



**2025/26 SESSION**  
of the  
**BERMUDA SENATE**

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**20 MAY 2026**

*Sitting number 23 of the 2025/2026 Session*  
*(pages 987–1014)*

**Sen. The Hon. Joan E. Dillas-Wright, MBE, JP**  
**President**

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**BERMUDA SENATE  
OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT  
20 MAY 2026  
10:04 AM**

*Sitting Number 23 of the 2025/2026 Session*

*[Sen. the Hon. Joan E. Dillas-Wright, President, presiding]*

**The President:** Good morning, Senators.  
The Senate is in session.  
Shall we pray?

### PRAYERS

*[Prayers read by Sen. the Hon. Joan E. Dillas-Wright, President]*

**The President:** Please be seated.

### CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

*[Minutes of March 23, March 25, March 26,  
and March 30, 2026]*

**The President:** I call on Vice President John Wight.

**Sen. John Wight:** Good morning, Madam President.

**The President:** Good morning.

**Sen. John Wight:** I move that the Minutes of the meetings of Monday the 23rd of March; Wednesday the 25th of March; Thursday the 26th of March, and Monday the 30th of March 2026 be taken as read.

**The President:** Is there any objection to that motion?  
No objection.

**Sen. John Wight:** Madam President, I move that the Minutes of Monday, March 23; Wednesday, March 25; Thursday, March 26; and Monday, March 30 be confirmed.

**The President:** Is there any objection to that motion?  
No objection.  
The Minutes are confirmed.  
Thank you, Vice President John Wight.

*[Minutes of 23 March, 25 March, 26 March, and 30 March 2026 confirmed.]*

### MESSAGES

**The President:** Mrs. Beale.

**The Deputy Clerk:** There are no messages, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you.

### REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

**The President:** There are none.

### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

#### APOLOGIES

**The President:** And before I get into the formal ones, I would just like to report that we have had apologies from Minister Caesar and Senator Tannock. They are both travelling on business.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**The President:** The next announcement then is in the name of Senator the Honourable Kim Wilkerson, Attorney General and Minister of Justice.  
Minister, you have the floor.

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** Thank you, Madam President. Good morning to the listening public.

#### TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2025

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** Madam President, I hereby present for the information of Senate the 2025 Treatment of Offenders Board Annual Report.

#### PAROLE BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2025

#### BERMUDA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS—PANEL REPORT REVIEW

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** I also present the 2025 Parole Board Annual Report and the Review of Bermuda Department of Corrections—Panel Report. Senators may access copies on their tablets and/or the Parliament website.

**The President:** Thank you, Minister.  
The next announcement then is in the name of . . . yes, Minister Wilkerson, also a spokesperson for Finance.

**INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION (TAX  
INFORMATION EXCHANGE AGREEMENTS)  
COMMON REPORTING STANDARD  
AMENDMENT REGULATIONS 2026**

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** Thank you, Madam President.

I hereby present for the information of Senate the International Cooperation (Tax Information Exchange Agreements) Common Reporting Standard Amendment Regulations 2026 as made by the Minister of Finance in exercise of the powers conferred by section 12 of the International Cooperation (Tax Information Exchange Agreements) Act 2005.

Senators may access copies on their tablets and/or the Parliament website.

**The President:** Thank you, Minister Wilkerson.

The next announcement is in the name of Senator Lindsay Simmons.

**MOTOR TAXI (TAXI DESPATCHING SERVICE)  
AMENDMENT REGULATIONS 2026**

**Sen. Lindsay Simmons:** Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I hereby present for the information of Senate the Motor Taxi (Taxi Despatching Service) Amendment Regulations 2026 as made by the Minister responsible for transport in exercise of the power conferred by section 37A of the Motor Car Act 1951. Senators may access copies on their tablets and/or the Parliament website.

I have one more, Madam President.

**The President:** Yes, please carry on.

**MOTOR CAR (RIDESHARING)  
REGULATIONS 2026**

**Sen. Lindsay Simmons:** Madam President, I present for the information of Senate the Motor Car (Ridesharing) Regulations 2026 as made by the Minister responsible for transport in exercise of the power conferred by sections 37 and 102 of the Motor Car Act 1951.

Senators may access copies on their tablets and/or the Parliament website. Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator Lindsay Simmons who is speaking on behalf of Senator Mischa Fubler.

**NOTICES OF MOTIONS**

**The President:** There are none.

**PETITIONS**

**The President:** There are none.

**STATEMENTS**

**The President:** We have a few Statements this morning. The first one is in the name of Minister Kim Wilkerson, the Attorney General and Minister of Justice.

Minister, when you are ready, you can present your first Statement.

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** Thank you, Madam President.

*[Pause]*

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** Madam President, you will see the Order Paper . . . the sequence puts the Treatment of Offenders and the Parole Board [2025 Reports] Statement before the Corrections Reform: Accountability and Action Statement. And because one relates to the other, I'd like to take them in the opposite order.

**The President:** Certainly, Minister.

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** Thank you, Madam President.

So, Madam President, with your indulgence, and thank you, I am beginning with Corrections Reform: Accountability and Action.

**The President:** Mm-hmm.

**CORRECTIONS REFORM: ACCOUNTABILITY  
AND ACTION**

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** Madam President, I rise to table the report of the Review Panel commissioned by the Government, which covers a comprehensive, independent inspection of the Department of Corrections conducted between October 6 and 14, 2025.

Madam President, I want to be candid with this Honourable Senate. The Review Panel Report contains difficult findings. It identifies serious and systemic challenges within our correctional system, particularly at the Westgate Correctional Facility. The Ministry of Justice does not shy away from those findings. We commissioned this review precisely because we believe that accountability is not a sign of weakness. It is a prerequisite for meaningful reform. We would rather confront the truth than allow problems to persist unchallenged. And that is exactly what this Government intends to do.

Madam President, let me begin where this reform effort begins, with accountability.

The independent review, conducted by a four-person panel of correctional experts drawn from the United Kingdom and the Overseas Territories, assessed all three of our correctional facilities: Westgate, the Co-Educational Facility and the Farm [Facility], against the Overseas Territories Detention Standards

Framework, which is consistent with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (otherwise known as the Nelson Mandela Rules).

Their findings are thorough and welcomed by this Ministry. The report identifies 75 recommendations across four thematic areas: Treatment of Detainees, Living Conditions, Activities and Rehabilitation, and Detainee Management. Some of these recommendations require immediate action. Others require sustained investment over time. I give the commitment that all of them will be acted upon.

Within weeks of receiving the Panel Report, the Department of Corrections, working closely with the Ministry and our partners in the United Kingdom, produced a post-inspection action plan that assigns responsible individuals, timelines and evidential standards to every single one of those 75 recommendations. That action plan is now active. Work has already begun.

Madam President, I now wish to address the findings of the independent Panel Report directly, beginning with what is working well. Because it would be easy, and indeed tempting, to allow the weightier challenges documented in this [Panel] Report to overshadow the good practice that the Panel observed. That would be unfair to our staff and to our system. And it would be dishonest.

The Panel found that the Co-Educational Facility and the Farm Facility demonstrated significant good practice, providing what it described as a positive and hopeful regime, underpinned by effective programmes. The Co-[Educational] Facility was commended for the effective delivery of its intake programme, for the quality and relevance of its communal area materials and for positive staff engagement that reflected genuine good practice. The Farm Facility was recognised for its structured work programmes, including the wood workshop and computer courses which provide practical, purposeful activity that gives inmates skills, dignity and the foundations for a different kind of life.

The Panel noted that health care provision at Westgate was particularly positive. The medical area is clean, well-maintained and appropriately equipped. All prisoners are seen by a nurse within 24 hours of arrival, a practice the Panel specifically commended as a strong foundation for early identification of health needs. Private consultation spaces are available across all facilities.

The Right Living House Therapeutic Community at the Co-Ed Facility continues to provide structured support for substance misuse, a programme this Government has championed and will continue to support.

The Panel also commended the gender-sensitive approach to searches conducted by same-sex staff in private and with professionalism. It noted that the visit room at Westgate is well-equipped and conducive to safe and respectful interactions. Free lawyer calls, which do not require phone credit, ensure that

prisoners can access legal representation without financial barriers, a practice the Panel rightly recommended keeping.

Madam President, these are not small things. They reflect the professionalism and commitment of our correctional staff, and they deserve to be acknowledged.

Madam President, I turn now to the challenges, and I will not minimise them.

The Panel found that conditions at the main Westgate facility are, in several areas, not fit for purpose. Additionally, the Panel identified notable inconsistency in policy and practice and highlighted the impact of staff shortages on operations.

The Panel found that the complaints process, while formally established, is slow and has lost the confidence of the inmate population. The Panel's findings on discipline and recordkeeping confirm that the Department of Corrections needs clearer policies, better oversight, stronger management accountability and more consistent application of its own standards.

The Panel also identified a lack of structured purposeful activity, particularly for remand prisoners, who currently have access only to the gym and are excluded from work, education and most programmes. This Ministry takes the view that time in custody, at whatever stage of the judicial process, should not be wasted time.

Madam President, the Panel was frank about leadership and governance at the senior level within the Department of Corrections. It found that while senior managers demonstrated a strong desire to deliver positive results, there was a lack of visible leadership and insufficient oversight and accountability. This Government accepts those findings. It is not a criticism of individuals in isolation, it is a systems observation, and it requires a systems response.

Madam President, I wish to address a specific matter of governance raised both by the Review Panel and independently by this Ministry. The Panel has recommended that the Treatment of Offenders Board be fully removed from the adjudication process. It identifies a conflict of interest inherent in a body that simultaneously monitors prisoner welfare and participates in their discipline. The Board's primary purpose should be the independent monitoring of welfare, the investigation of complaints and the upholding of prisoners' rights.

A formal Classification and Assessment Policy is being developed to ensure that admission procedures, including risk and needs assessments are completed within 72 hours. The adoption of a simplified version of the Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) system, already in use in other Overseas Territory prisons, is being progressed, with supporting training materials being provided by His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service [HMPPS].

Madam President, I said at the outset that accountability matters and that work has already begun. Let me now speak to the specifics of what is underway.

The post-inspection action plan, developed jointly by the Executive Leadership of the Department of Corrections and the Prison Officers Association, with direct support from the UK Ministry of Justice, assigns all 75 recommendations a status, a responsible officer, a target date and an evidence standard. The fact that the plan was built collaboratively, with the voices of those who lead our facilities and those who work on the front line both present at the table, is itself a signal of the kind of reform culture we are building. Recommendations have been prioritised according to urgency.

Madam President, in a further demonstration of this Government's commitment to meeting and exceeding international detention standards, the HMPPS Staff Profiling Team is currently on the ground in Bermuda. (I met them yesterday.) Their presence reflects the active and ongoing partnership between the Department of Corrections and the United Kingdom in strengthening the management, capability and professionalism of our Corrections team. This engagement is a positive step in the broader reform programme and signals continued momentum beyond the immediate Action Plan.

The profiling exercise, being led by specialists from HMPPS, will ensure that staff roles and responsibilities are properly aligned with operational needs and staff capacity. It will produce a report that forms the basis for smarter, more effective workforce deployment across our facilities. This kind of structural rigour is essential if we are to close the gap between the regime we aspire to provide and the regime our staff are currently able to deliver.

This is not the first time UK expertise has been brought to bear on this reform effort. The Ministry has benefited from support in developing the Action Plan itself and in accessing specialist services across a range of operational areas. We continue to work closely with our UK partners and are grateful for their sustained engagement.

Madam President, the Ministry also continues to work closely with the Executive Leadership team at the Department of Corrections and the Prison Officers Association to execute this work. Our staff are not watching this reform from the sidelines; they are driving it. Their well-being, their development and their professional capacity are non-negotiable priorities. The Panel's staff survey, conducted during the review, reflected the pressures officers are under. This Ministry heard it and we are responding to it.

Madam President, I want to return to something the Panel said, because it matters.

The Panel specifically noted that the Co-Educational and Farm Facilities demonstrated what is possible. They represent a model of purposeful activity, rehabilitative culture, consistent staff engagement and hope that the Department of Corrections can and must replicate at Westgate. The Panel has not presented us with an impossible standard. It has pointed to evidence already existing within our own system that a different kind of correctional experience is achievable.

Madam President, let me close with this. The independent Panel Review report I have laid today documents years of underinvestment and a gap between the standards we are bound to meet and the conditions that have, in some areas, been allowed to persist. But it is honest. And honesty is the beginning of change.

We have 75 recommendations, a clear Action Plan and the combined commitment to improve this system. We have staff who, as the Panel itself noted, expressed a clear willingness to engage in further training and development. We have programmes at the Farm, at the Co-Ed Facility, [and] in the Right Living House, that prove what is possible. We have a Ministry that is committed to seeing this through, not in a single Statement to this Chamber, but in the sustained, essential work of institutional reform. I commit to return to this Senate quarterly to report on that progress.

Bermuda deserves a correctional system it can be proud of. One that is safe, humane and purposeful. One that does not merely detain people but genuinely prepares them to return to their families and [their] communities as better, healthier, more capable individuals. That is the commitment of this Government. And I am determined that we will deliver on it.

Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you, Minister Wilkerson.

When you are ready, you can present your second Statement which is the Tabling of Treatment of Offenders Board and the Parole Board 2025 Reports.

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** Thank you, Madam President.

And as a preface, Madam President, as I said, and I am grateful for your indulgence to take this paper second—

**The President:** Yes.

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** —[Senators] should be aware that the annual reports are chronicling the 2025 [year], so that the conditions highlighted in the review report, you will see those thematically through the observations of both the Treatment of Offenders Board and the Parole Board during the 2025 year. And I want to add that both representatives of both boards, the Parole Board and the Treatment Offenders Board were part of the interview process in establishing the Panel Review report. So, I will begin.

#### **TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS BOARD AND THE PAROLE BOARD 2025 REPORTS TABLED**

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** Madam President, I rise today to lay before this Honourable Senate the Annual Reports for the year 2025 for both the Parole Board and the Treatment of Offenders Board. These Reports are submitted in compliance with the

requirements of the Treatment of Offenders Board Act 1979 and the Parole Board Act 2001, respectively.

Madam President, the Treatment of Offenders Board, chaired by Mrs. Komieko Roberts comprises 10 members following three appointments and one resignation during the reporting year. The Board has operated under the Ministry of Justice [since] September 2024, following the transfer of oversight of the Department of Corrections from the Ministry of National Security.

During 2025, the Board conducted 23 adjudications, all at the Westgate Correctional Facility, with a quorum of five members present for each. A total of 33 inmate interviews were held across the three facilities, and 32 rota visits were conducted. The most common infractions recorded involved the possession of contraband, including mobile phones and accessories, as well as the possession and consumption of prohibited substances.

The Board's report is candid about 10 systemic concerns, a few of which have been formally documented in previous reporting cycles. Chief among them is the ongoing impact of staffing shortages on the delivery of education programmes, medical services, case management and legal and appeal preparation. The Board also identifies the increasing number of inmates with serious mental health diagnoses as one of the most significant emerging risks facing the system, a concern echoed by the independent Review Panel.

Madam President, I now turn to the Parole Board Annual Report for 2025. The Parole Board, now chaired by Dr. Emily Ross following a renewal of its membership effective October 1, 2025, is a seven-member independent statutory body empowered to determine the timing, terms and conditions of release for eligible incarcerated persons.

During 2025, the Board reviewed 41 individual parole applications, consistent with the 41 reviewed in 2023 and the 43 reviewed in 2024. Of those, 13 parole licences were granted, a meaningful increase compared to seven granted in each of the two preceding years. A further 62 applications were deferred, and 10 individuals chose to decline parole, citing in some cases a preference to complete the Right Living House programme, or a preference for release at their earliest release date rather than on licence. This last point is worth noting. It speaks to inmates who are making considered choices about the conditions under which they re-enter society, and we should not see it as a failure of the process.

Five parole licences were revoked during 2025, the highest number since 2019. These were linked to non-compliance with recommended programming and the use of controlled substances. The Board has rightly emphasised that these revocations reflect broader systemic challenges around the limited availability of rehabilitative programming, both in custody and in the community, rather than solely individual non-compliance. The Ministry accepts that analysis. We

cannot ask people to comply with conditions we have not sufficiently resourced them to meet.

The total custodial population at the end of 2025 stood at 163, unchanged from the end of 2024. The population of incarcerated foreign nationals rose, from 20 at the end of 2024 to 29 at the end of 2025, representing 17.8 per cent of the total prison population. The Board has initiated work on policy and guidance to ensure fair and consistent parole consideration for this cohort in 2026. Individuals serving life sentences accounted for 20.2 per cent of the custodial population and the sexual offender population rose from 16 to 22. The Board has emphasised the acute need for enhanced access to specialist programming to support rehabilitation and safe release planning for these complex cohorts, and this Ministry concurs.

As of 31 December 2025, Madam President, 46 individuals were on parole licence in the community, all men, with ages ranging from 22 to 85. The Board has noted that effective reintegration in a small island context requires flexible, well-resourced and inter-agency approaches. As such, this Ministry is actively working to ensure that our post-release support is commensurate with that reality.

Madam President, both reports paint a picture of a system under pressure, but one that is moving in the right direction. Parole grants have nearly doubled. Incarcerated persons are making considered choices about their reintegration. The Treatment of Offenders Board continues to provide meaningful oversight, and our corrections staff continue to serve with professionalism and dedication. We acknowledge the challenges that remain and this Ministry is committed to meeting them. The foundation is there and the work continues.

Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you, Minister Wilkerson for the presentation of your reports.

We will now move on to the next Statements, and those are in the name of Senator Lauren Bell, the Junior Minister of Economy and Labour, and the title is The 2026 Census of Population and Housing.

Senator Lauren Bell, you have the floor.

**Sen. Lauren Bell:** Thank you, Madam President.

## CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING 2026

**Sen. Lauren Bell:** Good morning, Madam President, colleagues, and listening audience.

This morning I rise to inform honourable colleagues and the listening members of the public that today, May 20, 2026, is Census Day for Bermuda. This means that from tomorrow, May 21, data collection for the 2026 Census of Population and Housing begins.

Madam President, a national census is one of the most important exercises undertaken by any modern society. It is the only process that captures

comprehensively, uniformly, and reliably the full picture of who we are as a country. The census tells us how our population is changing, how our communities are evolving, and what our people need to thrive. In short, it allows us to fill the gap between assumptions and evidence.

Therefore, it is fitting that the theme for the 2026 Census is “Fill the Gap.” The Statistics Act 2002 requires that a census of population and housing in Bermuda be taken at least once every 10 years, as directed by Order. The last census was conducted in Bermuda in 2016, and therefore, the next census is due this year.

Madam President, the census is of critical importance to the Government and people of Bermuda. It is a comprehensive count of Bermuda’s population and dwelling units as at Census Day, May 20, 2026. Our census collects data on our geographic, demographic, social, and economic characteristics making it a rich source of invaluable statistical information.

Census data informs long-term planning for housing, health care, education, labour, and social services. It identifies movements in our workplace and helps us to understand demographic trends, population growth, migration and shifts in housing composition. It can highlight [inequalities] that may otherwise remain hidden. Without accurate and complete data, we are planning in the dark.

Madam President, I must emphasise that the very success of the census and the quality of the information we produce from the data collected depends entirely on the participation of Bermuda’s residents. Every household, every family, and every individual counts.

When you participate, you help ensure that decisions being made today, and for future generations, are rooted in the real lived experiences of our community. With everyone’s participation we can better ensure up-to-date data to support in-depth analysis and informed, data-driven decision-making.

Madam President, census data will be collected using a variety of methods, including online, telephone, or personal interviews. As always, strict confidentiality provisions under the Statistics Act 2002 will ensure that personal information is safeguarded and used in aggregate form only for statistical purposes.

For many Bermuda residents, the quickest and most convenient way to complete the census will be via the e-Census found at [census.gov.bm](https://census.gov.bm). This can be done from the comfort of your very own home. Private households were mailed letters on May 11, 2026, outlining the steps to follow for completing the e-Census.

For those without access to a computer, there are computers set up at the Department of Statistics which allow for proper privacy. Alternatively, you can call the Department of Statistics, and a staff member will assist you in completing the census over the phone. Eventually, interviewers will be in the field to sit with seniors and others who require more help in completing

the census. Notwithstanding these options, we urge everyone to complete the e-Census for their household as soon as possible.

Madam President, as a reminder, when you respond to the census, you respond for where you usually live on Census Day, May 20. One person can respond for a whole household, and you must include everyone who usually lives and sleeps in your home as of May 20, even if they are staying somewhere else temporarily. This includes babies, household members who are temporarily in the hospital, abroad for vacation, study or other purposes. Completion of the census is mandatory.

Madam President, the census is our opportunity to fill the gap—the gap between what we think and what we know, between perception and reality, between outdated data and the needs of today’s Bermuda.

I therefore encourage every resident of Bermuda to support the 2026 Census of Population and Housing and to take part from Thursday, May 21, 2026. Together, we can build a clear and accurate picture of our Island and help shape policies that reflect who we truly are.

Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator Lauren Bell, Junior Minister for Economy and Labour. And you do have a second Statement on Pay Transparency Policy: Public Consultation. You can present your Statement when you’re ready.

**Sen. Lauren Bell:** Thank you, Madam President.

#### **PAY TRANSPARENCY POLICY: PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

**Sen. Lauren Bell:** Madam President, today I rise to remind this Honourable Senate and the listening audience of the public consultation which is currently underway for the Government’s proposed pay transparency policy. The proposal has been developed as part of the Government’s broader commitment to strengthening labour protections and advancing fairness within Bermuda’s labour market.

This Government believes that fair pay is fundamental to building a modern, inclusive, and competitive labour market. The policy proposal recognises that long-standing wage disparities linked to race, gender, ethnicity, and immigration status continue to affect income and employment outcomes in Bermuda.

Madam President, the policy is grounded on the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. The proposal is informed by international best practices and guidance from the International Labour Organization [ILO], which identifies pay transparency as an important mechanism for reducing unjustified pay disparities and promoting equitable workplaces.

The aim of the proposed policy is to promote fairness, accountability, and openness in how compensation decisions are made. It would move Bermuda from a largely reactive complaints-based system, under the Human Rights Act 1981, toward a more proactive framework that prevents unfair pay practices before they even arise.

At present, Bermuda's legal framework largely relies on individuals bringing forward complaints after unfair treatment has already occurred. In many cases, this can be difficult, time-consuming, and challenging to prove, especially where pay practices lack transparency.

Madam President, the proposed framework outlines six key features of the pay transparency policy.

1. Mandatory pay transparency and equity policies—Every employer in Bermuda would be required to develop and maintain a simple written policy on pay transparency and equity. This policy would affirm the employer's commitment to fair, non-discriminatory pay practices.

2. Clear, objective salary-setting criteria—Employers would be required to explain how pay is determined, using objective factors such as

- the nature and responsibilities of the role;
- an employee's qualifications; and
- relevant skills and experience.

3. Employee access to pay information—Employees would have the right to request information about the salary range for their role, promoting openness and reducing uncertainty around pay.

4. Restrictions on salary history inquiries—Employers would no longer be permitted to ask job applicants about their past or current salary during the recruitment process.

5. Salary ranges in job advertisements—All job advertisements would be required to include a salary range, ensuring that applicants understand expected pay before applying.

6. Enforcement—The enforcement model would follow a framework similar to that already used under Bermuda's minimum wage legislation which is supported by labour inspectors.

Madam President, recognising the importance of broad public engagement, the Government has launched a consultation process to ensure that the proposed legislation is practical, balanced, and reflective of Bermuda's unique labour market.

The consultation framework is intended to encourage meaningful participation from employers, employees, trade unions, industry groups, advocacy organisations, and members of the public. The consultation has been structured to gather practical feedback on how the proposed measures can be implemented effectively within Bermuda's labour market while balancing fairness, accountability, and operational realities for employers.

As part of this process, the Government has published the proposed Pay Transparency Policy for

public review and feedback through the Government's online consultation platform at [forum.gov.bm](https://forum.gov.bm). The deadline for feedback is 30 June 2026.

The consultation process is intended to be collaborative and constructive. Feedback received will assist the Government in refining the proposed legislative framework to ensure that it promotes fairness while remaining practical and proportionate for employers.

Madam President, I want to be clear. This initiative is not about creating unnecessary burdens. It is about strengthening confidence in Bermuda's labour market. It is about promoting good governance, and it is about ensuring that compensation practices are fair, transparent, and based on objective criteria.

Pay transparency is increasingly recognised internationally as an important component of equitable labour standards and modern workplace practices. Bermuda must continue to evolve its labour framework to ensure that our economy remains fair, competitive, and inclusive.

I encourage all stakeholders to participate fully in the consultation process and to share their views on the proposed policy.

Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator Lauren Bell, Junior Minister of Economy and Labour.

We will now move on with our orders.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**The President:** There are none.

## FIRST READING OF PUBLIC BILLS

### SINGLE-USE PLASTICS ACT 2026

**The President:** Senators, the following public Bill has been received from the House of Assembly and is hereby read for the first time. Its title is the Single-Use Plastics Act 2026.

And I would note that this Bill will be taken up on our Orders of the Day.

## FIRST READING OF PRIVATE BILLS

**The President:** There are none.

## QUESTION PERIOD

**The President:** Senators, we will now entertain questions on the Statements that have been delivered this morning, starting with the first one that was delivered by Minister the Honourable Kim Wilkerson, and that is Corrections Reform: Accountability and Action.

Would any Senator care to ask questions on this Statement?

Yes, Senator Cunningham, you have the floor.

**QUESTION 1: CORRECTIONS REFORM:  
ACCOUNTABILITY AND ACTION**

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** Thank you, Madam President, and good morning to the listening audience. And I want to thank the Minister for that Statement. Obviously, a lot of hard work was done, and it's not an easy topic, so I welcome that the report has been laid.

I do have a number of questions. One is, the Minister mentioned 75 recommendations across the four main themes and mentioned that work has already been done. I would be interested in how many of the 75 recommendations have actually been categorised as needing immediate action and how many have potentially already been completed.

*[No audio]*

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** No, I have more. Would you like me to continue?

**The President:** Yes.

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** I have two. I have one more.

*[Laughter]*

**QUESTION 2: CORRECTIONS REFORM:  
ACCOUNTABILITY AND ACTION**

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** So, the Minister mentioned that one of the challenges seen was in the leadership and governance of the Department of Corrections, and so I'm interested whether the current leadership team is the one that will execute on this reform and how that will ultimately pan out. Thank you.

**The President:** Vice President, Senator John Wight.

**QUESTION 1: CORRECTIONS REFORM:  
ACCOUNTABILITY AND ACTION**

**Sen. John Wight:** Thank you, Madam President, and I thank the Minister for advising the Senate and the listening audience. These are certainly troubling findings, but I do applaud the Attorney General for committing to address these recommendations head on.

I guess my question would be, How does she see the timeline working for coming back to the Senate and to the listening audience [with] progress made on these 75 recommendations?

Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you. Vice President John Wight. Would any other Senator care to ask questions?

Hearing none, then Minister, it's over to you.

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** Thank you, Madam President.

I'll take these and as a result of these answers, there might be other questions.

**The President:** Mm-hmm.

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** For Senator Cunningham's question, I'll start with the second question first, because really that is a harder question. And if I put it another way, Do you believe the current leadership can help to implement the changes?

What we have recognised in this process [that] there certainly are leadership deficiencies. But as there are infrastructure deficiencies as well, the fact that things have not been addressed as an infrastructure, it's the same with the support for leadership and development. And so, part of the plan is to assist with leadership development to enable the current leadership to carry out the implementation. So, we are doing all of it together, if I might put it that way.

And just segueing to Senator Wight's question on progress, I think those will be critical items to bring back in the progress report. So, enabling management and building capacity at the leadership level is critical. We won't be able to implement this plan without engaged and capable leadership. And we recognise that some of that is needing tools as well.

So then, back to Senator Cunningham's first question, which . . . I'm going to have a quick peek because I got a report last night on which things are already progressing.

*[Pause]*

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** And just because you asked the question, I can't find the report.

*[Laughter]*

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** I can answer by saying . . . I will find it eventually when other questions come. But a number of . . . there are some things that are urgent that can be acted upon immediately, if we put it like that. And so, the recommendations are categorised in the things that we can . . . what you should keep doing, what we should immediately stop doing, and then recommendations that need to be implemented.

So, some of the immediate stop, for example, even when we look at the bifurcation of the role of the Treatment of Offenders Board, that would be easy to immediately do. But we don't have the capacity built up to have the disciplinary action taken in another way. So, there will be some bridging on some of these matters.

Other recommendations go to things, for example, that if prisoners are coming to Hamilton for a court hearing, a recommendation [was] that they should be able to wear their regular clothing. And this

stems from a presumption, particularly around the remand population, that you are not guilty of a crime yet.

So, I think things that go to more of the psychological welfare, there are reflections on recruitment and training, how we do certain things immediately, where there may be one officer involved in a certain kind of movement, where there's a requirement for there to be two. So those are some of the . . . I wouldn't call them low-hanging fruit, because they are things that we could immediately do, but they will have a big impact, but a number of things move together.

So, I'll take your third question, then.

**The President:** It was just the two.

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** All right.

**The President:** Senator Wight?

So, you've addressed the questions, then, on this Statement.

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** Thank you.

**The President:** Thank you.

We'll move on, then, to the second Statement that was delivered by the Minister, and that is the Tabling of the Treatment of Offenders Board and the Parole Board Reports.

Would any Senator care to ask questions on that Statement?

Hearing none, Minister, there appears not to be any questions on that second Statement of yours.

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you.

So, we will move on to the third Statement that was delivered by Senator Lauren Bell, the Junior Minister of Economy and Labour. The title was, The 2026 Census of Population and Housing.

Would any Senator care to ask questions on that Statement?

Senator Cunningham.

### QUESTION 1: CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING 2026

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** Thank you, Madam President, and thank you to the Junior Minister for delivering the Statement.

Obviously, we all understand the importance of the census, which is Census Day today, or tomorrow. [A] question around when we . . . and maybe I completely missed it. But when can we expect to get the finalised report to have those numbers? I know, obviously, there's a great deal of information that is going to be coming in. But I would think, given . . . if I recall 10 years ago, it was someone actually writing down the

responses, so now that it's all electronic and hopefully collected within the next couple of weeks, I would hope that the collection process is somewhat easier.

### QUESTION 2: CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING 2026

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** And my second question, just as a point of interest for anyone in the listening audience, so you are completing this for the property that you live in normally and where you are going to be this evening. What would happen if you owned a secondary property that is, say, empty or [not] inhabited? Would those individuals then fill it out for their property or for their own personal situations? And that's it. Thank you.

And I just want to encourage the listening public and everyone else to complete this because, obviously, it is going to help make those decisions in the future.

**The President:** Mm-hmm.

**Sen. Lauren Bell:** I thank my colleague for those two important questions. Providing clarity to our listening audience is key for this very important initiative. To answer her first question, and her question, again, was, When can we expect the results of the census to be made available?

So just to give you some historical background, in 1991, in the year 2000, and the year 2010, final census results were all released approximately two years after the respective census was launched. And, again, for 2026 census, the Department of Statistics expects that the results will also be released within that two-year window. Just be mindful, preliminary results are expected by December 2027.

The second question was related to where individuals reside typically on the Census Day, which is, again, today, May 20. So, yes, you always respond relative to the residence where you normally reside. So, an individual who owns another property, if that property is being rented, the residents of that property will respond in kind related to that residence. If that property is vacant, that information is also captured during the census. I hope that provides an appropriate response. Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator Bell.

And we will now entertain questions on Senator Bell's second Statement, the [Pay] Transparency Policy: Public Consultation.

Vice President John Wight, you have the floor.

### QUESTION 1: PAY TRANSPARENCY POLICY: PUBLIC CONSULTATION

**Sen. John Wight:** Thank you, Madam President.

I'm all in favour of fair and equitable salary practices for all Bermudians and guest workers. At the

same time, we don't want anything put in legislation that's onerous for our employers, especially those in international business.

So, having heard the six objectives that the Junior Minister outlined, I don't want to speak on behalf of international business, but I could potentially see at least one of those issues, if not more, causing some concern. As we know, international business drives our economy. Bermuda is already a high-cost jurisdiction in which to do business, and we certainly do not want any new legislation to be the tipping point for any jobs either lost in Bermuda or new ones not being created here.

So, I would just be curious to hear over time the feedback Government receives from all stakeholders, but particularly international business. Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator, Vice President John Wight.

**Sen. Lauren Bell:** Madam President, I recognise that Senator Wight didn't actually pose a question to me, but I just want to reiterate the theme throughout the Statement I made here today. The consultation process that the Government is currently conducting is [that] we are committed to having a consultation process that is collaborative and constructive. And we recognise the importance of striking a balance between the two factors, ensuring fairness and equity for employees, and we also recognise the importance of balancing the burden on the employer.

So, I recognise the concern that was raised by the Senator, but I want to give him assurances that the consultation process is deeply committed to ensuring collaboration between our key stakeholders, and we are encouraging all members of the community to participate in this consultation process.

Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator Bell.

Senator Cunningham, you have an additional question?

### **QUESTION 1: PAY TRANSPARENCY POLICY: PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** Thank you, Madam President, and thank you, Junior Minister.

You mentioned the labour inspectors from the department that are already in place. Will there be a requirement for additional resources to be allocated, and I guess where would they come from?

### **QUESTION 2: PAY TRANSPARENCY POLICY: PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** Secondly, will this policy apply across all labour categories, so part-time versus full-time, temporary contract, guest worker versus

Bermudian worker? And secondary to that, will it include things such as bonuses, commissions, benefits within those requirements?

### **QUESTION 3: PAY TRANSPARENCY POLICY: PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** And third and finally, I think, how will Government ensure that employee pay privacy is protected and respected? Thank you.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator Cunningham.

**Sen. Lauren Bell:** Again, Madam President, I thank my colleagues for these thoughtful questions. A lot of these answers are still up for determination, and a lot of that will be fed based on the detailed consultation that we are currently conducting. There is a recognition that this may require additional resources, but again, those details won't come until we have a clear understanding of what final policy and legislation is going to be included.

The question about bonuses, et cetera, I believe was also asked in another place and was duly answered, so again, that information will be determined once we conclude our consultation.

*[Crosstalk]*

**Sen. Lauren Bell:** Thank you.

*[Pause]*

**The President:** Is that a satisfactory answer to the questions?

Are there any further questions?

Senators, we will now move on to the questions that were presented for today. And these were questions that were presented for oral responses to parliamentary questions from Senator David Rogers, who . . . we have apologies from him, and therefore, I will call on Senator Victoria Cunningham to present these questions, and that will be to Junior Minister for Health.

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** Thank you, Madam President, and I would like to apologise for Senator David Rogers' absence.

### **QUESTION 1: EMERGENCY ROOM CHRONIC OVERCROWDING**

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** To start, so the first question to Senator Lauren Bell for oral response.

Can the Junior Minister please provide the Senate with the Ministry of Health's plan to systematically address chronic overcrowding in the Emergency Department at KEMH, considering that the Bermuda Hospitals Board appears to be approximately \$30 million in debt?

**Sen. Lauren Bell:** Madam President, can I request that all the questions be tabled first, and then I'll provide a response? Thank you.

**The President:** Absolutely.  
Senator Cunningham, would you—

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** So just the first three or all of them?

**Sen. Lauren Bell:** Yes, if you could do all of them.

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** Okay.

**Sen. Lauren Bell:** Thank you.

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** Okay.

### QUESTION 2: EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT PATIENT CAPACITY

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** The second question on behalf of Senator Rogers was:

Can the Junior Minister please provide the Senate with what the intended patient capacity of the Emergency Department without boarding is, as well as what the actual capacity is when boarding occurs in hallways and overflow areas?

### QUESTION 3: EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT PROCEDURES FOR EMERGENCY ROOM PATIENTS TO RECEIVE DIGNITY, ADEQUATE PRIVACY AND BASIC HYGIENE DAILY

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** And the third question:

Can the Junior Minister please explain what systems and processes are currently in place to ensure that boarded patients in the Emergency Department are treated with dignity, adequate privacy and basic hygiene on a daily basis?

I will continue with the three questions posed by myself.

### QUESTION 1: EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT EXTERNAL OPERATIONAL REVIEW

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** Given . . . again, [question] to Senator Lauren Bell for oral response:

Given repeated public assurances that an external operational review of the Emergency Department at KEMH is being treated as a matter of urgency, can the Junior Minister please inform the Senate when the external operational assessment was formally commissioned, by whom, and under what terms of reference?

### QUESTION 2: EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT EXTERNAL OPERATIONAL REVIEW

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** Question number two:

In relation to the external operational review of the Emergency Department, can the Junior Minister please confirm whether the scope of the review will explicitly address concerns about patient care and health being directly affected by prolonged boarding, overcrowding, or delays in care?

### QUESTION 3: ACUTE CARE BED DAYS LOST DUE TO DELAYED DISCHARGES

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** And question three:  
Can the Junior Minister please inform the Senate how many acute care bed days were lost in the past year due to delayed discharges and what the estimated financial impact was?

And I will turn over now to my colleague.

**The President:** Yes. Thank you Senator Cunningham.  
And we will now entertain questions from Senator Tarik Smith.

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** Madam President, just a point of order.

**The President:** Yes.

### POINT OF ORDER

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** I would ask Senator Smith to remove the last [question], number three. It is not a parliamentary question, Madam President. It's not a question at all.

**The President:** Senator Tarik Dunbar Smith, did you hear that?

**Sen. Tarik Smith:** Yes, I did, Madam President.

**The President:** We will remove question number three.

**Sen. Tarik Smith:** Question number three. Okay. Thank you, Madam Attorney General, and no problem with that at all.

Good afternoon . . . I'm sorry, good morning to the listening audience.

Madam President, I do have a few questions for Senator Lauren F. Bell to provide oral responses to parliamentary questions.

### QUESTION 1: LONG-TERM CARE AND STEP- DOWN BED AVAILABILITY

**Sen. Tarik Smith:** Question one:

Can the Junior Minister please inform the Senate how many long-term care and step-down beds are currently available island-wide, and how does this compare with Bermuda Hospitals Board's projected demand over the next five years?

## QUESTION 2: EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT SURGE CAPACITY PLANS

**Sen. Tarik Smith:** Second question.

Can the Junior Minister please inform the Senate what surge capacity plans are in place to manage seasonal demand, infectious disease outbreaks, or mass casualty events when the Emergency Department at King Edward Memorial Hospital is already operating at full capacity?

Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator [Tarik] Dunbar Smith.

We will await a response from Senator Bell.

**Sen. Lauren Bell:** Thank you, Madam President, and I thank my Senate colleagues for those questions.

Madam President, I just want to advise that the answers to the questions posed here today are currently in the public domain.

**The President:** Senator Cunningham.

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** Madam President, thank you.

Is that the answer to all questions?

**Sen. Lauren Bell:** Correct. That's the answer to all of the questions posed here today.

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** So then can I beg . . . can we ask supplemental questions to the original questions based on what has been released in the press today if it's not been given to this Chamber?

**The President:** Senator Bell.

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** Madam President, those would be different questions, not supplemental. And it is our position that if Senator Cunningham has new questions, then they should be put as new questions.

**The President:** Senator Cunningham.

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** Well, certainly following review of the information that is now in the public domain, which effectively pre-empts the questions.

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** As an example, the first question was about the plan to address overcrowding. I would ask about how these are going to be achieved.

### POINT OF ORDER

**Sen. Lindsay Simmons:** Point of order, Madam President.

She can't ask new questions that are written. We already gave an answer to that. If she's got other questions, she needs to write these questions in.

**The President:** Submit them separately.

**Sen. Lindsay Simmons:** She has to present them separately.

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** These are [supplemental.]

**Sen. Lindsay Simmons:** You cannot [ask] supplemental questions that have already been given.

**The President:** Not on these. They are written oral responses.

**Sen. Lindsay Simmons:** The answers are already in the public domain, so you can get the answers and then ask different questions. You cannot ask supplemental questions that's already in the public domain.

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** Okay. We will look forward to the next Senate session.

**The President:** With that, Senators, then the questions have been addressed. As it has been indicated that the answers to the questions that have been posed for response today are in the public domain, and so, therefore, there will be no further questions this morning.

We will now move on.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

**The President:** And that is the second reading of the Single-Use Plastics Act 2026, and that is in the name of Senator Mischa Fubler, the Junior Minister of Public Works and the Environment.

Senator Fubler, when you are ready, you can present your Bill.

**Sen. Mischa Fubler:** Thank you, Madam President.

I move that the Bill entitled the Single-Use Plastics Act 2026 be now read a second time.

**The President:** Is there any objection to that motion?  
No objection.

**Sen. Mischa Fubler:** Excellent.  
Madam President—

[Crosstalk]

**Sen. Mischa Fubler:** Oh, correct. I think so.

I do need to move that we suspend a Standing Order . . . I'm just looking at my notes to confirm which one it is since we only tabled the Bill this morning.

[Crosstalk]

**Sen. Mischa Fubler:** Yes. Thank you.

[Laughter]

## STANDING ORDER 25

**Sen. Mischa Fubler:** Madam President, I move that [the provisions of] Standing Order 25, in respect of this Bill, be granted.

**The President:** Is there any objection to that motion?  
No objection.

[Motion carried: Leave granted for the Single-Use Plastics Act 2026 to be read a second time on the same day as its first reading.]

**Sen. Mischa Fubler:** Apologies. Thank you, Madam President. And so, on that note, I will now begin.

## BILL

### SECOND READING

#### SINGLE-USE PLASTICS ACT 2026

**Sen. Mischa Fubler:** Madam President, I rise today to open the debate on the Bill entitled the [Single-Use Plastics Act \[2026\]](#). For years, Bermudians have spoken passionately about the need to protect our Island home from the growing tide of plastic pollution. Our children have raised it in classrooms. Divers and fishermen have raised it from the sea-floor. Environmental groups have raised it in community forums. This is because plastic does not disappear, and that is the challenge before us.

Madam President, every year approximately 11 million tonnes of plastic enters our oceans. It's the equivalent of a garbage truck of plastic being dumped into the sea every single minute. It is also key to note that half of all plastic produced is used once and discarded, and less than 10 per cent has ever been recycled.

Microplastics are accumulating on our beaches and throughout our marine ecosystem. Much of the plastic that reaches our shores originated somewhere else, and we are the ones who must live with the consequences. As organisations like Beyond Plastics Bermuda have highlighted, this issue is not just about the environment. It is about human health, our tourism economy, and it is about our responsibility. And now, Madam President, this Government is taking the next deliberate step to address this issue.

Madam President, the Bill before this Chamber today is designed not to ban every item overnight, but to establish the legal framework for Bermuda's transition away from the most harmful single-use plastics through consultation, science, and a phased, responsible approach.

Put simply, it creates the legislative structure we need to regulate single-use plastics effectively and sustainably. It empowers the Government to add items to a schedule only after consultation, only after listening to stakeholders, and only after determining that alternatives are viable for both our environment and our economy. The Bill provides the Minister with the ability to prohibit specific single-use plastics by adding them to a Schedule, but only where viable and cost-effective alternatives exist.

It's important to note that this safeguard is fundamental. No item can be prohibited unless the Government is satisfied that businesses and consumers have practical alternatives available, and even then, there are built-in timelines to allow for adjustment.

Madam President, I am also aware that some may look at this Bill and point to the empty Schedule and suggest that it lacks substance. So, allow me to address that directly.

The Schedule is empty by design. This legislation is about putting the framework in place first, ensuring that when we act, we do so based on evidence, consultation, and real-world conditions. The Ministry of Public Works and Environment is fully aware that there has already been significant consultation over several years. That engagement has directly informed the structure and safeguards within this Bill. The consultation that follows is not repetition; it is progression. Simply put, our prior consultation shaped the policy, and the upcoming consultation will shape the implementation.

Madam President, let me be clear about the immediate plan going forward. Subject to the passage of this Bill, the Ministry intends to commence formal consultation within 60 days. That consultation is expected to run for approximately 8 to 12 weeks, after which the Ministry will potentially bring forward the first item or items for consideration to be added to the Schedule.

Now, Madam President, allow me to explain in practical terms how this will work. When the Government proposes to prohibit a specific single-use plastic, a notice of intention must first be published. That notice will outline the item being considered, the proposed restriction, and the alternatives available.

From that point, there is a minimum six-month period where businesses, importers, and the public will have the opportunity to provide feedback, identify challenges, and suggest improvements. Only where viable and cost-effective alternatives exist can a prohibition order be made. Once that order is made, a further six-month transition period begins. So, in practical terms, Madam President, we are looking at at least 12 months between notice and full implementation. This ensures clarity, fairness, and predictability.

Madam President, I also want to take this opportunity to clarify a few things. The first is that this legislation is focused primarily on commercial activity. It regulates the importation, sale, and supply of single-use plastics, not personal use. Items already in

personal possession are not the target of enforcement. The Bill also goes beyond importation. Once an item is prohibited, it cannot be imported, sold, or supplied, ensuring it is removed from circulation.

Madam President, decisions on what to prohibit will not be arbitrary. They will be guided by the Director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, informed by consultation, and based on whether alternatives are both available and reasonably affordable. It is also important that the system remains flexible. If it is demonstrated that alternatives are not viable, there is a process to review and even remove items from the prohibited list.

Madam President, this will be a phased approach. We will begin with items that are widely recognised as low-impact and easily replaceable, and then move to more complex items over time, and we will support businesses through that transition.

I am pleased to confirm that the Ministry of Finance has agreed to provide customs duty relief on approved alternatives, helping to reduce costs. Details of this duty relief will be finalised through the upcoming consultation and made public before any items are prohibited.

Madam President, I have also heard concerns over the quality of alternative options, and so I would like to take this opportunity to remind the public that the quality of alternative options is improving. There are now products made from plant-based and other materials that closely replicate the look, feel, and function of traditional plastics. The transition we are proposing today is more practical than ever before. Madam President, this is how a responsible Government operates. We set the direction, we engage the stakeholders, we phase the implementation, and we support the transition.

In closing, Madam President, this legislation presents Bermuda with a measured and credible path forward, a direction that protects our natural heritage, gives businesses time to adapt, and reflects the expectations of a public that wants practical action. It is a balanced proposal, rooted in evidence and shaped by consultation, and it signals our determination to leave a cleaner, stronger island for future generations.

Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** And thank you, Senator Mischa Fubler, Junior Minister of Public Works and Environment.

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

### SENATE VISITORS

**The President:** And, Senators, before I open the floor for questions, I would just like to acknowledge and welcome to the Chamber, Mr. Stephen Symons, the Policy Analyst for Public Works and Environment, and his colleague.

*[Single-Use Plastics Act 2026, second reading debate, continuing]*

**The President:** Would any Senator care to speak on this Bill?

Yes, Senator Victoria Cunningham, you have the floor.

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** Thank you, Madam President, and thank you to the Junior Minister for his commentary. I would say overall we're generally supportive of this Bill.

Ultimately, I believe it was in the Throne Speech back in 2018, but the Opposition have also been pushing this for some time. I think it is important to point out what this Bill will and won't do, though, and ultimately consider the consequences for Bermuda. I mean, I think, you know, we can look back. I now have a million bags for life, because every time I forget one, I got to buy another one. And so, you know, they just seem to get passed around like gift bags do now. And I think we have also come to recognise paper straws versus plastic straws in a lot of places.

But I think a main concern is around small businesses, where I would say the majority of our single-use plastic is coming from. And so I think a question would be how are we going to ensure . . . and I understand the whole consultation period and process, but the compliance costs for small businesses when you look at things like supply chain disruptions, things that are outside of our controls in Bermuda, and specifically around maybe increased freight costs if we're using, let's say, glass over plastic. So, I think from that perspective the cost-effective alternatives may not actually be that cost-effective when we look at, you know, the implications of being in Bermuda.

And I think a second question would be around, Is Bermuda set up to be able to reduce the rest of the waste? Without specifically knowing what we would be looking at in a consultation, I guess I can't specifically suggest, but I think most individuals are aware of the eco-friendly movement and the impacts of plastics.

But if these are going to ultimately end up being more waste rather than just having a single-use cup, being bulkier waste to replace these things, is our current Tynes Bay, for example, our recycling facilities going to be able to deal with them? And I think overall, this is a good thing for Bermuda. Ultimately, we are not the ones who are dumping the garbage truck of plastic into the ocean every minute, although that was quite a staggering figure. But I look forward to seeing where this ends up and how it impacts our global footprint or our plastic footprint, should I say. Thank you.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator Cunningham.

Would any other Senator . . . Yes, Vice President John Wight, you have the floor.

**Sen. John Wight:** Thank you, Madam President.

I recognise this Bill is a framework only at this stage, and the details will follow the consultative process with all impacted stakeholders. So, in theory, it's hard not to be in favour of the direction that Bermuda is heading with legislation restricting the use of single-use plastics.

We know that over 90 countries around the world have either banned or strictly reduced the use of plastics, including Canada, the UK, [and the] European Union. So, while the use of plastics has been around for over 100 years and has some obvious benefits to its use, I think we now much better understand the impact it has on our environment and potentially on our health. So, I'm very much in favour, at this point, of this Bill. Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you, Vice President John Wight. Would any other Senator care to speak on this Bill?

Minister Wilkerson.

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** Thank you, Madam President.

I just take the opportunity to publicly signal my support for this Bill, and that comes from a Governmental . . . as Senator Cunningham said, it's been in the Throne Speech since 2018. When we think about small businesses, this is not a new direction. Right?

**The President:** Mm-hmm.

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** There are opportunities to examine technologies, to look at alternatives, and I think this process with a framework is respectful of that.

But before I move on, Madam President, I want to acknowledge by name my colleague sitting there, our amazing drafter, Alisha Wilson. And she is the drafter of this piece of legislation. And I would say when we were at the table with this, she's certainly like myself. We were like, *It's just a framework*. We really want to do more. We want to see plastics banned now before summer. And that is really the ethos.

I live on the coast, Madam President. I'm collecting plastics on a regular basis. And when, you know, we know that there is dumping that may not involve Bermudians, but when it is plastic forks, plastic spoons, things of that nature, are washing up on a small local beach, we know that they came from here and not from afar, very likely.

**The President:** Mm-hmm.

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** And so, the opportunity, even though it is a framework, I think this framework helps us to lean into the future and have those conversations. And certainly, the holiday is upon us, and people will be taking the opportunity to go out and picnic and things of that sort. And people can say,

*When you come to my picnic, do not bring any plastics that are not reusable.*

I had the opportunity, Madam President, and maybe lately people have been doing it, to travel on BermudAir. And I was completely excited to get a glass that was a glass. And their recycling campaign where they are going to be using recycled materials to make their glasses on board and to have coffee in a china cup that I knew was going to be reused. Those things were delights for me, and they should be becoming the standard, the common standard that we come to expect.

So, with those comments, Madam President, I just want to say I am excited that we are taking the first step with the framework, and I'm very much looking forward to seeing the Schedules populated in due course. Thank you.

**The President:** Thank you, Minister Wilkerson, and thank you for introducing the draftsman here. Welcome to you.

Would any Senator . . . any other Senator care to ask questions or make a comment on this Bill?

No?

[Junior] Minister Fubler, you seem to have full support.

**Sen. Mischa Fubler:** Thank you, Madam President.

It does appear that way, but I will take a moment to engage with the kind of thought exercise, as it were, posed by my colleague from across the aisle with the reusable bags.

**The President:** Yes.

**Sen. Mischa Fubler:** Hopefully we are getting better at remembering to bring them. I know we keep a set in the car for when we travel to the store to kind of help with that. Although, I [have] got to admit now and then I do get into the store without the bags, and then I am faced with the [question]: *Well, do I go back and get them?* or whatever. But, you know, that changes over time as your culture shifts around reusable items, which I think this Bill helps to do.

In the paper straw space, I mean, personally, I would just rather not use a straw. Just give me a cup that I can drink out of. I know there are cases where you kind of need one. Sure, I would recommend alternatives to paper, like bamboo, as an example. It is a lot more resilient. Those paper ones do get kind of mushy.

And in that space as well, [it is] important to highlight that there are admittedly mostly larger organisations that have already started to shift. Those of you that use some of the, like, chain restaurants, you will see that their straws and utensils and packaging have shifted. But be curious in that space because some paper items, like paper cups, still do have a plastic liner on the inside. So, it is less plastic, but it is still plastic.

And I just want to take a moment to kind of hit on the impact of the environment in the personal sense. We are part of the environment, of course, but micro-plastics in our bodies have a significant negative impact on its operation. And while we are 21 square miles in the middle of the ocean, who are we to request that these larger polluters change their approach to waste if we are not willing to do the same? And so, I think we can agree that is a good thing that we are doing here.

And [in regard to] glass over plastic, I like that idea. Actually, my at-home containers are largely glass. They handle the microwave a bit better. But you can look to other countries that have found solutions in that space. Like when I was doing some research on it, Korea has kind of a private food delivery system where you can request reusable containers. And so, when the food gets to your house, then you wash them out, [and] you leave them outside. Someone will come pick them up to go back into that system of use. And maybe that is not for you, but you could also take your own containers to the restaurant. I am hearing that KFC allows reusable containers. I do not eat at KFC, so I am not familiar with that.

*[Laughter]*

**Sen. Mischa Fubler:** But that sounds great. I support it. And the not cost-effective . . . I encourage you to think broader. The financial cost, yes, there are a few pennies, maybe even a dollar more per item. But you also need to calculate the cost on our environment, on the waste.

Maybe several years ago now, I saw a news segment where they talked about the average amount of waste that Bermudians create. And it is astounding for such a small place to be creating so much of it and kind of feeding into roadside debris. If we are reducing the number of single-use plastics that are in circulation, there are fewer things ending up in the bushes on the side of the road because you are not going to throw silverware out. I mean, I hope you are not going to throw silverware out.

And then another tip [is to] change your culture as well. I keep in my briefcase a little pouch of reusable utensils in the instances where I do find myself taking out. And that helps as well. Or the reusable straw if you are really attached to straws and you do not like the paper ones.

But to the other questions, like around the capacity, I am being assured by my technical officers that we do indeed have enough capacity at Tynes Bay to handle the waste. And in the recycling space particularly, it is unfortunate that many jurisdictions struggle to make recycling programmes profitable. I would argue they should not need to be, but generally they are not. But increased demand for recycling will help to expand the programme. As we are doing our budgeting for the year, if more people are recycling, that will give us justification to expand that programme.

And to the small businesses, again, I would just like to highlight the duty relief that will be provided for alternatives to these single-use plastics. And on that, as was mentioned in my brief, you know this is also helping to shift our culture around using disposable items. And so, I encourage everyone to give that some thought and try to change your own approach to how you go about your day.

And on that note, Madam President, I do move that the Bill be read a second time.

**The President:** Is there any objection to that motion?  
No objection.

**Sen. Mischa Fubler:** Thank you, Madam President.

### SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 26

**Sen. Mischa Fubler:** I move that [Standing Order] 26 be suspended in respect of this Bill.

**The President:** Is there any objection to that motion?  
No objection.

*[Motion carried: Standing Order 26 suspended.]*

**Sen. Mischa Fubler:** Thank you, Madam President.  
I move that the Bill entitled the Single-Use Plastics Act 2026 be now read a third time.

**The President:** Is there any objection to a third reading?  
No objection.

## BILL

### THIRD READING

#### SINGLE-USE PLASTICS ACT 2026

**Sen. Mischa Fubler:** Thank you, Madam President.  
I move that the Bill do now pass.

**The President:** It has been moved that the Bill entitled the Single-Use Plastics Act 2026 do now pass.  
Is there any objection to the passage of the Bill?

No objection.  
The Bill is passed.

*[Motion carried: The Single-Use Plastics Act 2026 was given a third reading and passed.]*

**The President:** Thank you, Senator Mischa Fubler, Junior Minister of Public Works and Environment, and to all Senators.

We will now move on with our agenda.

## MOTIONS

**The President:** There are none.

## CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

**The President:** Would any Senator . . .  
Vice President John Wight, you have the floor.

**Sen. John Wight:** Thank you, Madam President.

Just a couple of condolences, one to the family of the late Earl Leader. Anyone involved in tennis over many, many decades in Bermuda would either know Earl personally or know of Earl. He taught both my daughters how to play tennis at the Southampton Princess tennis courts many years ago. And I was certainly shocked and saddened when I heard of his passing. He was a true gentleman in every sense of the word. So, I would like to pass on my condolences to the family.

Secondly, to the family of the late Maria Perry, to her husband John, children Edward, Lynn, and to a very good friend of our families, Leila Madeiros, who is the daughter of Maria. So those are my two obituaries, my two condolences.

Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator John Wight.

Would any other Senator?

Yes, Senator Lindsay Simmons, you have the floor.

**Sen. Lindsay Simmons:** Thank you, Madam President.

I would like to congratulate all the graduates of Bermuda College. It was amazing to be in the room. I know it was not the graduation that most people wanted to attend because they had to be in separate rooms, but I want to congratulate every graduate. I do want to congratulate Callahj Simons, who is 17 years old. And she gave a phenomenal speech that was moving. And she might have been the youngest graduate, if I am not mistaken, because she started school early. She is 17, and she is just a phenomenal young lady who speaks well. And I want to shout out to her mother, Ashley Smith, for continually pouring into her daughter. Our future is bright because of her and the amazing graduates who graduated last week. I was glad to be a part of it, and I look forward to the high school graduations coming up. Congratulations to all the graduates.

Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator Lindsay Simmons.

Would any other Senator care . . .

Senator Cunningham, Victoria Cunningham, proceed please.

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** Thank you, Madam President.

I would like to add to Senator Simmons' comments about Bermuda College. I was also there. I, as part of faculty, sat in a classroom watching it on television, which was quite interesting, but nonetheless [I am] inspired and proud of every single student that walked across the—well, I guess it was not a stage, but across the—bottom of the Athene Lecture Theatre. And Senator Simmons mentioned Callahj. I also want to mention Gino Smith, who was actually the first BFIS [Bermuda Foundation for Insurance Studies] scholar, which is my organisation, and he did a great speech kind of talking about how, you know, what you think might happen might not happen. You just have to push yourself out there out of your comfort zone. So well done to both Gino and Callahj and to all of the graduating students.

I was really excited to see the number of dual-enrolment students that there were, with the majority of them getting merits and distinctions. So, I think hopefully the future is looking bright. I think Bermuda College is on the right track with their strategic plan.

And along with Bermuda College students, we have obviously got a load of other returning graduates and just university students returning home for the summer. My LinkedIn feed is full of internships and summer jobs. And so, I would like to congratulate all of those, as well as the private and government programmes that are putting these students into work experience programmes for the summer.

And I also want to congratulate Josh Samuels and his OUTBermuda team. There were a number of us from this Chamber there last Friday for the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia on Friday. I think . . . I mean, the weather was not the best. I mean, that was the same for Bermuda College graduation. But I think it showed the community support for OUTBermuda and what Josh and his team are planning on doing. And I was proud to be in attendance at that. So, congratulations to OUTBermuda.

Thank you.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator Cunningham.

Would any other Senator care to speak?

Senator Fubler, you have the floor.

**Sen. Mischa Fubler:** Thank you, Madam President.

I will take some time, as it has been quite a while since we met and a lot has happened that deserves congratulations.

But starting off with condolences to the family of Ms. Florence Pearman of Rose Hill Road in Southampton on her recent passing. I am sure she will be missed.

And then on to congratulations. Of course, I would like to associate myself with the Bermuda College graduation as well as OUTBermuda's event to

stand in solidarity with the world in standing against biphobia, homophobia, and transphobia.

And I also would like to congratulate the student recipients of the first Martin Luther King (MLK) and Progressive Group Youth Awards, which were hosted at Bermuda College a couple of weeks ago. Some really promising young folks. They met with a panel who discussed kind of the implications of MLK's less popular, maybe less notable, speech *Beyond Vietnam*—[A Time to Break Silence] and the need for us to change our mind-set on how we engage or accept global conflict. Very timely, given current international events.

And moving on [to] our CARIFTA athletes, again, we have not met since they had significant success in those. And so, I captured a few; there are many, though. But notable [is] Miles Outerbridge, who won gold in the under-20 boys 100 metres and set a national record with 10.21 seconds. That is notable. It is also the fourth fastest ever time at the event—also notable, punching above our weight there in the sport. And at that time, records stood for 30 years prior, being held by DeVon Bean.

Moving on to our next gold medallists, the ladies in the 4x100 relay, Teagan Mewett, Marleigh Howes, Katherine Wheddon, and Violet Smith. Originally second, notably, but Martinique was disqualified. And as such, we take the gold, and a win is a win. And so, congratulations.

Also, Sanchez Smith, the under-17 boys, three kilometres. We won the silver. Rory Shepherd, also taking silver in the 13–14 boys 50 metres backstroke. And Teagan again, Teagan Mewett, bronze in 15–17-year-old girls 200 metres breaststroke. And also, [she is] the daughter of a Bermudian Olympian, kind of highlighting the importance of having people you can relate to in the things you aspire to do, like representation matters, right? Direct example there.

Also, Connor Hupman and Violet Smith, who were fourth in the 5–17 boys and girls 50 metres backstroke.

Also, not CARIFTA, but still sports, Pria Wilson at the IMG Academy Invitational. I saw that in the paper. Congratulations to her on three gold medals in the 100, 200, and 4x100 races.

Moving away from track and field, but still within sport, I would like to highlight a great friend of mine and long-time supporter of the Progressive Labour Party, Mr. Roderick “Roddy” Burchell, who received the Bermuda Football Association's Order of Merit, which the paper highlighted as its highest distinction. Congratulations to him for life-long service, especially in the realm of football.

Shifting into tourism, I would like to extend congratulations to Tobacco Bay, who apparently is the number two Caribbean beach on TripAdvisor. All right. And that is based on user feedback. Yes, I think most of us that are more local are surprised by that hesitation. But, you know, there is a restaurant, and there are [a] beach and chairs. And it is a little smaller. And it is

well protected from the waves. I understand the snorkelling there is quite good, but again, not somewhere that I frequent. But nonetheless, congratulations to them.

And on that note, Madam President, I yield my time. Thank you.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator Fubler.

And I did note Senator Lauren Bell wanted to speak, so you have the floor, Senator Bell.

**Sen. Lauren Bell:** Thank you, Madam President.

I would like to be associated with the congratulations to Brother “Roddy” Burchell with his recent recognition. It is a phenomenal and a well-deserved recognition for his contribution.

I also would like to be associated with the congratulations surrounding Bermuda College's recent graduation, and also the recognition of the phenomenal job that was done by Callahj in her remarks during the graduation ceremony. My congratulations do extend, of course, to all graduates. Whenever you are in these spaces, you get the reassurance that Bermuda's future is in very, very good hands.

I would like to take a minute with your permission, Madam President, to just also highlight the accomplishment of my son, because I, too, was in the audience in a separate room watching from a screen. It did not detract from the momentous occasion. My son managed to graduate with distinction and was given an award for the highest GPA for his programme. So, again, [I am] an incredibly proud mom. I joined many, many proud parents and supporters for our graduates.

I want to highlight the phenomenal work that is being done by the entire Bermuda College team, and special recognition to the College Promise Programme. Without it, many of our very noteworthy students would not be able to have access to higher education.

I also want to congratulate those that were part of the production of *Transforming the Beautiful Game: The Clyde Best Story*. I had the honour and privilege, like many, many people did—because it was sold out every night—to be in attendance and was joined by my family. It was a phenomenal opportunity to be able to, one, celebrate the amazing accomplishments of Clyde Best, and it was also a great opportunity to expose my children to an important part of Bermuda's history, oftentimes the dark and not discussed dark history of the racism that was prevalent at that time, not only in Bermuda but around the world. So, I want to congratulate all those who were part of the project. It was a phenomenal, phenomenal production.

Finally, I want to take a moment to recognise the life of Brother Harold Leon Minors. Now, Brother Harold Leon Minors was recognised in another place by many of the parliamentary colleagues on both sides of the floor, and it was phenomenal as a colleague of Brother Minor's to see the outpouring that came towards his family due to his passing. Brother Harold was

a very quiet, humble, meek individual, and to see the recognition that he received for the works that he has done in the community was definitely heartwarming. Brother Minors was a very gifted sportsman, excelling in nearly every discipline he chose to pursue. He was an avid cricketer, softball player, was in the bowling league, and represented Bermuda in badminton, which was, of course, his favourite sport.

He was deeply, deeply committed to supporting Bermuda's youth. In fact, he worked for over 40 years in what was known as [the] Bermuda Youth Centre, now known as Sammy Wilson Central Zone Community Centre. He has had a major impact on so many of our youth who have passed through the centre, and that was reflected in his homecoming ceremony that was held on Saturday, in addition to the block party that was held in his honour. There was a block party that spanned between the youth centre and [the] Bermuda Public Services Union, where Brother Minors was my work colleague.

So, I extend my deepest condolences to his wife, Carmen, his son, Aaron, and his daughters, Natasha and Helena. And we are offering you up in our prayers regularly.

Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator Lauren Bell.

Would any other Senator care to speak?

Yes, Senator Tarik Dunbar Smith, you have the floor.

**Sen. Tarik Smith:** Thank you, Madam President. I will be quick. I just have a few congratulatory announcements for us.

I want to associate myself with the CARIFTA congratulations that Senator Fubler did bring out. It is wonderful to see such a small island compete on such a major, major level because as we know, some of the other islands, their athletes have been fantastic world record holders over the years. In fact, Usain Bolt first hit the track as far as worldwide down up at the Flora Duffy [South Field] Stadium [and Track] many years ago.

So also, I want to sing out Sanchez Smith, as [the Senator] did mention. I coached Sanchez at North Village [Community Club] for many years, so congratulations to Sanchez on his triathlon medal.

Also, I would like to congratulate Skye Furbert from West Pembroke school, who set a record in the under-9 girls 100 metres dash at interschool sports a few weeks ago. I think it is important that that is highlighted because that is a big, big thing for this young lady. She has a bright future ahead, and hopefully one day will be a CARIFTA athlete.

Moving on, I also would like to associate myself, as Senator Bell said. I too was in attendance for the Clyde Best documentary. And as I say as a Bermudian, I hope that a Netflix or someone (I think Senator Bell can agree.) will pick this documentary up because

it is so fascinating and touching. And the things that, as I call him, Sir Clyde (when I do see him as a footballer) went through impacts anyone's heart. [It] does not matter where you are from or what you look like. So, it was fantastic and done so well, and credit to the person from another place who may sit in the chair behind you, Madam President, and his crew for getting the ball rolling on that documentary.

**The President:** Yes.

**Sen. Tarik Smith:** As Bermuda Day approaches on Friday, it is important that I single out one of the grand marshals, Tawana Lee.

*[Desk thumping]*

**Sen. Tarik Smith:** I have known Tawana since September 1985. She has had the unfortunate position of being in every class from Gilbert Institute through to The Berkeley Institute with me—I mean every class, not even just in the year, every single class. And Tawana has given herself to majorettes and drum lines since I can imagine. I was probably in Gilbert Institute when I first remember her at Warwick Majorettes. She has branched out, and now she is at PHC [Pembroke Hamilton Club], and they are fantastic. They are the old school, what we love to see as Bermudians in the parade. And it is such an honour as a friend of Tawana to see her as a grand marshal.

And also, congratulations to other grand marshals. I do not know them personally, but congratulations to all the grand marshals. But Tawana, I am so proud of you. And keep up the good work because you provide so many avenues for young women and young men who may want to join the majorettes or the band corps. So, keep it up, Tawana. Congratulations for that.

Moving on, my favourite sport of course [is] football. Congratulations to the North Village Community Football Club Rams as we won our third FA Cup in four years during the break. [It was a] very proud moment for me as a coach. And yes, who! It was a tough one, but I am happy. And thank you to President DeVrae Tankard and the North Village Board and committee for putting their trust in me and the other coaches over this past season.

And the final football congratulatory is to all Arsenal fans throughout the world—

*[Laughter]*

**Sen. Tarik Smith:** —[for] whom yesterday our long 22 years of suffering ended. I . . . Listen, Madam President, I have cried in this Chamber, and I cried in my living room yesterday as Manchester City was unsuccessful in beating Bournemouth and brought us Arsenal fans, who I believe there are a few in these Chambers, our first league title since 2004. I have on my Arsenal pin today. I cannot emphasise where I am now

looking to buy a ticket to go to the parade on May 31 in London because I do not think I can miss such a moment. So, congratulations to all the Arsenal fans, and thank you to Arsenal Football Club (if you are listening over there in the UK) for bringing us joy because you have brought us a lot of pain and suffering over the last few years.

And of course, as always, I always give my Roman update. Roman completed his professional club trial. Unfortunately, on Monday, he was unsuccessful. We had a meeting, but it was not because of his ability, more so for his size as he is only 15 and he went up against 18- and 19-year-olds for eight weeks. But the coaches said he was fantastic. His attitude was wonderful. His manners were wonderful. [That] was due to the upbringing that his mother . . . And I would associate myself with [that], and my parents, and his other grandparents as well. We do not learn a lot from success, Madam President, but we do learn a lot from failure if we take the feedback as positive feedback. And Roman will grow, so his size will improve. And he just needs to work on working on the speed of game because the professional football is no joke.

With those comments, I thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator Tarik Dunbar Smith.

Senator Lindsay Simmons, you—

**Sen. Lindsay Simmons:** Madam President, I beg your indulgence. I apologise, but it would be remiss of me not to congratulate Loyal Hill. Madam President, Loyal Hill has done it again. Every year, they get bigger and better. Since COVID-19, they have their pre-Bermuda Day parade. They had it on Sunday. And I want to thank Shawnette Easton, Renee Benjamin, Oshanda Lightbourne, and their team. They went over and beyond. It was a beautiful day. Hundreds of people were up there, and it was just a great family day. They had vendors. They had PHC Majorettes. Congratulations to my cousin Tawana for carrying that through. And the Gombeyes came. They had floats.

They actually had Mr. and Ms. Loyal Hill, and also Mr. and Miss Incubator. So, congratulations to Shawnette Easton for being Mrs. Loyal Hill [and] Mr. Dennis O'Brien for being Mr. Loyal Hill. We have D'esta Ascento for being Miss Incubator. And Mr. Franklin Simons for being Mr. Incubator. Congratulations to them and Loyal Hill. You should be proud of yourself. Communities around Bermuda should follow your footsteps. You guys are amazing.

And I am glad to have a little small part of Loyal Hill, not only through my husband's family, the Goaters' but just being able to be somebody that actually walks the hills of Loyal Hill and tries my best to do great by the people of Loyal Hill. [It is a] beautiful community, and I encourage everybody to come out next year and participate in their Bermuda Day Festival. So, thank

you, Loyal Hill, [constituency] 10, and [constituency] 13.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator Lindsay Simmons.

And I believe it is over to you, Minister Wilkerson now. Everyone else has spoken.

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** Thank you, Madam President.

I will start, Madam President, with condolences. First, [I] associate [myself with] the comments from Senator Wight in relation to the passing of Maria Perry. And from this seat, Madam President, I wish her family comfort and my deepest condolences. Her daughter, Leila, has been a colleague of mine for many years, an amazing person, and no doubt she is carrying that from her mother. So, I want her to know particularly that she is in my thoughts and prayers.

Also, Madam President, in relation to colleagues, these are my colleagues from years of XL, AXA XL, and all of the variations in between, offer condolences to the family of Dervin Wright on the passing of his mother, Janice Wright. Mrs. Wright has been one of those women . . . you know, there will always be some women in the community that you look up to who are kind of the picture of deportment and style. And Mrs. Wright always was a style icon, and she was someone that I certainly looked up to growing up. So, I was very sad to hear of her passing.

And finally, in relation to condolences, Madam President, I, from this Chamber, hold up the family of Elroy Eve, who will be funeralised at two o'clock. I will leave this Chamber and head there. He is the father of my good friend, Annette Eve. We know the quality of a man through his children, and he is raised a very beautiful daughter. And I just want that family to know that we are offering condolences from this Chamber, Madam President.

Now, on to more joyous things on the congratulatory side. I join with colleagues who have already expressed support for the OUTBermuda event. I was privileged to be asked by Josh Samuels to give remarks at that event. And I stand in support of the work of OUTBermuda, of their legislative manifesto. And I stand in support of Josh himself. I told him on that day that I am proud of him. And I will say that again from this Chamber because this is not easy work being out and having to carry, I think, the mantle for so many and where representation really does matter.

Madam President, I also join the congratulations for Bermuda College. Certainly, as an alum, it is always thrilling to see the graduates and the quality of them. So, congratulations to all of them. But as my colleague, Senator Simmons has said, also acknowledging Callahj Simons, she is an incredible ambassador for youth. She has been doing yeoman's work as a member of the Youth Advisory Board and carrying that advocacy to the seat of government around the needs of the youth.

In the athletic space, I associate with the congratulations for Pria Wilson. She is my cousin, and we knew that when she left Bermuda, she would do great things.

"Roddy" Burchell—[I am] associating with that.

It is sports. The Clyde Best documentary, *Transforming the Beautiful Game*, it was indeed a job well done. And we have been fighting in the trenches in the neighbourhood. I think we started just after COVID-19 [with] the wall, Clyde Best Lane, and starting that mural honouring him. And then it was a happy coincidence that the efforts around the documentary and raising funds for it started shortly thereafter. So, it is beautiful to see the wall, as well, and the mural reflected in the film. So hats off there to Barbara Dillas, who coordinated the artwork, and to my friend, who is not on the Island at the moment, but she is between here and Bermuda, Tinashe Johnson, Dr. Johnson, who . . . Really it was her brainchild to put positive images on the wall because she walked her small children through that wall at the time that she lived at the top of Broome Street.

To athletics, again, joining in the congratulations for Skye Furbert, I was there to witness it as my own granddaughter, Diamond Morris, was successful in the second year in a row being the champion girl for under-10 at interschool sports, and Saltus won the primary division yet again. And we know that athletics is so important to development, to creating fine citizens, and to academic performance as well. So, hats off to Saltus Grammar [School] for making that real. We are in the primary division. Those children have athletics every other day, and some people say, *Gee, historically, we would never see Saltus win at athletics*. They win at it because they make it important, and it is part of the curriculum, not something extra to be an add-on. So, I appreciate that.

Madam President, and finally, I want to . . . I know that many congratulations have gone forth already in relation to how the Island turned out for the activities in relation to the visit of King Charles III, but I want to particularly congratulate the Bermuda Regiment Band [and Corps of Drums]. We were together, Madam President, in the square, and the Bermuda Regiment Band did an amazing job. It was bittersweet because we missed, obviously, the presence of James Van-Lowe, who recently passed away, and he contributed so much to the development of the younger musicians who we see in the Bermuda Regiment Band. But that day was a display where you could see that baton has been passed very successfully, and when the band played the song "Golden," to see all the little children, certainly from, I think, all of the schools, break into song and be led by the band leader, it was really a sight to be recorded, and as I say, joyous indeed. So, congratulations to the Bermuda Regiment for that display.

Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** And thank you, Minister Wilkerson.

With my own comments, I would like to . . . I will start off because I . . . I will start off with the condolences that were extended [for] Mr. Elroy Desmond Eve because I know his wife very well and his family, and Robyn Eve, whose wife . . . Sorry, of his son . . . I did attend the viewing last night because I thought I would not be able to make the funeral today. But anyway, I would also just adjoin Minister Wilkerson with the condolences to that family.

I would also like to associate myself with the congratulations to all the graduates at Bermuda College. Like you all who were there, we were in separate rooms, and we had to view it on screen. But nevertheless, the families in the room, believe me, they certainly showed their support for their graduate children, and it was just a wonderful occasion. And I was glad to be there.

Also, congratulations to the Clyde Best Story production. That was absolutely wonderful, and I did attend. I know that Speaker Lister did go to London, and he was a major partner in helping to produce or help in that production. But I think it bodes well for Bermuda. And I agree with you that all Bermudians should have the opportunity to view the film because it really is a wonderful story.

I also agree with you, Minister Wilkerson, with the visit of King Charles III, and the . . . in St. George's particularly, the King walked around. There were so many young people, children, and he was . . . They were delighted to see him, and he took time out to walk around and greet them and talk to them. And it was just wonderful to see. They were so excited. So, I think Bermuda did well in terms of the plans and programmes that they had for him while he was here.

And with that, Minister Wilkerson, I lead you to adjournment.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** Thank you, Madam President.

I move that the Senate adjourn until June 3.

**The President:** Thank you.

Would any Senator care to speak on the motion to adjourn?

And I see Lindsay Simmons, you have your hand up. You are the first one—

**Sen. Lindsay Simmons:** Thank you.

**The President:** —I recognise. You have the floor.

## BERMUDA DAY

**Sen. Lindsay Simmons:** Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, as we rise on this motion to adjourn, I wish to speak not only about policy and

politics but about something special that lives deep within the heart of every Bermudian—our pride, our culture, and our shared responsibility to one another as we approach Bermuda Day this Friday. Bermuda Day is more than a public holiday. It is a celebration of who we are as a people. It is the sound of the Gombeyes echoing through the streets. It is the sight of our families lining the roads before sunrise. It is the runners, cyclists, dancers, musicians, majorettes, vendors, children waving flags, and generations coming together in unity and joy.

Madam President, Bermuda Day reminds us that despite our differences, we are one Island, one community, and one people. Madam President, while this holiday fills us with excitement and national pride, it must also fill us with responsibility. This weekend, thousands of residents and visitors will gather across our Island. Roads will be crowded. Celebrations will continue late into the evening. Boats will head out onto the water. Motorcycles will line our streets. And in moments like these, we must remember that one poor decision can change our lives forever. So today, I rise to encourage every Bermudian to celebrate responsibly and safely. If you are driving, please slow down. If you are riding, please wear your helmet and ride responsibly. If you are boating, please respect the water and the weather. If you choose to indulge in drinking, do not get behind the wheel. Call a friend or a taxi.

Madam President, if you see one making an unsafe choice, speak up. Let's protect one another. Because no celebration is worth the loss of a life. Madam President, too many families in Bermuda know the pain of receiving a late-night phone call that should never have to come in. Too many mothers, fathers, children, and friends are carrying grief that deepens during holidays and long weekends. We owe it to them and to each other to make safety part of our national celebration.

Madam President, I also want to recognise and thank many individuals who have sacrificed their time with their own families so the rest of us may celebrate safely. Madam President, I am talking about our police officers, EMTs, firefighters, doctors, nurses, lifeguards, ferry operators, sanitation workers, City of Hamilton workers, and volunteers. Their services often go unnoticed, but Bermuda is safer because of their dedication. So, thank you.

Madam President, Bermuda Day should leave us with memories of laughter, music, community, and pride—not tragedy. So as the Island prepares for the festivals, let us also prepare our hearts and our minds to look out for one another. Let us extend patience on the road, kindness in our interactions, and responsibility in our celebrations. Remember, some families are hurting during this time.

May this Bermuda Day remind us not only of where we have come from, but the kind of country we still strive to be—compassionate, united, resilient, and

proud. I wish everyone a Bermudaful holiday. Bless Bermuda and our Island.

Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator Lindsay Simmons. Would any other Senator . . .  
John Wight, I recognise you. You have the floor.

#### **DISSERVICE TO PUBLIC WHEN MINISTERS FAIL TO ANSWER QUESTIONS POSED BY SENATORS**

**Sen. John Wight:** Thank you, Madam President. I will be brief.

Madam President, in March, during the budget process, I expressed disappointment when, having been allocated three hours to debate around the Ministry of Health, there was no time allocated for any debate or questions at the end. And I said that I felt that was a disservice to the Chambers and to our listening audience. Today, there were nine questions relevant to our hospital that were asked with no response, with the response being that—

#### **POINT OF ORDER**

**Sen. Lindsay Simmons:** Point of order, Madam President.

We cannot discuss what was already spoken about in the Chambers today.

**Sen. John Wight:** Let me then conclude by saying I find it very disappointing when issues relevant to our community, which are raised in these Chambers, are not discussed. I think I will say one more time that we do ourselves a disservice—

**Sen. Lindsay Simmons:** Point of order, Madam President.

**Sen. John Wight:** —and we do our listening audience a disservice—

**Sen. Lindsay Simmons:** Point of order.

**Sen. John Wight:** —when we do not discuss these issues.

Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator John Wight. Would any other Senator care to speak on the motion to adjourn?

Senator Victoria Cunningham, I see you.

#### **BERMUDA DAY**

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** Thank you, Madam President.

I would like to take a moment to wish everyone across Bermuda a very happy and safe Bermuda Day holiday weekend. I think we will all agree that Bermuda Day is one of the most special times on our calendar, and it is a celebration of our culture, our community spirit, and ultimately everything that makes Bermuda unique and special. And I think from the excitement of the half marathon to the colour, vibrancy, you know, expertise on display at the parade, it is a day that brings generations of Bermudians together.

I want to wish my husband, who is running the half marathon—I think for the 12th time—good luck as he goes. I have looked at the weather forecast. It looks like it is going to be beautiful for spectators, but probably not so nice for the runners.

But I think, you know, also to those who are going to be in the parade in whatever way, shape, or form, you know, good luck, have fun. Congratulations to what I am sure will be an amazingly fun and beautiful afternoon.

I also want to encourage participants and everyone that is going to be participating in throughout the weekend to look after each other, to celebrate our culture, but to keep safety in the front of mind so that ultimately everyone can return home safely after everything is done. So, I wish everyone a very happy holiday and hope that it is filled with joy, Bermuda pride, and community spirit.

Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** And thank you, Senator Cunningham.

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

### SENATE VISITORS

**The President:** And before I move on, I would just like to acknowledge and recognise the [OBA] Opposition [Members], MP Craig Cannonier, as well as MP Scott Pearman. And they are both in the, not in the Chamber, but in the Gallery.

Welcome to you both.

*[Motion to adjourn, continuing]*

**The President:** Would any other Senator care to speak?

Senator [Tarik] Dunbar Smith, I recognise you. You have the floor.

### BERMUDA DAY

**Sen. Tarik Smith:** Thank you, Madam President.

I will be brief as well. I just want to wish everyone in Bermuda a wonderful Bermuda Day holiday. Bermudians, we are quite different than the rest of the world. Even though summer begins for the rest of the world on June 21, Bermudians often say [the] May 24 holiday as we like to call it, or Bermuda Day, is the

official start of summer in Bermuda. So, [I am] wishing everyone a wonderful holiday. And to all the participants in the parade, please make sure that you get some good rest. I have never done the parade, but I know it can be quite rigorous as it is hot that time of day.

And for my fellow runners, I am sorry. I was injured a few weeks ago, so I am unable to run. I was training, Madam President, I was training. I was doing a seven-mile run, and I blew out my other knee.

**The President:** Oh, dear.

**Sen. Tarik Smith:** So, it has been . . . My ego wants me to run, but my body . . . And I think if I do run, Susan will have quite some words for me once I finish. But all the best to all the runners. It will be hot. Please make sure you get your salt and your water in and have a good night's rest.

And also, I just wish that those who that have listened to today can please . . . The census is very important to this Island, and the information that we get from that census is important. So please do your diligence to fill out the necessary forms or answer the questions if called.

Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator [Tarik] Dunbar Smith.

Would any other Senator care to speak?

Yes, I recognise you, Senator Mischa Fubler. You have the floor.

### BERMUDA DAY: FOR THE CULTURE CULTURAL REFLECTIONS

**Sen. Mischa Fubler:** Thank you, Madam President.

And so initially for today, I was planning a kind of a presentation focused more around road safety. But I think given recent debate in another place, I figured I would focus on something that had not been covered quite as much. And so today I am going to talk about cultural reflections.

We are here on the eve of the culmination of Heritage Month, which is, of course, the Bermuda Day Parade. And the theme for this year . . . Again, just to make sure everyone is aware, we have shared it publicly, but again, it is "For the Culture." And I want to acknowledge my colleagues from across the aisle. They have been doing some PR speaking to what culture means to them. And I applaud them for that. You know, it is important that we recognise that.

And so, I wanted to make my own contribution in that space, starting out with some definitions that were operating on the same basis. And so, if I may, I would like to share Edward Tylor's kind of definition of culture. He is one of the, I guess, dare I say, preeminent anthropologists. And he wrote a book called *Primitive Culture*, as it were, volumes one and two. And from

that, the definition of culture has been used repeatedly in many other works. And so, with your leave, “Culture or civilisation, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by” people “as a member of a society.”

And more relevantly for us and kind of bringing it closer to home, I also want to share the Department of Culture's kind of definition of culture and heritage. If you have not checked it out before, I encourage you to go to culture.bm. They have quite a lot of content on there, and I will be highlighting some more of their work as I continue. But again, they point to the Regional Cultural Policy of the Caribbean Community's definition, which describes culture through a much broader lens.

And again, with your leave, I will quote, “the distinctive ways in which a particular grouping of people . . . has responded to, reflected on, and expressed their historical and presently continuing experience of life. These ways are explored and expressed in everything from clothing and cuisine—from the dimension of biological survival—to dance, painting, storytelling, or any of the other art forms, which have no apparent immediate survival value. This sum total of intricately connected ways of being . . . worked out by a people in relation to a particular environment and with a particular legacy of ideas, beliefs, and practises is what gives people a sense of cohesiveness, a sense of having a particular irreplaceable value in the world . . . It is our culture which makes it possible to bond ourselves meaningfully to our physical and social environment and to each other.”

And on that note, I want to share about someone who represents the epitome of that idea, our theme for Bermuda Day: For the Culture. And for some added context, on Saturday evening, I had the immense pleasure of representing the Ministry of Tourism and Transport, Culture and Sport at BUEI [Bermuda Underwater Exploration Institute] as the Department of Culture premiered their “Voices of the Rock” with a film titled *Ruth's Mosaic*. And it focused on Ms. Ruth E. Thomas, MBE, who spent 40 years serving our community, most notably as the cultural affairs officer, actually our first cultural affairs officer, back in 1988. And the documentary that we went on to watch there at BUEI, masterfully done by Milton Raposo (kudos to him), made it seem like she willed that role into existence, right? She was a proponent and active participant in arts and culture in Bermuda and impressed upon the Government of the day the importance of having someone specifically focused on advancing our culture.

And in 1997, *The Royal Gazette* wrote an article about her retirement: “Culture czar Thomas calling it a day.” And if I may, Madam President, to quote, “one of her major tasks was to win over to her side, the sceptics who proclaimed that Bermuda had no culture of its own or those who genuinely could not understand why something like ‘culture’ could keep her occupied on a

full-time basis.” And as you can recall, I just highlighted how my colleagues are now starting to step into acknowledging the importance of culture. And so that was part of the reason I gave them some kudos there because historically that has been kind of the perception, one of the differences between us (right?) as kind of political entities.

And to one of the other very interesting quotes from the film was of Yehudi Menuhin, Lord Menuhin, [about] the violin programme that we have in Bermuda. And it was a run in the paper. He was claiming that Bermuda was a cultural desert. And while that sentiment may persist in some sectors of our community . . . And when I talk to people in passing, they will share their stories of people trying to claim that we do not have culture [here]—they are wrong. And Ms. Thomas' storied career proves that. For if we had no culture, what did she spend 40 years nurturing, promoting, and cataloguing for future generations?

For the culture, she established the Premier's Concert series back in 1997. Interesting enough, the first one had zero budget, and she still made it work. And they have gone on to be . . . I think, when we first came back from the winter break, in fact, my congratulations went out to the participants of the Premier's Concert, a venue that provides a stage for our emerging performers. And it is something that Ms. Thomas has always championed, the need for us to support not just the professionals, but those who are in the pipeline, as it were. Because if you only focus on those who are already doing it, what happens when they retire? How do you continue to grow? How does the culture evolve? And one of those definitions kind of spoke to that. Not just historical, not just the heritage—it is how we are living today as well that is important to focus on.

And for the culture, she spearheaded popular TV programmes like “Bermuda Profiles,” “Bermuda Treasures,” and the “Learnalots” in addition to producing books like *Bermuda Reflections*, which captured the stories of Bermudian life as told by our elders, both of which captured our Bermudian culture and heritage. And again, for the culture—she took the work internationally, hosting “Carib Art.” It was a UNESCO-sponsored exhibition of art from across the Caribbean.

And as I mentioned in the beginning of my presentation, I would say we arguably would not be recognising Heritage Month, which was formerly Heritage Week until the mid-1980s without Ms. Thomas's efforts.

And as we all know, this Friday, the fourth Friday of the month, as it were, no longer just May 24, is the recognition of Bermuda Day. And the first one took place in 1979. And so, as I am keen to do, I like to go back and look at news articles and other media from the time that that occurred. And so, I wanted to share a few interesting observations.

It is also notable that the Bermuda Day Parade built on the existing cultural happening that is the Bermuda Half Marathon [Derby]. Coming out of the Pitt Report that was published the year prior, it was

established that we need some kind of large cultural event like a parade to help bring the Island together. For those of you unfamiliar with the Pitt Report, I encourage you to go ahead and have a read of that seminal work. And it replaced Empire Day, which celebrated Queen Victoria's birthday, which . . . Yes, there you go, [Senator] Cunningham.

And so, *The Royal Gazette* headline from the day prior to Bermuda Day, so May 23, had a plea on the front page from Minister Ralph Marshall, who (interestingly, we still refer to it as Heritage Day) ironically made a plea to taxi operators to not take the day off the following day. He said, *There are 3,000 air arrivals expected at the airport*. This [is] kind of [a] recurring theme. We were still debating this this year, kind of—challenges with airport pickups. But it was a relief on the 25th, the following day, that the paper was published. There was another front-page article capturing how the taxi drivers did show up to ensure that people could get a ride from the airport.

Also interesting in the way that history repeats itself, that May 25 front page also had the controversy over the Half Marathon Derby as a headline item. It was not too long ago we had a similar controversy with that time in 1979. It was Carl Kupferschmid of Switzerland, who was first place in the Derby but of course was not [a] resident here. And so, those of you, I think, last year, year before . . . There was some similar contention. It is not new.

*[Inaudible interjections]*

**Sen. Mischa Fubler:** Okay. And so, Gary Wilkinson was the first Bermudian that year, and he finished only 42 seconds behind Carl. The paper also highlighted how they were neck and neck for the majority of the race.

But also in there, interestingly enough, the description of that first Bermuda Day Parade was having a festive carnival air, and it got more and more like a jump-up carnival in Trinidad, and kind of excusing the language. The “jump up” has, of course, become more of a derogatory term in today's parlance. I think we can all agree that the parade does have kind of a festive air. It highlighted how the then Minister of Culture, responsible for culture, Quinton Edness, also joined the parade, something that we still see with our current Ministers responsible for such.

And so, we prepare to observe and support and celebrate the 70 participants we have in this year's Bermuda Day Parade, which notably this year will have a 30-minute break after the final Gombey troupe to be followed by the party soca truck kind of tying it back to that 1979 article referencing Trinidad.

I want to, again, refute [Yehudi] Menuhin's assertion. It is kind of interesting or disappointing that he would have even made such a claim, given his profession and his own culture as a focus on heritage.

But anyway, one of my favourite quotes in this space comes from James Baldwin, and he said that “no people come into possession of a culture without having paid a heavy price for it.” And it is undeniable that we have indeed paid a heavy price, and as such, it is irrefutable that we do indeed have culture. And so, I hope everyone, regardless of how you choose to do it, takes the time to give some thought to all that it is that encompasses our existence here in Bermuda on our Bermuda Day.

Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** And thank you, Senator Mischa Fubler.

Would any other Senator care to speak on the motion to adjourn?

Senator?

Minister Wilkerson, you have the floor.

### CARICOM MEMBERSHIP

**Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson:** Thank you, Madam President.

Listening to my colleague's comment and the quote from James Baldwin about paying a price for culture, it relates neatly to thoughts that I have been having on the conversation around CARICOM and Bermuda's potential membership, full membership, in CARICOM.

I was pleased to join a panel at St. James Church Hall last week on the topic. Of course, I did not go to St. George's for the . . . I think it was the last Tuesday night (what do I want to say?) Tuesday night session. But in the summary of a kind of feedback, Madam President, there is a constant reference, or in some of the forums constant, to the cost of membership. And I submit, Madam President, that that conversation, idea, subject is a red herring.

When we think about what “red herring” means, I did not go to AI, but what does *Cambridge Dictionary* say? It says a red herring is an “idea or subject that takes people's attention away from the central point being considered.” And I submit that the conversations around \$2 million as a membership fee is a red herring. And what I want to do, Madam President . . . My colleague, the Honourable Alexa Lightbourne, who is moving this initiative on the part of the Government . . . I have said to her very recently, *You really have done enough*. And she has said, *We are not trying to win an argument here. We are trying to educate*.

And so, with that, Madam President, I would say, we hear two things: cost and also time. This idea that there has not been enough time or now is not the right time . . . There has not been time for consultation, and there is not enough time to consider it. Or now is not the right time. The Green Paper has been in the public domain since March. We are now moving to June. The consultation is still open. The paper is still up to be read. It is a 60-page document.

And in the rooms that I have been in, there are a couple of interesting things. In Sandys, there was a question asking (and the room was near to full), How many people have ties, familial ties, roots, heritage, to the Caribbean? And the room had representation across race. The majority of people raised their hands (right?)—Black and White. A majority of people raised their hands indicating that they had some cultural heritage connection to the Caribbean. But in answer to the question as to how many people have actually read the Green Paper, that number was a lot lower. And that is the case Island-wide.

So, what I want to do with this platform today is encourage people to go online, or if you cannot go online, go to the Ministry. Get a copy of the Green Paper. If you have questions about the things in the Green Paper, that is fine. Right? But people must engage with what has been done.

And so, with that, Madam President, I just want to commend my colleague because I believe it is a fine job in the document and the continued effort toward public discourse and conversations around it. Bermudians, take the time to read. Do not be deterred by a red herring.

And finally, Madam President, I just want to join colleagues in bidding a happy holiday to Bermudians, and a happy and safe holiday.

Madam President, thank you.

**The President:** Thank you, Minister Wilkerson.

And before I make my . . . Oh, I am sorry.

Yes, Senator Cunningham, you have the floor.

### STANDING ORDER RAISED ON RESPONSES DURING QUESTION PERIOD

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** I just want to clarify that there is no specific Standing Order based on the point of order directed at my honourable colleague earlier about discussing previous questions. It relates to legislation. So, I think that that point of order should be...

### POINT OF CLARIFICATION

**Sen. Mischa Fubler:** Point of clarification, Madam President? I do believe the Standing Order refers to previous debate, which would . . . Oh, no?

**The President:** Yes, it does relate to the previous debates.

**Sen. Victoria Cunningham:** But not [in] the Question Period that was not actually . . . There was no debate in that Question Period.

### POINT OF CLARIFICATION

**Sen. Lauren Bell:** Madam President? Again, a point of clarification.

The concern that was raised was that a response was not provided to the questions that were posed by the Opposition. And I want it to be perfectly clear to the listening audience that the information, the answer to those questions, is in the public domain. So, there was not a refusal to provide answers in accordance with our Standing Orders. Information that is already accessible in the public domain and in other spaces, those questions cannot come here because that information is already readily available.

So, my point of clarification is that the public is aware that there was not an attempt not to answer the questions, and we were operating in accordance with Standing Orders that say once that information is in the public domain, those questions are not . . . They do not need to be answered. Thank you.

And I would encourage all members of the public, including my Senate colleagues, to read the press statement that was released, a joint press statement that was released by the Minister of Health as well as BHB [Bermuda Hospitals Board] that provided detailed information about the questions that were raised here today.

Thank you, Madam President.

**The President:** Thank you, Senator Lauren Bell. And I concur with your comments.

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

### SENATE VISITOR

**The President:** And before I make my final comments, I would just like to acknowledge the presence of MP Emilygail Dill, who is in the foyer. Welcome to you, madam.

*[Motion to adjourn, continuing]*

### BERMUDA DAY

**The President:** And Senators, I would just like to say that I join all colleagues in this Chamber by encouraging everyone, all of us here, as well as the general public to really have a most enjoyable, safe Bermuda Heritage Day this weekend and be safe.

And I know that there are a number of family members who are overseas. They come back to Bermuda for this holiday period. And so, I would just encourage you all to, as well as the general public, to be safe and to have a wonderful time over this period.

And so, Senators, I would like to thank you all for your attendance this morning and for the comments. And I think we did much work.

I would like to say that the Senate now stands adjourned until the 3rd of June.

With that, be safe and enjoy yourselves with your families.

Thank you.

*[At 12:37 pm, the Senate stood adjourned until  
10:00 am, Wednesday, 3 June 2026]*

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