



THE TWENTY-EIGHTH REPORT OF THE COMMISSION FOR STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE (CSPL)

1 AUGUST 2024 – 31 JANUARY 2025

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SECTION ONE – INTRODUCTION

1. Preface

The Commission for Standards in Public Life (the "CSPL") was established as an institution supporting democracy under the Cayman Islands Constitution Order 2009 (the "Constitution"). Its introduction reinforced the need to have regard to ethics and transparency as important elements of a democratic society and the necessary protection of the rights and freedoms of the people in the Cayman Islands.

With its mandate as set out in section 117(9) of the Constitution, the first CSPL was appointed in January 2010. The CSPL's overarching powers are ingrained in the Standards in Public Life Act, 2021 (the "SPLA") and the Standards in Public Life Regulations, 2020.

1.1. Membership of the CSPL

As prescribed in the Constitution, the Governor shall, after consulting the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, appoint, from among persons of high integrity and with experience in the public or private sector, the CSPL comprising –

1. A Chairperson;

2. A chartered or certified accountant with at least ten years' experience;

3. A legal practitioner who has practiced in the Commonwealth for at least ten years; and

4. Not more than two other members.

(See Appendix for current membership)

1.2. Summary of CSPL Activities

This Report outlines the progress made and the key issues identified by the CSPL over the period 1 August 2024 – 31 January 2025.

1.3. During the current reporting period the Members have:

a. continued to follow up on the status of the draft Standards in Public Life (SPL) (Amendment) Bill and SPL (Amendment) Regulations;

b. continued to follow up on the Parliamentary Code of Conduct;

c. conducted in-depth analysis of Register of Interests submissions and planned an enforcement strategy;

d. initiated correspondence with non-compliant Persons in Public Life to the Register of Interests;
e. continued to follow up on progressing election and campaign finance reform;
f. liaised with the Office of the Auditor General on establishing a Memorandum of Understanding between the two entities;
g. carried out various education and public relations projects;
h. discussed media articles on subjects relating to its remit; and
i. discussed and issued correspondence relating to various complaints, enquiries and other investigations.

SECTION TWO – MEETINGS AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS OF THE CSPL

2.1. Meetings

The reporting period for this Report commenced on 1 August 2024. During the period, the CSPL held a general meeting on 5 December 2024 and an extraordinary meeting on 21 November 2024.

The minutes of these meetings reflect the matters discussed and undertaken by the CSPL. Copies of the CSPL meeting minutes are available on the CSPL's website.

2.2. Membership of the CSPL

Several membership changes occurred during the period. Member Rosalie Twohey resigned from her role as a member in August 2024, in accordance with section 117(6)(e) of the Constitution, after accepting a position of employment with a statutory authority. Additionally, two new members were appointed during this period – Mr Woodrow Foster in November 2024 and Mr Jay Ehrhart in December 2024.

Subsequent to these membership changes, it was brought to the Chairman's attention that, since the departure of Member Twohey, the Commission did not have a member who was a chartered or certified accountant, as was required by s.117(3) of the Cayman Islands Constitution Order 2009.

The Commission therefore sought advice from the Attorney General on its ability to continue operating. After considering this advice, it was agreed that the Commission could continue operating except where decisions may cause adverse consequences for parties, until the appointment of a chartered or certified accountant.

It was noted that the very specific requirements for membership of the CSPL need to be addressed in the longer term in order to reduce the risk of the Commission not being properly constituted again in the future.

SECTION THREE – STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE (SPL) ACT

3.1. Amendments to the SPL Act and Regulations

The Commission continued to follow up with the Attorney General on the status of the draft amendments to the Standards in Public Life Act (SPLA). It was noted that, with the impending General Election scheduled for April 2025, there was unlikely to be any progression of the draft amendments at this time. The Commission would therefore follow up in due course after the election.

SECTION FOUR – PROCUREMENT

No issues related to procurement were discussed during this period.

SECTION FIVE – REGISTER OF INTERESTS (ROI)

5.1. Background and Developments

The functions of the CSPL include, amongst other things, *"to supervise the operation of registers of interest and to investigate breaches of established standards…"* (section 117(9)(c) of the Constitution).

In accordance with s.121(1) of the Constitution, *"There shall be for the Cayman Islands a Register of Interests, which shall be maintained by the Commission for Standards in Public Life."* Section 121(2) elaborates that all Persons in Public Life have a constitutional obligation to declare to the CSPL, *"for entry in the Register of Interests, such interests, assets, income and liabilities of that person, or of any other person connected with him or her, as may be prescribed by [the] Act."* The SPL Act and Regulations were commenced in early 2020 to outline the operation of the Register and the process for submissions to it.

The ROI in accordance with s.121(1) of the Constitution, and the introduction of the SPL Act in accordance with s.117(9)(c) of the Constitution to, amongst other things, provide CSPL with the powers *"to supervise the operation of registers of interests and to investigate breaches of established standards…".* Furthermore, the commencement of the SPL Regulations, 2020 provided the approved form for declarations of interests, income, assets and liabilities to be completed by Persons in Public Life and give effect to the various provisions of the SPL Act. Both legislative documents combined provide the CSPL with the power needed to meet its constitutional mandates to supervise the operation of the ROI and to investigate breaches of established standards in public life.

In 2020, the CSPL received the first filings of annual declarations to the ROI in accordance with the SPL Act. Following receipt of these declarations, the CSPL embarked on the development of a system to allow for the electronic filing of annual declaration forms by Persons in Public Life. The online ROI portal was launched in 2021.

5.2. Register of Interests (ROI)

For the 2023-2024 ROI annual submission period, declarations continued to be filed throughout this reporting period. The Commission also reviewed a presentation on submissions from this declaration period, and considered an analysis of insights and interpretation of these, and discussed next steps to increase submission rates.

Members ultimately agreed that the focus moving forward would be on identifying groups to target in short-term, medium-term and long-term actions to increase submission rates. Follow ups with non-compliant Persons in Public Life would begin with those identified as high-priority. 'High-priority' was defined as persons who were in Ministry leadership roles in the civil service, CEOs of SAGCs and their deputies, Chairpersons of boards and their deputies, and Chairpersons and members of boards in the bottom 10% of board submission rates (including boards with 0% submissions).

Follow-ups were conducted through a structured escalation process:

- **Step 1**: Emails sent directly to declarants, where possible, or to proxies (board secretaries or HR Managers, as appropriate), with reminders of the requirements to declare.
- **Step 2**: A formal letter from the CSPL Chairman notifying persons of their non-compliance and the potential for penalties. In the case of Persons in Public Life who were civil servants, these letters were also co-signed by the Deputy Governor.
- **Step 3**: formal notifications sent to the non-compliant Person in Public Life's appointing officer, as required by section 11(4) of the Standards in Public Life Act.
- **Step 4**: direct contact by the CSPL Chairperson of any still outstanding non-compliant Persons in Public Life notifying them of their non-compliance.

Within this reporting period follow-ups reached Step 2. The CSPL is committed to continuing the follow-up process to ensure compliance rates within this high-priority group of Persons in Public Life are increased.

The Commission also initiated discussions with the Supervisor of Elections and Deputy Supervisor of Elections on 22 January 2025 on the upcoming 2025 General Elections. The discussion focused on how the CSPL and Elections Office could work together to carry out the Commission's responsibilities to make potential Nominees for Election aware of the obligation, under the Standards in Public Life Act, to file declarations prior to submitting their nomination papers. The plans for this on both sides are in place and will emphasize public education, and direct messaging to candidates, as much as possible.

SECTION SIX – STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS AND LEGISLATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY

6.1 MOU with the Auditor General

After an earlier meeting with the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) was postponed, the Commission sought a mutually agreeable date. The date of 13 January 2025 was secured, and discussions took place between CSPL Members Keith Blake, Woody Foster and Jay Ehrhart, with Auditor General Sue Winspear and Deputy Auditor General Patrick Smith representing the OAG, and the Secretariat Manager, Deputy Manager and Research Analyst providing support. Unfortunately, the Chairman, Dr Sonia Bush, was unable to attend.

The issues of the draft MOU between the OAG and CSPL, government procurement practices and strategies for building relationships across the public sector were discussed. The Commission committed to updating the draft MOU between the CSPL and OAG to describe the arrangement between the two entities in greater detail, circulating the revision in due course.

6.2 Update re Parliamentary Code of Conduct

The Commission continued to seek updates on the Parliamentary Code of Conduct and considered ways to maintain public focus on this issue, as it is an essential to effective governance and therefore whether the Commission for Standards in Public Life, and other governance bodies, can carry out their remits.

6.3 Elections Observer's Report and Campaign Financing Reform

The Commission sent a letter to Premier Julianna O'Connor-Connolly on 19 December 2024 following up on the status of the recommendations from the 2021 Election Observers' Report and the campaign financing reform initiative she was spearheading. No response had been received by the end of this reporting period.

6.4 Recent and Upcoming Trials of the Former Speaker of the House

The Commission noted in December 2024 that the appeal of the indecent assault trial against the former Speaker of the House, Mr W. McKeeva Bush, has been scheduled for May 2025. The Commission will continue to monitor the media and add the matter to future CSPL meeting agendas as updates arise. It

continues to be noted that section 22 of the SPLA prevents the Commission from investigating a matter until all other investigations are complete.

6.5 Meeting with Governor

Commission members, along with former member Rosalie Twohey, met with Her Excellency the Governor, Mrs Jane Owen, for lunch on 22 January 2025. Matters discussed included the Parliamentary Code of Conduct, the handling of complaints before the Commission, relationships the Commission could benefit from establishing and the constitutional reporting requirement. Members noted that they were encouraged by Her Excellency's desire to assist and support the Commission in carrying out its functions, where appropriate, and appreciated the opportunity to engage in these open discussions.

SECTION SEVEN – CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

7.1 Conflict of Interest Issues Reported on at the Department of Tourism

In this ongoing issue relating to the media article titled 'Controversial sports tourism strategy targeted prawn sandwich soccer fans' published on 6 November 2023, the Commission wrote to the Director of the Department of Tourism on 6 December 2024 following up on their request for assurance that the risk of similar situations happening in the future has been reduced. As no response had been received by the end of the reporting period, the Commission agreed that a third and final letter should be sent, cc'ing the Deputy Governor, to solicit a response.

7.2 Panton/Turner Loan

Reference is made to media articles published by the Cayman Compass on 4 September 2024 and 6 September 2024 regarding the personal loan of a substantial sum of money from former Premier, Wayne Panton, to then Health & Wellness Minister, Sabrina Turner, in 2023. Members reviewed the articles, public feedback, and relevant internal research. It was ultimately agreed to write a media statement, noting the outcome of the Commission's examination that no breaches of the Register of Interests requirements as outlined in the SPLA were found. However, the Commission did note the importance of declarants being transparent in their submissions, and encouraged this for future declarations. This statement was issued on 5 December 2024.

As a result of this inquiry, members further considered whether the CSPL is empowered to proactively examine declarations to identify potential breaches of the SPLA. The Chair proposed a policy to enable staff to proactively review declarations to increase the likelihood that issues such as this can be identified earlier, which members agreed with.

The Chair also requested that a review of the guidance notes for declarants be conducted to improve their robustness, if necessary.

SECTION EIGHT – EDUCATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

8.1 CSPL Introductory Video

The CSPL had previously planned to update an introductory video explaining the Commission and its purpose/functions for use at the ongoing CIG New Employee Orientations and for other general informational purposes. The video was completed at the end of 2024 and circulated to members. The video will be posted on the CSPL 'About Us' page on its website, and will also be included in the Civil Servants Orientation training.

8.2 Governance Campaign

The Commission began to consider developing a Governance Campaign that would focus on various issues related to its remit. These include, but are not limited to, the Parliamentary Code of Conduct, the election and campaign finance reform, the Register of Interests, and general information about the Commission itself and its functions. Planning for this will continue into the next reporting period.

SECTION NINE – COMPLAINTS

9.1 Complaints

During the reporting period, the Commission navigated a number of complaints and enquiries, touching on a broad spectrum of topics. These included ethical concerns in government decision-making and issues relating to institutional transparency. In all of these cases, the Commission upheld a policy of strict confidentiality. This approach safeguards against potential harm to the reputations of those accused of wrongdoing, and allows for a fair and impartial assessment of the facts. The Commission will continue to receive and respond to complaints relating to issues within its purview, such as conflicts of interest and adherence to ethical codes.

None of the complaints or enquiries considered during this period led to the Commission deciding to open a formal investigation. Below is a summary of the complaints, enquiries and any formal or informal investigations conducted:

	Total Handled in Reporting Period	Open and Under Consideration at end of Reporting Period	Closed	
			Insufficient/ No Evidence	Recommendations/ Concerns Expressed
Complaints	1	1	0	0
Enquiries	0	0	0	0
Informal Investigations	2	1	1	1
Formal Investigations	0	0	0	0

SECTION TEN – MOVING FORWARD

10. Over the next reporting period the CSPL will continue to:

a. continue to follow up on the draft Standards in Public Life (SPL) (Amendment) Bill and SPL (Amendment) Regulations;

b. carry out follow-up plan for non-compliant Persons in Public Life filing declarations;

c. support the declaration period for candidates for election in the 2025 General Election;

d. prepare for the 2024-2025 ROI declaration submission period;

e. continue to discuss an MOU with the Office of the Auditor General;

f. continue to follow up on the Parliamentary Code of Conduct;

g. continue to follow up on the status of the 2021 Election Observers' Report recommendations and campaign finance reform after the 2025 General Election;

h. draft the next CSPL Report;

i. carry out public relations and education initiatives for 2025; and

j. discuss and action matters relating to complaints, enquiries and other investigations.

For more information on the CSPL please visit www.standardsinpubliclifecommission.ky. Alternatively, you can e-mail info@standardsinpubliclifecommission.ky or call 244-3685.

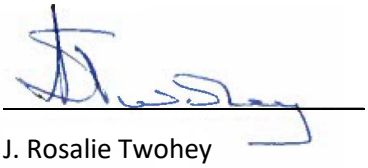
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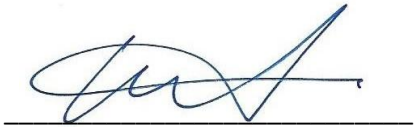
Dr Sonia Bush (Chairman)



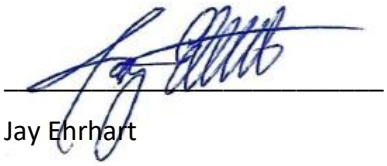
Keith Blake



J. Rosalie Twohey



Woodrow Foster



Jay Ehrhart

SECTION ELEVEN – APPENDIX

11.1. Members' Biographies



Dr Sonia Bush is an Attorney at Law in the Cayman Islands as the owner and sole practitioner of Sonia Bush and Associates Law. **Sonia** obtained a LLB (Hons) degree from the University of Liverpool, and she was trained by one of Cayman's top law firms. Additionally, **Dr Bush** obtained a Bachelor's of Science Degree in International Finance, (BSc.), a Master of Business Administration Degree (MBA), a Master of Science Degree (MSc.), and a PhD in Management with a minor in Leadership. She also is a registered member of the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners, and a designated Trust and Estate Practitioner ("TEP") since 2001.

Sonia was called to the Cayman Islands Bar in July 2009, and broadened her exposure to offshore trusts, while working as an attorney at law in Jersey, Channel Islands. Her areas of practice include Trust and Estate Planning, Business Formation, Company Incorporation, Intellectual Property including registration of Trademarks, Work Permits, Family Law, Residency, Guardianship, Wills, Probate and Administration and Real Estate. **Sonia** is also a Notary Public and provides this service from the Firm's office. In addition to practicing law, Sonia has worked over ten years in the financial industry in the Cayman Islands, in particular at offshore trust and banks as a Trust Account Manager.

Dr Bush was appointed as Chairman effective 1 May 2021 for a four-year term.



Mrs J. Rosalie Twohey became a CPA in 1986 after being awarded a BSc (Cum Laude) in Accounting from Howard University. After six years as an auditor **Rosalie** served a short stint as the, Financial Controller of Walkers Global Holdings Ltd after which she served as Head of Institutional Business with the Butterfield Bank Trust Company Limited. Previously she acted in the same role with Bank Austria Cayman Islands Ltd. In addition to her MBA awarded from the University of Liverpool, **Rosalie** pursued and was successful in gaining an LLM from the same institution.

Mrs Twohey was appointed as a Member effective 1 May 2021 for a four-year term. Due to accepting a position as a public servant, she resigned from her role with the Commission on 4 September 2024.



Mr Keith Blake was a Senior Director with Alvarez & Marsal, based in the Cayman Islands, until his recent retirement. He has more than 30 years of insolvency and restructuring experience, including the last 21 years working in the Cayman Islands. After leaving school, **Mr Blake** spent 10 years at NatWest Bank in the U.K., with the last 18 months of that time working in the bank's Insolvency and Debt Recovery department in London. In 1990 **Mr Blake** joined KPMG in London, spending nine years working on the liquidations of a number of banks, including several that had previously traded in the secondary market of Latin American sovereign-backed debt.

Drawing upon this experience, **Mr Blake** moved to KPMG in the Cayman Islands in January 2000 to assist in liquidating the Cayman and British Virgin Islands (BVI) subsidiaries of one of the (at the time) largest Brazilian international banks. Staying in the Cayman Islands, **Mr Blake** continued to work at KPMG taking many appointments as Joint Voluntary Liquidator of Cayman hedge funds and other entities. In addition, **Mr Blake** played a significant role as one of the Joint Receivers of the underlying companies of a major Seven Mile Beach hotel and resort that went through a financial restructuring in 2012. More recently, **Mr Blake** has been appointed by the Grand Court of the Cayman Islands as an Interim Administrator over a deceased person's estate. He has also acted as a Controller appointed by Cayman Islands Monetary Authority (CIMA) under the Cayman Islands Mutual Funds Law.

Mr Blake was appointed as a Member effective 1 May 2021 for a four-year term.



Mr Woodrow (Woody) Foster is the current Managing Director of Foster's Food Fair Ltd (Foster's). **Woody** is also an integral member of the Board of Directors for the Foster Group, which includes companies such as Car City, Progressive Distributors Ltd, Cico Avis Car Rental and Home Gas. **Woody** is also on the Board of Directors for Caribbean Utilities Company (CUC), Chairman of LIFE (Literacy Is For Everyone) Ltd, President of the Cayman Food Bank and a Director of R3 Foundation.

Woody attended St. Ignatius Catholic Primary School and Triple C School in Grand Cayman, then moved on to Florida Air Academy and Louisiana State University, where he pursued studies in business. **Woody** returned to Grand Cayman in 1987 and began a full-time career in the grocery business at Foster's Food Fair. **Woody's** grocery experience actually began with the opening of Foster's Food Fair in 1980, where he worked after school bagging groceries and stocking shelves. Since joining Foster's Food Fair full time, **Woody** has worked his way through the company, gaining experience in all departments. **Woody** took leadership of Foster's Food Fair, as its Managing Director, with the opening of its Strand store in 1997.

Woody is married to Sabrina and has four children: Julian, Josh, Syrena and Charli.

Woody was first appointed as a Member effective 21 October 2024 for a four-year term.



Mr Jay Ehrhart is a retired civil servant with over 20 years of dedicated service to the Cayman Islands, where he excelled in various leadership roles across public relations, media, and tourism sectors.

Most recently, he served as Executive Director of the Cayman Islands Tourism Association (CITA) from 2019 to 2024. In this capacity, he championed the interests of the tourism industry by facilitating discussions with government stakeholders, overseeing the Association's fiscal health, and executing major fundraising events like Taste of Cayman. His strategic leadership helped position the Association as a vital voice in the Cayman Islands' tourism landscape.

Prior to their role at CITA, **Jay** was a Public Relations Officer at the Department of Tourism, managing global communications and media relations for the Cayman Islands tourism sector. His work included developing crisis communication responses, preparing government officials for media engagements, and curating itineraries for visiting journalists, enhancing the island's international visibility.

Earlier in his career, **Jay** had a successful tenure at Radio Cayman, rising from News Editor to News Director. Over 17 years, he helped shape the station's news programming, and managed a talented editorial team. His expertise in delivering fact-based, compelling content earned him recognition as a trusted voice in Cayman's media landscape.

Jay was appointed as a Member effective 11 December 2024 for a four-year term.