and when the UK Parliament changed the British Nationality Act, it had implications for all its territories as it related to who were British subjects and how they should be treated. Certain territories, including the Cayman Islands, did not keep pace and didn't change their domestic legislation to protect or shape the population, or their immigration policies to match what was happening in the United Kingdom. That's historically what has happened. That is a big part of the reason we are in this conundrum.

This is nothing to be ashamed of. Much of this is not about who sat in Parliament or Vestrymen falling down on the job. They didn't have these things called smartphones. There was no technology. They were on an outpost island called the Cayman Islands, moving and living and having their being. You think many of them knew what was happening in Westminster? Yet, what was happening in Westminster was having an impact on us and therefore those who qualified to be Caymanians. They were doing the best they could. They were doing the best they could. Now let's fast forward to 4th March, 2026. We now have an opportunity to just move forward; let's move forward. We know this is the right thing to do. Let's not get caught up in a technicality. Let's be cooperative, and I mean that.

Here's the point: there was a point in time when I used to be the youngest Member of the House and there were certain benefits to those who were older, a little more mature, a little more seasoned. I can only tell the Member for George Town Central, who's a little younger, that I can't help that he wasn't born before 26th March 1977; but I do feel for him. We will look for a way to get him deemed too, he and his generation, because that's important, so I agree with you, Member.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: They *gonna* have to apply.

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: That's right; and right now that irks me. I've already had to do it three times for three of my daughters as they've gone on to get scholarships in this country. All of us have been through this vexing issue. Do you know what it feels like, as a Caymanian parent, to have to go fill out a form, sign it, and submit it to immigration, for immigration to come back and tell me my three daughters are Caymanian?

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: We know there's a Member who refused to do it point by point. He's been holding out and I give him that — he's the flag bearer for holding out.

Even though I personally held out, I didn't do it in relation to my children. I signed the form, I'll admit it.

My ex-wife and I signed the form, right; but it's a point of principle for several of us as Caymanians, Mr. Speaker, so colleagues, while we can talk about how we got here and while we can argue about who waived provisions in 2023/2024... and you know, I understand that the Honourable Minister for Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing and Infrastructure did rise to defend our colleague, the Minister of District Administration and Home Affairs.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Well, no I can't call him that. I can't call him that. No, no, no. It's too late for that now, it's after 10 o'clock.

Mr. Speaker, let us join cooperatively and let us vote unanimously for this Bill. Let us show the solidarity that Caymanians need. Let us not be here fighting when everyone else who comes to this country unites and Caymanians look on and wonder how they move ahead.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Rolston M. Anglin: Let us be the flag bearers for solidarity around this Amendment Bill and let us support it unequivocally, resoundingly and say to Caymanians, *we're doing this for you*.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, let us not go next Wednesday on *Radio Cayman* and cause confusion about this. I don't know who may be on but let us not do that, Mr. Speaker. Let us avoid the temptation. You know that little thing that sits on your shoulder called the devil, let us say, *[Get thee] behind me, Satan; behind me, Satan*.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Gary B. Ratty, Deputy Premier: Mr. Speaker, I promise I won't be long. Trust me, because I do have to drive home tonight.

I listened to my colleague from West Bay. You know, before he got into politics he was going to do theology, and I think he got a little crossed up with where he was today, but he put it across the Floor so eloquently. He said many things that I wanted to say, so thank God he cut my time short.

Each and every one of us inside here campaigned on immigration, and I hear urgency, I hear national emergency. We campaigned on the platforms. This afternoon, we looked at the list of people in that room; I saw plenty from Red Bay and George Town South who could vote. I bet you won't go question them come three or four years when you need them.

I support this Bill wholeheartedly, and appreciate the Minister and his team for all the hard work

and efforts they've done. I'm asking all the colleagues to support it as well because we have a chance in this honourable House to deliver for the people what we campaigned on. I will be voting in support of it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

Honourable Attorney General.

The Attorney General, Hon. Samuel W. Bulgin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is a bit of a surprise that I want to contribute to this because I'm probably the least expected person to, but Mr. Speaker, it is such a common-sense issue it would be difficult not to say something about it. I say it is common sense because the law, what is being debated here, is not creating any new rights. The law already said these people are entitled, so you're not creating any new rights. What this piece of legislation is trying to do is remove what I call inconvenience. That is what it is. People who grew up among each other are baffled that they will now have to prove they are Caymanians; that they have this right, things they assumed all along, rightly so. They are, Mr. Speaker.

You know what has happened — and I say this in a very genuine way, this has always been largely an informal society. What do I mean by that? It's an informal society that was built on trust, and so how it happens is that there was a time when the makeup of the population was different and each person had a reference point. Who do you belong to? People could make a connection with your parents or grandparents, and once you called certain names it was enough validation; people trusted you and you were Caymanian. You needed nothing else. No certificate, nothing. You just needed to mention certain names. I see that all the time, Mr. Speaker. People ask my wife, *Are you for Buell?* Yes. *Girlie?* Yes. That is enough validation. She doesn't need any piece of paper. That's it. You're accepted. That is the trust.

Mr. Speaker, this society has evolved in two ways. You have more people — persons who are not from here and they would not be accustomed to or aware of or exposed to that kind of history so they need that sort of validation. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we have the younger generation who cannot make that connection with the older folks and so would not be able to trace that genealogy, that hereditary whatever it is. They're just a lineage; they're not accustomed to that, so they themselves need validation — but why do they need that, Mr. Speaker? It's because of the law.

The law is that if you employ a non-Caymanian you get into trouble. That is what happened, so in order to be careful about it, before I employ you I need to confirm that you are Caymanian because I don't want the Immigration Department to

come at me for employing a non-Caymanian. That is part of the genesis of all this. The other part of it is in order to access certain services, state benefits, whatever it is. It is designed for Caymanians, so in order to confirm that I'm not giving it to the wrong person, I need to confirm that you are Caymanian. In times gone by, that was not necessary.

To access those said services or to access employment, someone would say, are your grandparents so and so; who are you for? Mr. Rankine in East End... you called a couple other names and they said, oh yeah, that's fine, enough validation; so people are now kind of baffled to hear they need some kind of attestation to prove they are Caymanian and persons, understandably, find it humiliating, Mr. Speaker. They find it very inconvenient and that is another part of the problem. It's not that there are any new rights being conferred on anyone. What this is trying to do is to remove that piece of inconvenience where you have to go and get some kind of attestation to prove what everyone else already knows.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that it's such a common-sense thing to do to make sure that that bit of inconvenience is removed and persons rightly feel that they are part of all of this and don't have to keep validating and attesting each time. I think it is quite a sensible piece of legislation to bring under the circumstances.

Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

Member for Bodden Town West.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Mr. Speaker, I really didn't want to speak on this one but after the Honourable Minister of Finance called me out for being the standard bearer for holding out, it would be bad if I actually disappointed him.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Minister, the [Member] for Cayman Brac spoke about precious memories and the Holiday Inn was used as a reference point. The irony about it is my father was a bartender at Holiday Inn and what most people don't know is that he actually got his Caymanian status while working at Holiday Inn. It just so happened, Mr. Speaker, that one night the late, great Jim Bodden was at Holiday Inn. He looked at my father and said, *Roy, how long have you been in Cayman now?* He told him. He asked, *Are you married to a Caymanian?* He said, *yes sir.* He said, *come check me tomorrow.* Next day my dad had his status. My sister Carlene and I were born out of wedlock, but with our mother being Caymanian and since we were born prior to 1977, there was no issue for us.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance spoke about the lack of a database and ironically enough,

one of the first projects that I remember working on as a young civil servant was putting the Immigration Law — I'll never forget it as long as I live; it was a big black book and it had all the people who had paid their deposits, repatriation fees, et cetera. I had to put it — and I'm going to date myself now — on Lotus 1-2-3. I'll never forget it. We literally went through...

Mr. Speaker, what I remember about that project is, I did it and I went off to university and I think that year the government was able to recognise around \$6 million in revenues because the money was sitting there and the government just never brought it in, in revenue, but the time had run out. The purpose of that exercise was basically to take that big black book and put all the numbers there so the government could claim it.

I remember while at university, Mr. Speaker, I got a letter from the late Thomas Jefferson, who was the Financial Secretary at the time, thanking me for the work that I did. When the letter arrived at Pace University's residence hall, it read "On Her Majesty's Service" and everyone in the university thought it was the Queen who wrote to me — of course, I wouldn't correct them. That's just how far back it has gone. I do, however, want to correct the Honourable Minister of Finance on one point, Mr. Speaker.

He said everyone inside here campaigned on immigration. I can tell you I did not campaign on immigration. In fact—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Hm? No, the Minister said it too. He said it too, and the Deputy Premier said it too.

Mr. Speaker, the reason I didn't campaign on immigration is because Cayman's success was never immigration; it was integration. We need no further proof than to listen to the last speaker, the Honourable Attorney General who showed that people can come here regardless of where they were born, still contribute to this country, still add value and still become a part of our community. That is the Caymanian secret.

[Desk thumping]

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Just about every single family on this island at some point now is integrated with people from all over the world. That's the reality. I tell people all the while, I dare you to find any place 103 square miles with over 130/140 different nationalities living in peace and harmony.

Mr. Speaker, not to pre-empt the Motion that's coming tomorrow in terms of setting up these parliamentary committees I'm looking at. The question that Members need to ask themselves is not about the 1,600-plus Caymanians born between 1972 and 1977. What we need to be looking at is the 8,184 permanent residents, as per the last Labour Force Survey, who in

essence will be applying under the old system. Equally, when you look at page 38 of the 2021 Census there were 18,701 live births registered in the Cayman Islands over the Census period they were looking at, of which 8,454 were Caymanians and 10,247 were non-Caymanians.

Mr. Speaker, the point I'm making in all this is that we are in the challenging state that we are now, because we have not really sat as a people, as a Parliament, as a country, to really start looking at future proofing this country.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken about the geopolitical reset that is going on and everyone is now seeing it; with World War III literally on the brink. You have people out there telling their citizens here are the eleven things you must have in your home and all those kinds of things. That's where the world is. People are thinking about many anxious things, so there are many bigger issues going on.

Mr. Speaker, honestly, I really didn't plan to debate this. I read the Bill and really thought it was a no-brainer, so I didn't prepare anything because I just thought it would have been something we were all going to agree on. I was a bit surprised to see that we have used so much time on it, so I'm not going to be adding on to it except to say:

1. My people have messaged me saying, *Chris, you need to say something*; so, I have answered to my bosses in Bodden Town West — Natasha, you can stop messaging me now. You know what I mean?
2. The point to make is that we need to ensure that as we sit down and prepare for the future we start looking at things; we need to ensure that we're not caught off guard again.

We can sit down and look at these numbers quarterly. We sat here and saw Statuses go from 266 one year to over 1,500-1,600 the following year. I mean, we get too many surprises in this House as Members, you know, and this is why we need to sit down now and start doing this.

Mr. Speaker, I'm fine with the Bill; I intend to support it. I didn't expect it to draw so many people out; I thought we had debated it exhaustively the last time we dealt with it, and these were a few things. The truth of the matter is former Premier Alden said it best: *we can't make perfect be the enemy of the good*, or something like that. We're always going to make changes. If the day comes when we don't have to make changes to any more laws, we have no use for a Parliament. This is what we do. You know, we make decisions based on the information we have at the time; we make decisions based on what we know now — you know what I mean? This is just where we are; sometimes as things come up, you got to trust people to do what they're doing. I don't need to go to my peo-

ple for everything. They say, *Chris, we voted for you; go get your job done*. These things will happen.

I just want to add my two cents to this. I'm supporting the Bill and I'm going to tell you right now that I'll be calling for division because again, as I said, in my last speech, I don't want anyone running around saying they didn't vote for this, they didn't vote for that. Every single one of us is going to be called out because that's how I am when it comes to this issue. We cannot be separated.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Honourable Premier.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Good evening, Mr. Speaker. I promise to be brief. I think this has been exhausted. I only have an apology, a clarification, and a reiteration.

I owe an apology to the Member for Cayman Brac West and Little Cayman. I quoted a constituent [who] called him the little nice one from Little Cayman and it has caught fire but it was in a nice way; however, the Member has a giant intellect and had a gigantic contribution to the Bill which leads me to the clarification that he saved me to have to do which I'll just refine for him. He is correct. The Bills that were deemed too urgent for delay in 2024 were about fees and nothing to do with the grey list because we got off the grey list on the 27th October, 2023, and I remember it well, because it was my son's 10th birthday.

An Hon. Member: Yup.

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: This is nothing new to use that clause; and no other words are imported about national security... None of that is in our Standing Order 64 nor in section 77 of the Constitution — too urgent for the delay.

To reiterate, I was able to obtain the Cayman Islands ID, which says I am Caymanian. My driver, dropping me there to get it at the eGov Office, said, *well, we might as well kill two birds with one stone and I go get mine*. He was told he got to go get a letter saying he's Caymanian. He said, *Premier, I'm sorry; I love you, I love Minister Isaac, but I'm not going to get that ID*. When you have the Minister of Innovation; when you have the Minister of Caymanian Employment saying we've got nearly 1,600 Caymanians who are in this bind, it is too urgent to delay. We have to get on with it.

To the point of the individuals who were born post '77, that doesn't mean we don't fix pre '77. We *gotta* fix them, but you don't just stop to not fix anybody because you can't fix them all. Let's get done what we can and come back to scoop the rest later. For those in the House who try to complete this de-

bate, I've already conferred with the Minister of Caymanian Employment that his Ministers and PSs [Parliamentary Secretaries] have risen to his defence so his rebuttal can be brief. Let's get on with it. Enough is enough.

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 Member wish to exercise his right of reply? Honourable Minister of Caymanian Employment and Immigration.

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues and the Members of the Opposition for their support. I would [especially] like to thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition; I really truly thank you for all the things that you've gone through. I had a one-hour rebuttal. I want to tell you, I spoke with the Premier and he said, *I don't think you need that. I think you've made your point, your team has made your point, [and] independent Members have made some really great points in supporting this;* but I want to thank you because I believe that everything that you've said was in the best interest of our country.

I agree that we have to collaborate more and I'm going to commit to more of that, but I also want to ensure that you understand that every single day I'm collaborating with many people and many organisations in our country. If I go into the grocery store, I'm collaborating because people want to know; if I go to the gym, I'm collaborating; I speak to business owners every single day. Since getting elected, I made one promise to our country: that I will be accessible, and I have lived that, and I apologise if you felt that I was snubbing you in some way; I'm not. Every single day business owners are calling me — I go to their offices. I don't even allow them to come into GAB [Government Administration Building]. I want to go to them; I want to figure out how, as a government, we can help them get on with business.

Ninety per cent if not more of these people are all Caymanians who want advice, who want the Minister to come in and understand their pain. When I hear the Member for Bodden Town [East] talk about expressing empathy, I want you to know that I feel it every single day. I walk into GAB with urgency and I want you to know that, as a Member, I never want you to think that I will ever procrastinate. I am one of the biggest defenders of our Constitution, of our country. I love our people with a passion. Yes, I love Cayman, but I love our people more, and every single day I exercise that right by doing good by them. I will never put our people in harm's way. I do believe that we have to collaborate more and I'm going to make that become a necessary point going forward; but I also

want to stress, as I said, that I will never procrastinate. Everything I do is with urgency to serve everyone in our country as often as I possibly can.

I also want to make the point of public scrutiny. I remain transparent every single day. Every single day, I share every breath of what we're doing within the Cayman Islands Government, whatever we're doing in immigration. I feel the pain of business owners when a Caymanian isn't available and they have to wait eight months to get a work permit, when they have to wait a year to get some sort of amendment done. I feel their pain because these are Caymanians trying to expand their businesses. My team could tell you I am one of the most "urgent" Ministers they have ever worked with because I hound them every day to get better. We cannot fail at immigration anymore but immigration customer service must improve and we are making sizable improvements on it — and much of this has come from public consultation.

I am empathetic and compassionate to people whom the cost of living has impacted. I feel their pain. I want them to get better. That's why our government is making a sizable investment of almost \$40 million in retraining. That's why I went outside of the government to place Caymanians — I have tapped into every recruitment firm. We're doing everything with urgency and I assure you, I will never procrastinate on this job; and the day that I ever do so, I will walk away.

My team and I have done everything we possibly can since being elected to do well by Caymanians; and yes, there are times where it doesn't go to plan. I wish that everything that we did went to plan. I wish this Bill was perfect, but it's not; it has imperfections but the Member is also right: if we didn't have changes to make, why would we be here? Immigration is going to be changed often. There are more changes to come. I have labour and pension changes to come, but I will make you a promise today: before we leave here tonight, we will set up our meeting because I want us to be able to sit and collaborate because there are many things happening that I want to continue to share.

I've been a civil servant on four different occasions, and I was frustrated with aspects of what we were doing in the civil service because I felt we weren't going fast enough; I saw too much suffering. I've ensured that as a Minister, our team is about urgency. I am pushing them every day to make sure we get things done because Caymanians deserve the absolute best and we have to continue to push for that.

Mr. Speaker, my goal has always been to serve. Immigration is one aspect of that service. However, ensuring that we protect our people is by far the greatest service that I will ever commit to our country. I respect and I take feedback from the Opposition on where they felt that they were let down. My responsibility is to continue to work across the aisle to ensure that you guys understand what we're doing more regularly; and I commit to that.

My goal has always been to inform folks about everything that goes on in government. We have no secrets, and I believe all of us at one point or another have been in a leadership position within government. The goal is, how do we make it work? I don't believe that the Opposition is going to agree with everything that we do but there are things that are going to be necessary that we are going to need to get done because they're urgent for the people of this country. I would not be bringing this Bill if I felt that it wasn't urgent. If we could wait another six months, I'd wait; we simply can't wait. We have to ensure that things get done because far too long Caymanians have said that they have not been made a priority. What we are doing is ensuring that they are and that they feel it, that we are not just saying it, that they're feeling it every single day.

I want to take this time to thank my team and Director Scott — I know the DG has made [us] aware of all the work that he's done — he's been a stellar support system in helping us transform the department; our Chief Officer, Mr. Howell, who worked tirelessly to ensure that I get as much information as I possibly can to ensure that we're moving things forward; and all of our team members who continue to rally around supporting and providing the level of consistency that we need within the Ministry and the department; and our legal drafters, the AG's Office has been absolutely wonderful in supporting us as we make every attempt to get this right.

I want to thank my colleagues for their unwavering support and ensuring that they hold me accountable for moving immigration forward along with labour, pension and employment. Thank you all for all the great feedback you have contributed tonight, and I appreciate all the time that you spent ensuring that we get this right going forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Speaker: The question is that a Bill shortly entitled Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2026 be given a second reading.

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

AYES.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Mr Speaker, can I have a division, please?

The Speaker: Madam Clerk, can we do a division, please?

Division No. 7 of 2025-2026

AYES: 18

Hon. André M. Ebanks
Hon. Gary B. Ruddy
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

NOES: 0

The Clerk: Hon. Pearlina L. McGaw-Lumsden.

The Speaker: She declared when we started the Bill earlier that she wasn't going to take part in the debate or voting on immigration Bills because of a pecuniary interest.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Under Standing Orders, because the Member for George Town West is not in her seat, we have to ring the bell and wait three minutes for her to come into the Chamber and vote.

[Bell rings]

[Three-minute pause per Standing Order 61(2)]

AYES (cont'd)

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly
Mr. A. Roy Tatum
Mr. Roy M. McTaggart
Mr. Dwayne S. Seymour
Mr. Christopher S. Saunders

ABSTENTIONS: 1

*Hon. Pearlina L. McGaw-Lumsden

***Hon. Pearlina L. McGaw-Lumsden, Deputy Speaker:** Abstain, because of a business conflict.

The Speaker: The result of the division: 18 Ayes, 1 Abstention.

Agreed: Immigration (Transition) (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2026 was given a second reading.

The Speaker: Next item on the agenda, Madam Clerk.

HEALTH INSURANCE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2026

The Speaker: Minister of Health.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the Second Reading of the Health Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2026.

The Speaker: The Bill has been moved for a second reading. Does the Minister wish to speak to the Bill?

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to present on behalf of the Government, the Health Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2026, which amends the Health Insurance Act (2021 Revision). These amendments address how government determines eligibility for assistance in cases deemed both medically necessary and urgent. The amendments are targeted, operational in nature and designed to ensure that statutory decision-making reflects both clinical urgency and responsible stewardship of public funds.

Mr. Speaker, before turning to the clauses of the Bill, it is important to place these amendments in context. The current arrangements are set out under section 2 of the Health Insurance Act (2021 Revision) where an indigent person is defined as **“a person who, in the opinion of the Minister responsible for social services acting on the advice of the Director of the Department of Children and Family Services, is unable, by reason of inadequate financial resources, to pay for health insurance or medical services”**. That structure and arrangement reflect the realities of an earlier period. When it was introduced, our population was significantly smaller, and the scope of government services was more limited. As our society has grown in size and complexity, responsibilities across portfolios must evolve accordingly.

Healthcare delivery has also evolved: treatment pathways are more specialised, diagnostic tools are more advanced, clinical decisions are often time-sensitive and guided by structured treatment protocols. In many cases, delay is not merely administrative; it can affect outcomes, recovery timelines, and continuity of care. The current arrangements place the final determination of who can get urgent medical assistance and insurance coverage in the social services portfolio pathway while the services themselves are funded and delivered within the health portfolio. The existing structure has operated within its statutory mandate; however, experience has demonstrated that in time-sensitive medical cases, the sequence of determinations can affect how quickly treatment approvals are finalised. Where medical necessity is clear, the system must be capable of responding in a manner that supports continuity of care and reflects clinical urgency.

Mr. Speaker, when the government acts for the betterment of the people it serves, longstanding issues can be addressed decisively where the solution is clear and appropriate — this Amendment reflects that principle. Medical necessity is determined through clinical assessment. Physicians make recommenda-

tions based on diagnosis, progression of illness, established treatment protocols, and risks to long-term health outcomes. When treatment is urgent, timing forms part of the Clinical Judgement and continuity of care. Timely surgical interventions, adherence to specialist treatment plans or structured oncology are often integral to patient outcomes. The purpose of this Amendment is to ensure that the statutory pathway supports that clinical reality.

The Bill aligns responsibility for determining eligibility for medically necessary assistance with the Ministry responsible for health, the Ministry responsible for clinical standards, and also patient care. At the same time, financial assessments will continue to be conducted by the Department of Financial Assistance within its established statutory framework. This is not a departure from safeguards; it is a refinement of sequencing so that medical advice and financial capacity can be considered within a coherent and timely decision-making process. Mr. Speaker, Members may find it helpful to consider how this structure operates in practical terms.

In one case, a Caymanian woman retired after approximately 30 years of continuous employment in the private sector. During her working life, she was insured under a comprehensive employer-provided group health insurance plan. Upon retirement, the coverage available to her within her financial means was the Standard Health Insurance Contract (SHIC). Shortly thereafter her retirement, she was diagnosed with leukaemia. Although insured, her prescribed treatment includes a medication not covered under the SHIC plan at a cost of approximately \$1,200 per month.

She applied for assistance through the Department of Financial Assistance. Under the existing legislative framework, eligibility is determined against established financial criteria including available assets. At the time of her application she had access to her pension, which had been paid to her as a lump sum; because those funds were considered an available financial resource under the current rules, she did not meet the eligibility threshold. While the pension was intended to support her over time, it was not sufficient to sustainably cover ongoing treatment costs. The legislation does not provide discretion to exclude lump sum payments from the assessment. Under the current statutory pathway, eligibility is determined through a social assistance framework before any medical need is considered. The issue is not whether a review takes place, but the order in which decisions are made. Medical necessity and financial capacity are assessed separately, which can delay a final decision in time-sensitive cases and affect timely access to treatment.

In another case, a young Caymanian mother was diagnosed with an aggressive and fast-growing form of breast cancer. She was insured but significant elements of the recommended treatment protocol

were not covered under her policy. She applied through the Department of Financial Assistance and the application proceeded in accordance with the existing statutory pathway. Under that framework, financial eligibility was determined before medical approval could be finalised. During that period, surgery was postponed and her oncology treatment was disrupted. In this instance, the Breast Cancer Foundation conducted an expedited case review and intervened to prevent further delay in treatment.

I wish to acknowledge the important work the Foundation undertakes in supporting patients and families facing breast cancer, particularly where urgent assistance is required. I also recognise the continued contribution of the Cayman Islands Cancer Society and other non-profit organisations in providing support, advocacy and practical assistance to individuals and families affected by serious health conditions in our community. These examples illustrate that insurance does not always equate to full coverage and that in clinically urgent cases, timing directly affects continuity of care.

Mr. Speaker, this Amendment also supports responsible management of public resources. This Government has identified the cost of living as a major priority. Health insurance costs contribute to overall financial pressure within our community. Government also expands substantial public funds that fall under budget line item NGS 55. Under this line, non-HSA tertiary health care is provided for indigents, seafarers, and veterans who are referred by the Health Services Authority for treatment locally and overseas.

Where public funds are committed to supporting medical care, it is appropriate that the Ministry responsible for health expenditure also has clarity in the determination of eligibility for medically necessary assistance. This is a matter of fiscal responsibility. The Ministry must be able to understand projected and actual costs, assess financial exposure, and exercise appropriate control over expenditure to ensure sustainability and accountability for public funds.

Mr. Speaker just bear with me one minute, please.

[Pause]

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Efficiency in this context means reducing unnecessary procedural steps while retaining financial verification and medical documentation requirements. Mr. Speaker, I will now provide a brief clause by clause overview of the Bill.

Clause 1 provides the short title of the legislation.

Clause 2 removes the definition of “indigent person” and introduces the definition of “medically indigent person”. Under this definition, a person is medically indigent if —

- (a) they are recipients of financial assistance under the Financial Assistance Act, 2022, or
- (b) are unable in the opinion of the Minister responsible for Health, acting on the advice of the Chief Medical Officer, to pay for health insurance and medical services due to inadequate financial resources.

Clause 2 also introduces a definition for “Chief Medical Officer”, reflecting the advisory role of the Chief Medical Officer in determining eligibility. In practical terms, this creates two pathways. The first applies to persons already receiving financial assistance; the second applies to persons who may not qualify as indigent under social assistance rules but cannot reasonably meet the cost of necessary medical care. The addition of the word “medically” emphasises that this assistance is limited to health care costs and does not extend to other benefits administered under the Financial Assistance Act such as housing, schooling, or transportation.

Clause 3 updates the terminology to “medically indigent person” and clarifies that Government may affect and continue a contract of health insurance on behalf of each medically indigent person.

Clause 4 provides transitional provisions so that applications pending at the commencement date of this Bill will be assessed under the new framework.

These amendments are being brought forward now because experience has shown that the current framework can affect how quickly decisions are made in urgent medical cases. The change is narrow and operational. It does not expand eligibility or alter the insurance-based system. It ensures that medical need and financial eligibility can be considered together, where treatment is time-sensitive. In healthcare, timing matters and where the law can be adjusted to better support timely patient care, it is appropriate to act without delay.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to be clear about what these amendments *do not do*.

- They do not create a universal government health programme; nor
- Remove the requirement for individuals and employers to maintain health insurance coverage.

Health insurance continues to be compulsory under section 5 of the Health Insurance Act (2021 Revision). It should be noted that the Department of Health and Regulatory Services monitors premium payments and contacts employers when coverage lapses — you all might remember my long discussion today on the report from the Health Insurance Commission [and] certainly, all the work they do to cover just what I’m talking about here as it relates to the monitoring of health insurance plans.

Since I became the Minister, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health and Regulatory Services has moved to a full online service for its health insurance

stakeholders. This improves reporting and allows lapses in coverage to be identified earlier. The intention is for this Amendment to become enacted upon approval and confirmation of this honourable House so that decisions regarding medically necessary care can be made within a clearer and more efficient process.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments, though measured, are important.

- They modernise a statutory framework designed for an earlier time.
- They ensure that medically necessary determinations reflect clinical advice while maintaining responsible financial oversight.
- They provide the role of the Department of Financial Assistance in conducting financial assessments.
- They align responsibility within the health portfolio for matters grounded in clinical judgment.
- Most importantly, they ensure that where treatment is urgent, the statutory pathway supports continuity of care.

I thereby humbly request that this Health Insurance (Amendment) Bill be laid in this honourable House and respectfully seek the support of all Members.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member for Bodden Town West.

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

[Crosstalk]

Mr. Christopher S. Saunders: Mr. Speaker, I rise to lend my support to the Health Insurance (Amendment) Bill that is before this Parliament tonight.

Mr. Speaker, I know that during the last election, on your way to and from North Side and George Town, you couldn't help but admire those big beautiful billboards in Bodden Town West with the slogan, "Unity. Security. Dignity", followed by the slogan "Forward...Together".

Mr. Speaker, I will admit that much thought went into choosing those words, and they were a result of me locking myself away and pondering four questions.

- (1) How do I want my Cayman people to live?
- (2) What do I want for my Caymanian people?
- (3) What do I want my beloved Cayman Islands to strive for; and
- (4) How are you going to achieve all of it?

Mr. Speaker, as I said before, regardless of where we sit in Parliament, we are one nineteenth the owner and the manager of the collective problems that face our people and our country on a daily basis. I want to reiterate that by offering every Member of this Parliament my unwavering and resolute commitment to support any Bill, any amendment or any motion that encourages unity, promotes security, and provides dignity to our people and everyone who calls the Cayman Islands home.

Mr. Speaker, I have read the Bill as well as the companion or incidental amendment in the Health Insurance Commission (Amendment) Bill and I am in general support [but for] one amendment which I filed earlier today — and thank you for accepting it; that amendment is to delete the requirement for the Minister to act on the advice of the Chief Medical Officer.

Mr. Speaker, around four months ago, we approved the budget for the 2026/2027 Financial Years. In that budget, we approved a total of \$385,261,725 to the Minister of Health, Environment and Sustainability. During that process, every Member of this Parliament would recall the Chairman of the Finance Committee, the Honourable Minister of Finance, using the term "the Appropriation to the Minister". Members will also be aware that when section 12 statements are being read in this Parliament, they are read by the Minister and no one else, so the only person who we in this Parliament are charged to appropriate funds to, is the Minister, and the only person who comes here and gives an account of the funds that were spent is the Minister. Therefore, the only person who should be responsible for how the funds are to be spent is the Minister.

Now, whoever the Minister wants to consult with or get advice from is the Minister's prerogative. My prerogative is ensuring that the people of Bodden Town West and the people of the Cayman Islands get the medical services that they are entitled to in an efficient, professional manner that preserves and protects their dignity. When we, every one of us in here, must represent our bosses who are the voters and call the Ministers, I don't want to hear *my hands are tied because the Chief Medical Officer or some other unelected individuals have said it cannot or should not be done*. Healthcare is a very serious and important issue; our people have enough stress dealing with their health challenges to be caught up in red tape.

Mr. Speaker, you know what is so ironic? How did this become an issue for me? There's an elderly Caymanian lady who spent decades serving this country — both she and her husband served the Cayman Islands and the Caymanian people well. She is almost 90 years of age. She received approval from the previous CMO for her surgery. The surgery had to be rescheduled, but she had it. She's now being told that the rescheduled surgery was not approved and the doctor who did the surgery would not be paid; but she's approved for a follow-up consultation for the un-

approved surgery that she shouldn't have done. Mr. Speaker, to borrow a line from one of my fellow Caribbean MPs, *what can go so?*

Mr. Speaker, what is the one medical cost that we can't approve in this Parliament? The stress that people go through when they have to deal with issues like these, when they already have health issues to deal with. When this was brought to my attention and I was told that this lady cried when she got that news, it really hit me.

Mr. Speaker, the family provided me copies of the document and I'll share it with the Minister of Health as well as the other Cabinet Member who is also her representative. I've actually spoken to him about it already, and I think the family has already reached out to him in that regard. For the record, it's the Minister and Member for Cayman Brac [West] — and I'll give him his proper title, not what the Premier affectionately calls him; he already said he's going to reach out to her and give her the necessary assurances. You can't have served this country and [be] going through this level of stress when you're already in a fragile state.

This is why, when you look at the whole issue of unity, it is important: so we can reach out to each other regardless of where we sit and deal with these issues, and that is the only way we can get anything done for our people. Mr. Speaker, I want to close by saying that this Bill has my support. I think it's something that needs to have been done already, too — I guess it is part of the clean-up exercise. This is too important an issue; we're all descendants of Abraham, we are all our brothers' and sisters' keepers.

Mr. Speaker with that said, I support the Bill. I thank the Minister for bringing it, and I thank the other Minister and Member for Cayman Brac West in advance for dealing with the other issue I spoke to him about.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Minister of Culture.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to address this honourable House regarding the proposed amendments to the Health Insurance Act (2021 Revision).

First of all, I want to commend the Minister of Health and her team at the Ministry of Health and Sustainability for the work conducted to produce the Health Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2026. The proposed amendments, Mr. Speaker, are focused, practical, and designed to improve clarity, accountability, and alignment within our legislative framework. We must continually refine our legislation to ensure it remains responsive to the evolving needs of our people and our economy; and this effort is in line with achieving this standard.

Mr. Speaker, indigent health insurance coverage is a necessity in our Islands. The CINICO 2024

Annual Report indicated that the average number of covered lives insured under the indigent health care was 2,140, a 4 per cent increase from 2023 [when] coverage was extended to 2,056 individuals.

Mr. Speaker, to clearly distinguish between financial hardship and medical necessity, the Bill removes the existing definition of an indigent person and introduces the more precise term of medically indigent persons, and this ensures that the determinations under the Act are grounded in appropriate clinical and policy considerations.

I want to reiterate that the provisions for financial support to Caymanians through the Department of Financial Assistance and the Financial Assistance Act are not being undercut or removed in any way by these proposed amendments. This government, Mr. Speaker, remains committed to ensuring that Caymanians in need of financial assistance receive the help that they need and that the proposed changes to the Health Insurance Act actually add an additional avenue for critical medical support. This is especially important for those people who may not otherwise qualify for financial support under the Financial Assistance Act, but who still need help to meet the cost of medical bills which can be very high depending on the circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it's prudent for the Bill to reallocate the responsibility for determining eligibility under the medically indigent provisions from the Minister responsible for social services to the Minister responsible for health; this Amendment ensures that medical determinations are led by those with relevant technical and clinical resources, while maintaining appropriate ministerial accountability. This is a welcome and timely change.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, it is noteworthy that financial assessments will continue to be conducted by the Department of Financial Assistance. The role of the Department of Financial Assistance remains unchanged, ensuring that financial eligibility continues to be evaluated using established consistent criteria. To ensure that pending applications are treated fairly and without disruption. The Bill includes transitional provisions during the implementation of the amendments.

Overall, Mr. Speaker, these changes clarify administrative processes, improve decision-making alignment, and support a more coordinated approach between social development and health to support Caymanians in need. The proposed amendments will ensure that the eligibility decisions are made within the appropriate portfolios and are guided by the necessary medical advice.

Mr. Speaker, the government remains committed to reducing administrative inefficiencies and improving the overall experience of our people. I am pleased to see the work that has been done by my colleague and her team, and I will provide any support from the Ministry of Social Development and Innovation to ensure the success of this endeavour.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Member for George Town Central.

Hon. Kenneth V. Bryan, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Mr. Speaker, I only arise to give a contribution by way of congratulating the Honourable Minister. For a very short period of time, I was the Minister of Social Development, which deals with DFA better known to most people in the Cayman Islands as NAU [Needs Assessment Unit]. As Minister, many times I recognised where there was much bureaucracy in the way of getting appropriate assistance to Caymanians who find themselves in difficult circumstances and needed government help.

Mr. Speaker, I think there may be a Committee Stage Amendment being proposed which I think the Government should give some consideration to. I haven't spoken to the Mover of the Motion but I agree with the spirit by which that Amendment has been put forward. When deliberating with my Leader and my team, the question of the Chief Medical Officer and the qualification to decide whether a person is financially capable of affording the payments came to mind. I don't think it's within their qualifications or their remit and I would double down on that by saying such a decision on behalf of our people should be left in the hands of who they elect, which in these cases is always the Government and their Minister.

Naturally, the relevant protections would be in place whereby the Minister would report to the Honourable Premier who represents the whole Government, so I feel comfortable enough to think that such a right should be in the hands of the Minister rather than being directed or dictated by the Chief Medical Officer.

With that being said, I am happy that the Government has addressed this matter. I cannot deny that I think this too could have been done under the appropriate 28 days, but the definition of urgency is slippery, so I'll leave it there but to thank the Honourable Minister and the Government for bringing this. Hopefully the unfortunate Caymanians who find themselves in this situation can get access quicker because there are many in our community who are in need.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Mr. Speaker, I rise not only to support the Bill but to suggest, since there's a little energy, and the next Bill on the Order Paper is just a consequential Amendment, whether

we could just whip through all of these and kill the Second Readings for tonight and go home.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Yeah? Okay.

I'll just reiterate a point that the Member for George Town Central made which is, he knows from his stint as a social development minister, [and] I know, that part of this will create efficiency. We got our people hopping around between four departments to get an answer when they need critical health care, and then you finally get a chance to align the clientele with the budget to make better decisions. It is a long time coming. You were the Chair of PAC knowing that this was part of the Auditor General Reports. The Member for Bodden Town East was the health minister when I was Deputy Chief Officer in what was then Community Affairs to try to work on it at the same time. This is a long time coming and a big win for our people; it presents us an opportunity to get our arms around Indigent Coverage.

I thank the Minister for pulling this out from the other planned amendment she has on health insurance to just get this done. It's small in size on paper but significant for our people.

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 her right of reply?

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Very briefly, to thank the Members for their support and as what has been shared tonight, I think every one of us here understands the importance of continuing to move forward with a more efficient process as it relates to decisions relating to access to health care for our Caymanian people.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier touched on what I was going to cover; I had a nice long wrap-up speech. I want to acknowledge my team who has been here tonight waiting for a very long time and working very hard on the debate speech, wrap-up speech, you name it, we had it ready and I want to thank them; but something we wanted to share is that there is quite an extensive review of the Health Insurance Act underway with the Ministry.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Much of the credit is for the Ministry staff who have been working on this for a very long time — long before I became the Minister.

What we (the Government) decided to do for expediency was to pull out this Amendment and get it

across the finish line because right away it makes a huge impact when it comes to making decisions around access to critical health care and I've seen, since I've become the Minister, how important time really is when you're making a decision. Minister Rankine and I have had many phone calls working together, oftentimes during the weekends, to assist our Caymanians from every district with unfortunately urgent medical situations that arise, so I want to thank the Members for their support.

The Speaker: The question is that a Bill shortly entitled the Health Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2026 be given a second reading.

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Health Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2026 was given a second reading.

HEALTH INSURANCE COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2026

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Health.

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the Second Reading of the Health Insurance Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2026.

The Speaker: The Bill has been duly moved. Does the Mover wish to speak thereto?

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Mr. Speaker, these are just consequential amendments from the amendment to the Health Insurance (Amendment) Bill, so there's really no need for me to speak; it would be the exact presentation I just made.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? *[Pause]* Does any other Member wish to speak? *[Pause]* Does any other Member wish to speak? *[Pause]* If not, would the Mover wish to exercise her right of reply?

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Just a minute, Mr. Speaker.

[Pause]

Hon. Katherine A. Ebanks-Wilks: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I am grateful to have our Honourable Attorney General.

Just to ensure safe record keeping and to put on our Hansards, I will say that the Health Insurance

Commission (Amendment) Bill is a Bill for an Act to amend the Health Insurance Commission Act 2026 *[sic]* to delete the reference to the words "indigent persons" and substitute the words "medically indigent persons"; to provide a definition for the words "medically indigent person" by reference to the definition of those words in the Health Insurance Act (2021 Revision); and for incidental and connected purposes.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Members for their support and I ask for this Bill to be read for a second time.

The Speaker: The question is that a Bill shortly entitled the Health Insurance Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2026 be given a second reading.

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Health Insurance Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2026 was given a second reading.

Suspension of Standing Order 14(1)

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank all Members for all their work today up until 11:30 at night.

I now move the suspension of Standing Order 14(1) to allow this House to resume tomorrow, 5th March, at 10am rather than 2pm.

The Speaker: The question is that Standing Order 14(1) be suspended to allow the House to commence sitting tomorrow at 10am instead of 2pm.

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Standing Order 14(1) suspended.

The Speaker: I now invite the Premier to move the adjournment until 10am tomorrow.

ADJOURNMENT

The Premier, Hon. André M. Ebanks: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank all Members.

I move that this House do stand adjourned until tomorrow, the 5th March at 10am.

[Laughter]

The Speaker: You can't leave until it's adjourned.

The question is that this honourable House be adjourned until 10am tomorrow, 5th March.

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

AYES.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

The House stands adjourned until 10am tomorrow.

At 11:31pm the House stood adjourned until 10am Thursday, 5th March, 2026.