



**2025/26 SESSION
of the
BERMUDA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

4 SEPTEMBER 2026

*(Sitting number 41 of the 2025/2026 Session)
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**Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo,
Deputy Speaker**

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4 SEPTEMBER 2026
10:07 AM**

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[Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair]

The Deputy Speaker: Good morning, colleagues.
We will start off with the prayers.

PRAYERS

[Prayers read by Mr. Clark Somner, Clerk]

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
Members.

[Gavel]

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any?
None.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER
OR MEMBER PRESIDING**

The Deputy Speaker: Members, you should be aware that the Speaker, Member Jarion Richardson of the OBA, Member Scott Simmons of the PLP, along with the Deputy Clerk, are attending the 48th CPA Regional Conference of the Caribbean for Presiding Officers and Clerks of the Caribbean, Americas, and the Atlantic [CAA] Region.

APOLOGIES

The Deputy Speaker: Absent today, Members, are the Premier, the Honourable E. David Burt; the Honourable Tinee Furbert; the Honourable Jache Adams; the Honourable Craig Cannonier; Member Michael Fahy; the Honourable Kim Wilson; Member Lawrence Scott; [and] Member Michael Weeks. Those are the official absences reported to the House.

MESSAGES FROM THE SENATE

The Deputy Speaker: There are none.

**PAPERS AND OTHER
COMMUNICATIONS TO THE HOUSE**

The Deputy Speaker: I call on the [Deputy] Premier—papers and communications to the House.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you. Good morning, Acting Deputy . . . Acting Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Deputy Speaker. Acting Speaker. Deputy Speaker, yes.

[Laughter]

**POLICE COMPLAINTS AUTHORITY
ANNUAL REPORT 2025**

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Madam [Deputy] Speaker, I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of the Honourable House of Assembly the Police Complaints Authority Bermuda Annual Report 2025—Report of Police Complaints Authority to: His Excellency, the Governor, and Minister of National Security.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Shall I do the next one as well?

The Deputy Speaker: I think the next one comes from Minister Hayward, doesn't it?

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Okay.

The Deputy Speaker: All right.
Minister Hayward.

**SHAM MARRIAGES IN BERMUDA
STRENGTHENING THE INTEGRITY OF
THE MARRIAGE AND IMMIGRATION SYSTEMS**

Hon. Jason Hayward: Madam [Deputy] Speaker, I have the honour to attach and submit for the information of the Honourable House of Assembly the Department of Immigration Policy Proposal: Addressing Sham Marriages in Bermuda—Strengthening the integrity of the marriage and immigration systems.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Minister.
And I believe the [Deputy] Premier does have a second one that he wishes to make.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you, Madam [Deputy] Speaker.

I am introducing the following Bill for the first reading so that it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting.

[Crosstalk]

The Deputy Speaker: No, that's different. That's different. That's what you thought was your second one, though. You do that later in the chain.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Deputy Speaker: It's okay. It's okay.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Deputy Speaker: We are just returning. Yes.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I got the Cup Match Somerset fever. I am sorry.

The Deputy Speaker: Member, please, you don't want to risk being thrown out of the House. Right?

[Laughter]

The Deputy Speaker: In continuing . . .

PETITIONS

The Deputy Speaker: There are none.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS AND JUNIOR MINISTERS

The Deputy Speaker: There are several [Statements].

I call on the same [Deputy] Premier, who's already put himself in trouble, to give his Statement.

[Laughter]

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: It seems like whenever you and I share the floor, we get in trouble.

[Laughter]

HOUSING REHABILITATION AND REPURPOSING: EXPANDING BERMUDA'S HOUSING STOCK

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Madam [Deputy] Speaker, I rise today to update this Honourable House on an important component of the Government's broader housing strategy, the rehabilitation and repurposing of existing assets to expand Bermuda's housing stock and better meet the needs of our community.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when people think about expanding Bermuda's housing stock, they often think exclusively about new construction. New construction remains critical and will continue to form an important part of our approach to addressing Bermuda's housing challenges. However, some of our greatest opportunities already exist around us. They exist in homes that can be rehabilitated. They exist in properties that can be restored. They exist in buildings that can be repurposed to meet modern needs. For that reason, the Ministry has placed increasing emphasis on ensuring that existing housing assets and underutilised properties are not overlooked as we work to increase housing opportunities for Bermudians.

Madam Deputy Speaker, housing rehabilitation is one of the most practical and cost-effective ways of expanding available housing stock. Every housing unit that is restored and returned to productive use is a housing unit that does not need to be replaced. Every property preserved through timely investment represents a valuable asset retained for future generations. More importantly, rehabilitation allows us to put our money where our mouth is. If we are serious about expanding housing opportunities, then we must be equally serious about protecting and improving the housing assets already under our stewardship.

Madam Deputy Speaker, our commitment to rehabilitation is not merely theoretical. Significant investments are currently being made across the Bermuda Housing Corporation portfolio, with projects underway in multiple parishes and at various stages of completion. At the Chelsea development, units comprising three two-bedroom units and two three-bedroom units are approaching completion, with delivery anticipated later this month.

At 18 Battery Road, work continues on 12 additional affordable units comprising four two-bedroom apartments, two one-bedroom lofts and six studio apartments. While the project has experienced contractor delays and material shortages, it remains an important addition to the housing stock within the St. David's community.

At the Harmony campus construction commenced last month on the rehabilitation of Harmony Terrace North, which will deliver 16 refurbished studio units. This work is being supported by a comprehensive electrical infrastructure upgrade currently underway to ensure that the site is capable of supporting future residential growth and occupancy.

Elsewhere within the portfolio, work is advancing at 9 King Street, where plans are being finalised to convert two apartments into three two-bedroom units; at 13 Middle Town, where the refurbishment of two three-bedroom units is now underway; at Swanston Apartments, where five two-bedroom units are being prepared for refurbishment; and at 45 Elliott Street, where two three-bedroom apartments will be rehabilitated once relocation arrangements for existing tenants have been completed.

Additional rehabilitation works are also progressing at Gulfstream Transitional Living, including upgrades to residential facilities and kitchens, together with the refurbishment of 12 rooms that will be converted into family suites with private bathrooms. At Langley Rooming House 20 rooms have already been refurbished with further phases now underway alongside improvements to kitchens, bathrooms and laundry facilities.

Madam Deputy Speaker, these projects may not attract the same attention as a new development or a groundbreaking ceremony, but they are every bit as important. They represent a practical commitment to preserving existing housing stock extending the useful life of valuable public assets and ensuring that more Bermudians have access to safe and suitable accommodation.

The Ministry's commitment to rehabilitation extends beyond Government-owned properties, Madam Deputy Speaker, as it has also sought to support the continued preservation of affordable seniors' housing through strategic partnerships. This includes support for the work [of] the Bermuda Housing Trust and initiatives designed to encourage private sector investment in the refurbishment of existing properties.

Through the Private Sector Refurbishment Programme, we are partnering with private property owners across Bermuda to return vacant and underutilised units to productive use. Current projects include homes and apartments in Sandys, Pembroke, Smith's and Somerset, together with the rehabilitation of 16 one-bedroom units at Dr. Cann Park.

We are also working with several additional property owners whose projects have the potential to bring further residential units back onto the housing market in the near future. Taken together, these initiatives recognise an important reality: preserving housing can be just as valuable as creating housing.

Madam Deputy Speaker, alongside rehabilitation, the Ministry has also focused on the repurposing of underutilised assets to address housing and social challenges in innovative ways. One of the most compelling examples of this approach is the redevelopment of Channel House in St. David's.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Channel House represents far more than the renovation of a building. It represents a practical solution to multiple challenges facing Bermuda. Through collaboration involving the Ministry of Housing and Municipalities, the Ministry of Health and other key stakeholders, Channel House is being transformed into a 60-bed accommodation and care facility for individuals who have been deemed medically fit for discharge from the hospital, but who continue to require supportive accommodation and care. At present, some individuals remain in acute-care hospital beds despite no longer requiring acute medical treatment because suitable accommodation and support services are not readily available elsewhere. This

creates challenges not only for those individuals and their families, but for the health care system as a whole.

Acute-care hospital beds are among our most valuable health care resources and are intended for patients requiring urgent medical treatment and ongoing clinical intervention. When medically fit-for-discharge patients have nowhere appropriate to transition to, those beds remain occupied, limiting capacity for new admissions and placing additional strain on our health care services.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the consequences of this are felt throughout the system. Pressure on bed availability can result in patients awaiting admission or treatment for urgent health concerns spending extended periods in emergency department treatment areas and, at times (as we all know), receiving care in hallways rather than in more appropriate clinical settings. This impacts more than operational efficiency. It affects patient dignity. It affects privacy. It affects comfort. It creates additional challenges for health care professionals seeking to provide care in the most appropriate clinical environment possible. Most importantly, it has the potential to affect the overall patient experience and health outcomes. By providing appropriate accommodation and care in a supportive environment, Channel House will help address an important gap in Bermuda's continuum of care while freeing valuable acute-care bed capacity for patients who require hospital-level treatment.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this initiative demonstrates the value of looking beyond traditional approaches to housing. Sometimes the best opportunities are found not by constructing something entirely new, but by [reimagining] the purpose and potential of assets that already exist. Channel House is therefore not simply a housing initiative. It is a housing initiative that supports health care objectives. It is a health care initiative that improves the utilisation of public resources, and it is an example of how collaboration across ministries can produce outcomes that benefit the entire community.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the concept of repurposing extends beyond public assets. It also applies to derelict and underutilised properties that currently sit vacant across Bermuda. Too many buildings with the potential to provide housing remain unoccupied, deteriorating over time, rather than contributing to the housing market and the vitality of our neighbourhoods. The Ministry therefore continues to advance work on its Derelict Buildings Consultation Paper, which is now approaching completion and is expected to be published within the coming weeks.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this initiative has required thoughtful consideration because the issues involved are both complex and, as you know, very sensitive. While there is broad recognition that derelict properties should, wherever possible, be returned to productive use, the Government is equally mindful that questions relating to property rights and land

acquisition must be approached fairly, responsibly and with appropriate sensitivity. We recognise that these matters carry important historical significance for many Bermudians. Accordingly, considerable effort has been devoted to ensuring that any proposals balance the public interest in expanding housing opportunities with the rights and expectations of property owners. Our objective is not to create conflict. Our objective is to create opportunity.

The Government also recognises that it cannot solve Bermuda's housing challenges alone. Success will require partnerships with property owners, developers, charitable organisations, community groups, financial institutions and the private sector more broadly. It is for this reason, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the proposed Derelict Buildings initiative and the Ministry's Private Sector Refurbishment Programme are intended to complement one another. Together, these initiatives are designed to encourage investment, facilitate restoration efforts and support the return of currently vacant properties to productive residential use. Even a modest increase in the number of derelict and vacant properties brought back into use could make a meaningful contribution to Bermuda's housing stock.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when people think about expanding Bermuda's housing stock, they often think exclusively about new construction. New construction remains essential. And this Government remains committed to delivering new housing developments across the Island. However, some of our greatest opportunities already exist around us. They exist in buildings that can be rehabilitated. They exist in properties that can be restored. They exist in assets that can be repurposed to meet modern needs. Whether through the rehabilitation of existing housing units, the refurbishment of privately-owned properties, the redevelopment of Channel House, or the return of derelict buildings to productive use, this Government is pursuing every practical avenue available to expand Bermuda's housing stock.

Through rehabilitation and repurposing this Government is not only creating housing opportunities. We are preserving valuable assets, supporting our health care system, strengthening communities and making better use of the resources already available to us. This is a good housing policy. It is good stewardship. And it is an important part of expanding Bermuda's housing stock for the benefit of current and future generations.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, [Deputy] Premier.

I now call on the Minister of Transport. Minister, are you ready to deliver your brief?

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION UPDATES

Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam [Deputy] Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker, today I give an update on the continued progress of the Department of Public Transportation (also known as DPT) Bus Fleet Renewal Programme, on the advancement of the Digital Fare Media project and on the department's readiness to support the travelling public, including our schoolchildren, as the new school year begins.

Madam Deputy Speaker, DPT remains committed to building a modern, reliable and fully electrified public bus fleet by 2030. This latest delivery represents the third order of electric buses placed with Golden Dragon Bus Company. This follows an initial order of 30 buses in 2022 and a further 40 buses in 2023. Of the current order of 20 buses, 10 arrived in Bermuda on 18 August, with the remaining 10 having arrived shortly thereafter. With this delivery complete, DPT's electric fleet now totals 90 buses.

Madam Deputy Speaker, a final order of 20 electric buses will be placed later this year and is expected to enter service in early 2027, bringing the department's fully electrified fleet to a total of 110 buses and completing the electrification programme. As these new buses are commissioned, DPT will retire older diesel buses that have reached the end of their service life. This is a deliberate and necessary step that allows the department to reduce reliance on ageing vehicles that have been a significant source of mechanical breakdowns and service cancellations, while lowering long-term operating and maintenance costs.

Madam Deputy Speaker, DPT recognises that the public has experienced periods of service disruption this year, including instances where mechanical issues reduced the number of buses available for service and resulted in a significant number of cancelled runs. DPT's technical staff, supported by manufacturer representatives, have worked to address [these] issues directly. The arrival of newer, more reliable electric vehicles, together with the phased retirement of the older diesel buses, is central to resolving these challenges going forward.

An expanded and modernised fleet gives the department greater flexibility to maintain scheduled service even when individual vehicles require maintenance, thereby improving reliability for commuters across all routes.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the start of the school year places significant additional demand on our public bus network as students join regular commuters during peak morning and afternoon periods. DPT continues to prepare and will be ready to support the increase in demand and remains in a position where we do not require the use of supplementary minibuses to satisfy the winter schedule. This is a direct result of the introduction of the 20 new electric buses, coupled with increased maintenance efforts and focused recruitment of bus operators. Together, these measures ensure the department now has sufficient capacity and reliability

within its own fleet to complete the full schedule of work, including school runs.

This represents a meaningful improvement in the department's operational resilience heading into the new school year. The department will publish the winter schedule on the ShoreLink app and will continue to provide real-time updates on cancellations and service alerts throughout the school year.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Ministry continues to modernise how passengers pay for and experience public transportation through the Digital Fare Media project, branded as ShoreLink. Phase one launched in July 2024 enabling passengers to purchase and manage fares through the ShoreLink mobile app. Phase two followed with the introduction of real-time passenger information, allowing commuters to track the live location of buses and ferries directly on their phones, a feature that has since been extended to school bus routes, giving parents and students greater certainty and peace of mind.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we are now closing in on the completion of phase three, which introduces contactless tap-to-pay validators across the bus and ferry fleet. This final phase will allow passengers to board simply by tapping a debit or credit card, removing the need for cash or exact change, and significantly speeding up boarding times, particularly during peak periods. The advantages of this system are significant: faster, more reliable boarding; reduced administrative burden and cash-handling for operators; improved data on ridership patterns that will help DPT plan routes and schedules more effectively; and a more convenient, modern experience for residents and visitors alike.

Madam Deputy Speaker, earlier this year, DPT also introduced offline fare validation within the ShoreLink app, allowing eligible mobile fares to be validated even without an internet connection, a practical enhancement that further strengthens the reliability of the system as we move toward full tap-to-pay capability. As with previous phases, traditional fare media payment options will remain available throughout the tap-to-pay rollout, ensuring no passenger is left behind during this transition.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Minister, I believe you have a second [Statement] that you would like to share.

Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam Deputy Speaker, I sure do.

The Deputy Speaker: Get a drink of water or anything—

Hon. Owen Darrell: May I proceed?

The Deputy Speaker: —before you read. If you need it. Yes.

[Crosstalk]

Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Of course.

CENTRAL AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN GAMES 2026; AND 2026 COMMONWEALTH GAMES, BERMUDA'S PARTICIPATION IN

Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to update this Honourable House and the people of Bermuda on an outstanding summer achievement by our national athletes on the international stage. Over the course of a few short weeks, Team Bermuda competed at two of the most significant multi-sports events on the global calendar, the 2026 Central American and Caribbean Games in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland.

Madam Deputy Speaker, our athletes returned home with seven medals across the two games, spanning swimming, sailing, triathlon and athletics. This is a result that speaks to the depth of talent on our Island and to the dedication of the athletes, coaches, families and officials who make these achievements possible.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I will begin with the Central American and Caribbean [CAC] Games, which carried special significance this year. The 2026 CAC Games marked the 25th edition of the event and the centennial of its founding in 1926, making it the oldest regional multi-sport games in the world. Bermuda rose to the occasion by sending its largest team ever to a multi-sport event: a delegation of 104, including 78 athletes competing across 17 sporting disciplines, led by Chef de Mission Jon Beard. At the opening ceremony, our team was proudly led into the stadium by flag bearers (bowler) Lamar Richardson and Jennifer Chisnall.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Team Bermuda captured six medals at these Games, one gold, one silver and four bronze: Adriana Penruddocke won gold in the women's one-person dinghy sailing competition, finishing the 10-race series with 14 net points to top a strong international field. Jack Harvey enjoyed a remarkable two-medal campaign in the pool, winning silver in the men's 100 metres backstroke and bronze in the men's 50 metres backstroke. Sakari Famous (a former student of mine) claimed bronze in the women's high jump, clearing 1.89 metres to set a new Bermuda national record in the process. Sebastian Kempe took bronze in the men's one-person dinghy, completing an excellent showing for Bermuda in sailing. Tyler Smith earned bronze in the men's triathlon, crossing the line in 1 hour, 46 minutes and 21 seconds.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I now turn to the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, which marked Bermuda's 20th appearance at the Games since our debut in 1930. Our team of 13 athletes, led by Chef de

Mission Donna Raynor, competed across athletics, swimming and track cycling. This year's team broke new ground for our Island: for the first time in our history, Team Bermuda was represented in both para-athletics and track cycling.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is fitting that this historic team also delivered a historic result. Jessica Lewis made history by winning bronze in the women's T54 400 metres, finishing third in a time of 59.31 seconds. In doing so, the four-time Paralympian became Bermuda's first ever Commonwealth Games para-athletics medallist, a landmark moment for our nation and an inspiration to athletes of every ability.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this Government believes that excellence of this calibre deserves to be formally recognised. Through the Department of Sport and Recreation's Outstanding Athletic Performance [Incentive] Programme, Bermuda awards cash incentives to athletes who achieve a medal performance at one of the five recognised festivals of sport: the Olympic Games, the Pan American Games, the Commonwealth Games, the CAC Games, and the World Championships. Incentives are paid for every qualifying medal on a tiered scale that reflects the standing of each competition.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to advise this Honourable House that in recognition of their performances this summer six of our athletes received incentive awards totalling \$23,500 across seven qualifying medals and were presented at a ceremony held in their honour last week: Adriana Penruddocke received \$5,000 for her gold. Jack Harvey received \$4,000 for his silver. Jack Harvey also received another \$2,500 for his bronze medal. Sakari Famous received \$2,500 for her bronze medal. Sebastian Kempe received \$2,500 for his bronze. Tyler Smith received \$2,500 for his bronze. And Ms. Jessica Lewis for a bronze medal in the Commonwealth Games received \$4,500.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it was a privilege to present these awards to our medallists in person last week. The ceremony was a fitting tribute, and a tangible expression of this Government's continued commitment to standing behind our athletes, not only in celebration, but in real support for the excellence that they have shown.

Madam Deputy Speaker, you have heard me say multiple times that support comes in multiple ways. Madam Deputy Speaker, while medals rightly capture the headlines, I want this House to recognise every member of both delegations.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Owen Darrell: Their commitment carried our flag with distinction. I extend particular congratulations to [our] swimmers, including the two sets of siblings, Elijah and Elan Daley, and Jack and Emma Harvey, whose

qualification and performances reflect the growing strength of their sport.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want this Honourable House to know that this Government's support began long before the first medal was won. This year, the Government provided the Bermuda Olympic Association with a special grant of \$100,000 to assist our teams with the cost of travelling to these Games.

In addition, many of the athletes who competed in Santo Domingo and Glasgow directly received Elite Athlete funding totalling \$147,500 to support their training and preparation in the lead-up to the Games. This is what meaningful investment in our athletes looks like, Madam Deputy Speaker, backing them at every stage of the journey, from training in the pool and the track at home to the podium abroad.

Madam Deputy Speaker, achievements of this kind do not happen by accident. They are the product of years of training, years of sacrifice and years of support. On behalf of the Government, I thank the Bermuda Olympic Association, our Chefs de Mission, the coaches, managers, physiotherapists, and officials who supported our athletes throughout. I also want to thank the families and communities whose quiet sacrifices stand behind every athlete who wears the Bermuda colours.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Department of Sport and Recreation remains firmly committed to supporting our athletes at every level, from grassroots and youth programmes through to the elite international stage. Our investment in sport is about more than competition and medals. Sport strengthens our communities, it inspires our young people, it creates opportunities, and it provides a platform for Bermudians to excel and make this Island proud. That is why we continue, Madam Deputy Speaker, to invest in our athletes, our sporting organisations, and the systems that support their development. Because, as I have said in this Honourable House before, Madam Deputy Speaker, *Sport Matters!* It matters to our athletes. It matters to our young people. It matters to our communities. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, it matters to Bermuda.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I ask this Honourable House to join me in congratulating each and every member of Team Bermuda on a summer of achievement we can all celebrate.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

I now call on the Minister of Economy and Labour.

Minister.

REGISTRATION (BIRTHS AND DEATHS) AMENDMENT ACT 2026, TABLING OF

Hon. Jason Hayward: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise today to table the Registration, Births and Deaths Amendment Act 2026. This Bill forms part of the Government's ongoing commitment to modernising Bermuda's legislative framework, safeguarding personal information, and strengthening the integrity of the Island's civil registration system.

The Deputy Speaker: Minister, I just have a question. That's your brief? You're not trying to table a Bill? You're trying to give your brief? That's the brief? Because you said *you rise to table*.

Hon. Jason Hayward: It is a tabling Statement, Madam Deputy Speaker.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: Oh, okay. Thank you. I just thought you were trying to table a Bill.

[Laughter]

The Deputy Speaker: A new Bill.

[Laughter]

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry for interrupting.

Hon. Jason Hayward: Just to clarify,—

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

Hon. Jason Hayward: —it is a tabling Statement.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Jason Hayward: I will be tabling the Bill later on in the session.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Thank you. I'm like, gee, we jumped across a lot of [Statements].

[Laughter]

Hon. Jason Hayward: The purpose of the Bill is to reduce the risk of identity theft and the misuse of personal information contained within birth records while ensuring that legitimate access to those records is preserved.

Madam Deputy Speaker, birth certificates are among the most important identity documents issued by the Government. They are frequently used to establish identity when applying for passports, driver's licences, financial services, immigration benefits, and a wide range of other official documents and services. As society becomes increasingly dependent on identity verification, governments around the world must ensure that personal information is protected against

misuse, fraud, and other unlawful activities. It is therefore appropriate that Bermuda periodically review its legislative framework to ensure that it continues to meet modern standards of privacy, security, and public administration.

Madam Deputy Speaker, a review conducted by the Registry General identified concerns relating to the unrestricted public availability of certified copies of birth certificates. The National Anti-Money Laundering Committee Working Group also identified this issue as a potential vulnerability that could facilitate identity theft, financial fraud, and other forms of misuse involving personal information.

While Bermuda has long maintained a system that promotes transparency through access to such public records, it is now necessary to ensure that appropriate safeguards exist to protect sensitive personal information from exploitation. The Bill before this [Honourable] House seeks to achieve that objective through a measured and proportionate approach. It strikes an appropriate balance between protecting personal information and ensuring that individuals and organisations with a lawful need for access can continue to obtain certified copies when necessary.

Importantly, Madam Deputy Speaker, these amendments do not eliminate transparency. The public inspection of birth registers will remain available in accordance with existing practices, and historical records will continue to become publicly accessible after an appropriate period of time. The objective is not to restrict legitimate access to information, but, rather, to prevent the misuse of certified identity documents that may be used to facilitate fraud or identity theft.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in closing, the Government is committed to protecting the integrity of Bermuda's identity management systems and ensuring that personal information is safeguarded from misuse. The Registration (Births and Deaths) Amendment Act 2026 represents a practical and necessary reform that will strengthen protections against identity theft, enhance public confidence in the administration of civil registration records, and align Bermuda's legislative framework with contemporary standards of privacy and security.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

You have a second [Statement], do you not?

Hon. Jason Hayward: Correct.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes. Okay.

SHAM MARRIAGES POLICY PROPOSAL

Hon. Jason Hayward: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise today to inform this Honourable House of the Government's proposed policy framework to address sham

marriages in Bermuda and to strengthen the integrity of our immigration and legal systems.

This policy is outlined in the report *Addressing Sham Marriages in Bermuda*, laid in the House of Assembly today. This policy proposes a balanced and constitutionally sound framework aimed at detecting, deterring, and responding to marriages entered into primarily for the purpose of securing immigration or other legal benefits.

Madam Deputy Speaker, marriage is a fundamental institution in our society, and an important legal relationship that carries significant rights and responsibilities. The Government has a duty to protect both the right of individuals to marry and the integrity of the system that confers legal and immigration benefits arising from marriage.

While there is currently limited empirical evidence demonstrating the scale of sham marriages in Bermuda, concerns have been raised regarding potential vulnerabilities within the existing legislative framework. The current legal regime does not expressly define sham marriages, nor does it provide the Department of Immigration or the Registry General with clear statutory powers to investigate or address suspected cases. These gaps create the potential for abuse and limit the Government's ability to act where credible concerns arise.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the proposed policy seeks to address these legislative and operational gaps through a targeted and proportionate approach. At the centre of the proposal is the introduction of a clear legal definition of a sham marriage. The policy proposes that a sham marriage be defined as a marriage entered into primarily for the purpose of obtaining an immigration or legal benefit without a genuine intention to establish a shared life together as spouses. Establishing this definition will provide the legal clarity necessary to support fair and consistent decision-making.

The policy also recommends amendments to both the Marriage Act 1944 and the Bermuda Immigration and Protection Act 1956. These amendments would provide the Registrar and the Department of Immigration with clearly defined powers and responsibilities when concerns arise regarding the authenticity of a relationship.

Madam Deputy Speaker, a key feature of the proposal is the adoption of a risk-based approach. The vast majority of marriage applications would continue to proceed through the ordinary process without additional scrutiny. However, where objective indicators establish reasonable grounds to suspect that a marriage may not be genuine, the Registrar would have the ability to refer the matter to the Department of Immigration for further assessment. Importantly, the policy does not provide the Registrar with the authority to refuse or prevent a marriage solely on suspicion. Instead, any referral process would be subject to strict procedural safeguards and clearly defined time limits.

The policy further proposes enhanced identity verification requirements, sworn declarations confirming the authenticity of the relationship, and investigative powers allowing immigration officers to review documentation, conduct interviews, and make reasonable inquiries where concerns arise.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Government recognises that any measures in this area must carefully balance the protection of Bermuda's immigration system with the protection of fundamental rights. Accordingly, the policy is firmly grounded in constitutional principles and international human rights standards. It provides that all investigative and enforcement actions must be lawful, proportionate, non-discriminatory, and supported by due process protections. Individuals who are the subject of an inquiry would be notified of concerns, provided the opportunity to respond, and afforded access to appropriate review and appeal mechanisms. The policy also establishes clear evidentiary thresholds. Mere suspicion, speculation, nationality, or immigration status alone would not be sufficient grounds for investigation. Instead, any referral or investigation must be supported by objective and articulable facts demonstrating reasonable grounds for concern.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in addition to legislative reform, the proposal emphasises operational improvements. The Government intends to strengthen collaboration between the Registry General and the Department of Immigration to clearly define referral and investigation procedures. Staff training, public awareness initiatives, and enhanced data collection mechanisms will also form part of the broader implementation framework. These measures will allow Bermuda to move from anecdotal concerns to evidence-based policymaking while ensuring that genuine relationships are respected and protected.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in closing, the policy framework seeks to provide the Government with appropriate tools to address fraudulent activity while safeguarding the rights of individuals engaged in genuine relationships. This proposal represents a measured and balanced approach to protecting the integrity of Bermuda's marriage and immigration systems.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

I call on the next Minister, the Minister of Education, I believe it is, to give his [Statement].

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Good morning, Madam Deputy Speaker, and the listening public.

EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS 2026

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise today to provide this Honourable House with an update on the Government of Bermuda's 2026 Scholarships and Awards Programme and, more importantly,

to recognise the outstanding Bermudian students who have been selected to receive financial support as they pursue post-secondary education and training.

Madam Deputy Speaker, education remains one of the most important investments that we can make in Bermuda's future. Our scholarships and awards are not simply financial contributions. They represent an investment in our young people, in our future workforce and, ultimately, in the social and economic development of our country.

The Government has steadily increased its investment in scholarships and awards with the annual value of scholarships and awards now reaching approximately \$2.15 million, with an additional \$450,000 [budgeted] for the College Promise Programme, for a total of \$2.6 million in total support being given. This investment is part of our commitment to expanding access to tertiary education and reducing the financial barriers that can prevent Bermudians from pursuing further education and training.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the demand for assistance remains significant. During the 2026 Scholarships and Awards season, the Ministry received 499 applications across its scholarship and award programmes. This year we have increased scholarship funding across the board, enabling the Ministry to support more Bermudians in pursuing their educational and career aspirations. As a result, just under 100 students will receive scholarships and awards in 2026, representing a significant increase in the number of students receiving support.

Our scholarship portfolio has been deliberately designed to recognise academic excellence while also expanding opportunities for students who may traditionally face barriers to accessing post-secondary education. This includes public school graduates, students pursuing technical and vocational careers, students with exceptionalities, mature students, aspiring educators, and students who require assistance to continue undergraduate and postgraduate studies.

Madam Deputy Speaker, at the highest level of our scholarship programme are the Bermuda Government Scholarships. These prestigious scholarships are awarded to students who demonstrate outstanding academic achievement, leadership, community service, and a commitment to contributing to Bermuda. Each Bermuda Government Scholarship provides funding of up to \$35,000 per year for as many as four years, representing a potential Government investment of up to \$140,000 in each recipient over the life of the scholarship. This year, six Bermuda Government Scholarships were awarded. I am pleased to recognise our 2026 Bermuda Government Scholars:

- Zavia Doyling, who is pursuing a Bachelor of Biology at Jackson State University;
- Ayr Cannonier, who is pursuing Business Economics at the University of East London;
- Kaelyn Fleming, who is pursuing Biomedical Science at the University of Brighton;

- Ava Moreno, who is pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance at Marymount Manhattan College;
- Leona Trott, who will pursue Civil Engineering at Louisiana State University; and
- Kenya Robinson, who will pursue Biological Science at Howard University.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I particularly wish to highlight that two of this year's Bermuda Government Scholarships have been designated to support study in health sciences and the arts, reflecting our desire to align educational opportunities with Bermuda's workforce and cultural development needs.

Madam Deputy Speaker, our investment extends well beyond the Bermuda Government Scholarships. The Minister's Achievement Scholarship supports graduating students from CedarBridge Academy and The Berkeley Institute pursuing overseas post-secondary education. These scholarships are valued at up to \$25,000 annually and are tenable for up to four years.

This year's recipients are Shernae Smith-Laws and Citayo Outerbridge of CedarBridge Academy, and Sioma Rudo and Nazari Mienzer of The Berkeley Institute. Their chosen fields include actuarial science, electrical technology, business and health science.

The Minister's Exceptional Student Award provides support of up to \$25,000 annually for overseas study, while the Minister's Technical and Vocational Award similarly provides up to \$25,000 for overseas study and \$7,500 for local study. These awards can be held for up to four years.

We are also continuing our investment in Bermuda's future educators through the Teacher Education Scholarship, valued at \$20,000 per year and tenable for up to three years. This year we are supporting Jaiden Manders, Armani Brandy, T'syi Showers and Kamali Tucker as they pursue qualifications in areas including elementary education, secondary physical education and physical education.

Madam Deputy Speaker, one of the most significant areas of expansion this year is the Further Education Award. This programme assists students who are already progressing through college or university as well as those undertaking postgraduate study. The award provides up to \$10,000 for one year. For 2026, 50 undergraduate students and 20 postgraduate students will receive Further Education Awards. That means 70 students will receive assistance through this programme alone, helping students to continue and complete the qualifications they have already worked so hard to pursue.

Our scholarship programme also recognises that education does not follow the same path for everyone. Through the Non-Traditional Student Award, we are supporting mature students aged 25 and over who have made the decision to pursue post-secondary education. This year's recipients include Destiny Minors, Akim Johnson, Kiantae Smith, and Malia Bell, who are

pursuing studies in business, physical education, nursing and occupational therapy respectively.

We are equally pleased to continue the Caribbean Students Award, supporting Bermudian students pursuing undergraduate and graduate education within the Caribbean. This year's recipients are Dymond DeSilva, Nia Daily, and Calais Darrell, all of whom are pursuing medical degrees.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there is an important story behind these numbers. Our scholarship recipients are pursuing studies across a broad range of disciplines; from medicine, nursing and biomedical science to civil engineering, electrical technology, actuarial science, education, occupational therapy, business, the arts, and many other areas. These are areas that matter to Bermuda. When we help a student pursue a qualification, we are not only investing in that individual. We are developing the teachers who will educate the next generation, the health professionals who will care for our community, the engineers who will contribute to our infrastructure, the business leaders who will drive our economy, and the artists and cultural practitioners who will enrich our society. Our objective must therefore continue to be twofold: to expand access to education and to ensure that our investment in education contributes to the future skills and workforce needs of Bermuda.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I also want to recognise the families behind these students. For many Bermudian families, supporting a child through university or college represents a significant financial commitment. Tuition, accommodation, books, travel, and everyday living expenses can place considerable pressure on household finances. Government scholarships cannot remove every cost; but they can make a meaningful difference. For some students, that assistance may determine whether they are able to begin their studies, continue into another year, or complete their qualification. That is why increasing access to financial assistance remains an important priority for this Government.

I also extend my sincere appreciation to the members of the Board of Education and the Scholarships and Awards Committees for the considerable time, diligence and care they have devoted to the selection process. Reviewing hundreds of applications and making difficult decisions among talented and deserving candidates is no small undertaking. Their commitment helps ensure that public funds are awarded through a considered process that recognises achievement, potential and need.

To every student receiving an award this year: Bermuda is investing in you because we believe in your potential. I encourage each of you to make the most of the opportunity before you. Study hard. Challenge yourselves. Build relationships. Gain experience. And wherever your educational journey takes you, remember that your country looks forward to the contribution you will make to Bermuda's future.

To those students who applied but were not successful, I also encourage you not to be discouraged. Continue pursuing your goals and continue seeking the opportunities and support available to you.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Government remains committed to expanding access to post-secondary education and ensuring that more Bermudians have the opportunity to develop the knowledge, qualifications, and skills required to succeed. Our investment in these students is an investment in Bermuda. I congratulate all of our 2026 Scholarship and Award recipients, and I wish them every success as they continue their educational journeys.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

[Desk thumping]

The Deputy Speaker: Minister, you have a second [Statement].

[Crosstalk]

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Thank you.

BERMUDA PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM READINESS FOR THE 2026/27 ACADEMIC YEAR

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to provide an update of this Honourable House and the people of Bermuda of the readiness of our public schools for the 2026/27 academic year. As our students return to their classrooms, I want parents, educators, and the wider community to understand both the work completed over the summer and what work remains to be done.

School readiness is a significant undertaking. It involves preparing our buildings, addressing health and safety concerns, ensuring that our schools are appropriately staffed, and ensuring that programmes and supports are in place to meet the diverse needs of our students. This work does not happen overnight. And it certainly does not happen without the commitment of a great many people. Therefore, before I go any further I want to thank the teams who have worked throughout the summer to prepare our schools. I extend my appreciation to our Ministry and Department of Education staff, our colleagues at the Ministry of Public Works and Environment, principals and school leadership teams, custodians, contractors, BELCO, and our other government and community partners. Many have worked a lot of additional hours and weekends, often under considerable pressure, to get our schools ready. Consequently, there has been substantial progress, and that work deserves to be acknowledged.

Madam Deputy Speaker, our 2026 Summer Works Programme has been extensive. Across 27 public schools, approximately 610 maintenance, repair and improvement items have been identified and tracked through our School Readiness Dashboard. As of

September 3, Madam Deputy Speaker, 148 were complete, and a further 212 were actively in progress. The work ranges from major infrastructure projects to smaller repairs that directly affect the daily experience of our students and staff. It includes roofing and water-intrusion repairs, electrical and plumbing works, air conditioning and ventilation, mould and environmental remediation, painting, playground and outdoor safety improvements, windows and doors, fencing, classroom improvements, lighting, and general building maintenance.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this year's programme has placed particular emphasis on matters affecting health and safety of students and staff. Of the works being tracked, 69 were designated health and safety priorities. Twenty-two are complete, and a further 32 are in progress. Approximately 78 per cent have therefore either been completed or are actively being addressed. These works address water intrusion and leaking roofs, mould and moisture, electrical concerns, ventilation and air-conditioning, playground safety, windows, doors, fencing and other building conditions. These are tangible examples across the system.

At St. David's Preschool the driveway was repaved after loose gravel created a slip-and-fall concern. Significant water leaks have been addressed at Warwick and Southampton Preschools, and mould remediation has taken place at Lagoon Park Preschool. At Northlands Primary a missing fire door was replaced. At Paget Primary work addressed leaking ceilings and areas where moisture and possible mould had been identified. Significant leaks have also been addressed at Dalton E. Tucker and Somerset Primary Schools. These are not cosmetic issues. They directly affect the safety, health and comfort of the people who occupy our schools each day.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to address Elliot Primary School directly, because this has been a long-standing concern for the school community. Air-conditioning units were installed in the upper school and intended to be operational in the last school year. However, the [existing] electrical supply lacked the capacity to support the additional load. This summer, considerable attention has been focused on the underlying electrical infrastructure and the BELCO service upgrades required to increase the power supply so these units could operate as intended. This required coordination between the Ministry of Public Works and Environment, BELCO and other stakeholders and is considerably more complex than the installation of individual air-conditioning units.

I recognise how long the Elliot [school] community has waited, and the frustration of having air-conditioning units in place that didn't work because of the facility's electrical capacity. The service upgrade and associated works have therefore been prioritised within the summer programme. Elliot illustrates [why] some of the challenges [in] our school estates cannot be solved

through simple repairs. Ageing infrastructure sometimes requires significant upgrades before modern equipment can be properly supported. The work at Elliot is intended to provide a sustainable solution not just another temporary fix.

Madam Deputy Speaker, while there has been considerable progress, I want to be equally clear about what remains. Not every Summer Works Programme item has been completed. Forty-seven health and safety priority items remain open across the system. Most (32) are already in progress and are expected to be completed by the end of September. The others require further assessment, engineering solutions, specialist contractors, procurement, or coordination with agencies and utility providers, and will be scheduled as those dependencies are resolved.

Some projects are significant infrastructure projects that cannot be completed within a single summer maintenance period. The opening of a school, however, does not remove them from the priority list.

Yesterday, when I spoke directly to our educators at the Department of Education Teachers' Retreat, I made a commitment on how we will manage this work. I acknowledged that too many educators have begun previous school years without sufficient clarity on what would and would not be ready for their school buildings. This year, every school will receive a written, school specific, report outlining what has been completed, what remains outstanding and the plan to close those gaps. Our principals should not have to chase multiple departments for answers about their buildings. Outstanding work will be identified, tracked and scheduled, and interim measures considered where required. Where appropriate, work will begin on weekends, during school breaks and holidays to minimise disruption to teaching and learning. However, school readiness does not end when the first school bell rings.

Madam Deputy Speaker, preparation for the school year extends beyond our buildings. We must also ensure the people needed to educate and support our children are in place. I am pleased to report that our public schools are substantially fully staffed for the opening of the 2026/27 academic year. Throughout the summer, the Department of Education has worked to fill vacancies, secure substitute coverage and address the administrative and immigration requirements associated with overseas recruitment. Several staffing matters identified during the readiness process have been resolved. Substitute coverage has been secured at West End, Paget Primary, and for the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) programmes at West Pembroke.

St. George's [Preparatory] has substitute coverage while recruitment continues for its vacancy. An ICT teacher has also been secured for Francis Patton, with the necessary exemption being processed. A limited number of positions still require substitute coverage, including specific needs in the ASD, French, Music, English and Mathematics, Design and Technology, and Foreign Language. Some of these have arisen

recently because identified substitutes withdrew or members of staff became unavailable due to illness or approved personal leave. At The Berkeley Institute and Sandys Secondary Middle School, recruited overseas teachers are awaiting confirmation of the necessary approvals and are prepared to travel once those approvals are confirmed. The department continues to actively manage these remaining matters.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is important to put these exceptions in context. Our schools are staffed and educators are preparing to receive their students. Where individual vacancies or unexpected absences remain, the department is working to ensure appropriate coverage. We will continue to monitor staffing throughout the school year because, like facilities readiness, it is an ongoing responsibility.

Madam Deputy Speaker, another important development in our readiness for this academic year is the expansion of specialised student support. School readiness must include support for every child, including those students who require additional and specialised [support] services. The Bermuda public school system provides ASD, and Global Developmental Delay (or GDD) programmes within mainstream school environments. For students enrolled in these programmes, they must provide inclusive, individualised learning environments with targeted academic, communication, social-emotional and functional support, while maintaining purposeful connections with their mainstream peers.

For the 2026/27 academic year, we have expanded this provision. Harrington Sound Primary School and Northlands Primary School have launched new ASD programme classes this year. They join existing primary school programmes at West Pembroke Primary, Elliot Primary and Paget Primary, which each operate two classes, and West End Primary, which operates one. With Harrington Sound and Northlands, there are now nine [primary] ASD/GDD classes within the Bermuda public school system. These classrooms provide smaller, highly structured learning environments that may include small group instruction, predictable routines, visual supports, explicit teaching of communication and social skills, and sensory and emotional regulation support.

Importantly, these programmes do not operate in isolation from the wider school. Where appropriate, students participate with their peers in mainstream classes, physical education, music and art, assemblies, school events, recess and lunch, clubs and other activities. The classrooms operate as team-based programmes. Depending on student needs, support may include ASD/GDD lead teachers, learning support teachers, paraeducators, educational therapists, school psychologists, student services, and other specialists.

The expansion at Harrington Sound and Northlands represents another important step in increasing

our capacity to meet the diverse learning needs of Bermuda's children.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when I spoke with our educators yesterday, I also said that the responsibility of leadership is not simply about announcing initiatives. Our responsibility is to create the conditions in which our schools can succeed. That requires clarity, resources, timely decisions, coordinated change, and a willingness to adjust course when something is not working. For school readiness this means being honest about unfinished work rather than presenting an incomplete project as a finished one. It also means recognising the considerable work of people who spent their summer addressing these issues.

Our educators and support staff continue to show up for Bermuda's children. Teachers teach, principals lead, paraeducators and support staff serve children with increasingly complex needs, and counsellors, custodians, administrative staff and department officers keep our system operating. Their contribution is significant and should not be taken for granted.

Madam Deputy Speaker, ultimately, every item I have spoken about today—every roof repair, electrical upgrade, air-conditioning unit, recruitment exercise, substitute placement, and new ASD/GDD classroom—has one purpose: our children.

- When a child walks through the doors of one of our schools, they should enter a safe environment.
- They should know that they belong.
- They should have educators who recognise their potential and challenge them to achieve it.
- They should have access to the support they require.
- And they should receive an education that prepares them for the future they want for themselves.

Those are the measures by which our education system will ultimately be judged. They reflect the commitment I made to our educators this week: behind every policy, reform initiative and decision is a child whose experience must remain at the centre of our work.

Madam Deputy Speaker, school readiness does not mean every maintenance item on a spreadsheet has been checked off before the first day of school. Readiness means our schools can safely welcome students; classrooms have educators; appropriate programmes and supports are available; and, where work remains, we know what it is, are transparent about it, and have a plan to remedy it.

There is still work to do, and we will not suggest otherwise. But there has also been considerable progress. Our schools are substantially staffed, and significant works have been completed across our school estate. Approximately 78 per cent of identified health and safety priorities have either been completed or are actively being addressed. Long-standing infrastructure matters, including the electrical supply capacity needed

to operate air-conditioning safely and properly at Elliot Primary, are being advanced. We have expanded ASD/GDD provisions with new programmes at Harrington Sound Primary and Northlands Primary. And we are strengthening accountability for outstanding school works so that our school leaders know what remains and when they can expect it to be addressed.

Madam Deputy Speaker, none of this happens without people. I close by thanking our teachers, principals, paraeducators, counsellors, custodians, administrative staff, department and Ministry officers, facilities personnel, Works and Engineering teams, contractors, and partners across government who worked throughout the summer to prepare our schools. To our parents and families, thank you for your patience as this work has progressed and as the remaining work continues.

Most importantly, to our students: welcome back. I wish every student and educator in the Bermuda public school system a safe, successful and rewarding 2026/27 academic year. As our work continues, our responsibility remains clear: to create the conditions in which every child can learn, belong and succeed.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

I now call on Minister Dill. I think she has a [Statement] for us.

Minister Dill, you have the floor.

Hon. Rev. Dr. Emilygail A. Dill: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

PUBLIC SERVICE SCHOLARSHIP AWARD PROGRAMME 2026 UPDATE

Hon. Rev. Dr. Emilygail A. Dill: Madam Deputy Speaker, it is with great enthusiasm that I rise today to update this Honourable House on the Government's 2026 Public Service Scholarship Award programme, an important initiative designed to invest in Bermudians and strengthen the capacity of Bermuda's public service.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this programme was established in response to the Government's 2025 Throne Speech commitment to modernise the Public Service Graduate Scheme and to ensure that Bermuda has a strong pipeline of qualified, capable and committed professionals ready to serve in critical areas across government.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Public Service Scholarship Award programme provides tuition support of up to BD\$30,000 per year, renewable for up to three years, for Bermudians pursuing studies in critical and hard-to-fill posts. These posts are directly linked to the needs of the public service and include areas such as health, engineering, planning, environmental services, policy, legal training and other essential professional disciplines. Recipients of the scholarship are required to return to Bermuda after completing their studies and

serve in an approved public service role for five years. This requirement ensures that the Government's investment supports not only the individual recipient, but also the wider community through strengthened public services.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the programme also includes mandatory internship placements within government departments, giving scholarship recipients practical experience, early exposure to the public service, and a clearer understanding of the work they will be expected to undertake upon completion of their studies.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to report that the spring 2026 award cycle attracted a healthy interest, with approximately 34 applications received. Following the assessment and interview process, awards were assigned across priority roles in the Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Justice. The spring 2026 awards targeted posts including policy analyst, dental hygienist, senior medical officer, medical officer, dental officer, environmental health officer and pupil. While two awards were subsequently declined, the process demonstrated strong public interest in opportunities that connect education, career development and service to Bermuda.

Madam Deputy Speaker, a total of \$500,000 was allotted to the programme. Of this amount, \$316,000 was used for the spring 2026 awards (including support of existing bursary students), leaving BD\$184,000 available to support the fall 2026 awards. I am pleased to advise that no additional funding is required for the fall 2026 cycle. The fall 2026 cycle was introduced to respond to additional demand from students requiring sponsorship and to allow departments with critical workforce needs to participate where positions were not advertised during the spring cycle or where departmental requests were not submitted during the initial period.

There are 13 advertised posts in the fall 2026 cycle across Public Works, Environmental and Natural Resources, Planning and Health. These include engineering, veterinary, planning, environmental health, dental, speech language pathology, nursing, and environmental coordination roles.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this programme is more than a scholarship. It is a strategic talent acquisition tool for the Government. It supports succession planning, enables recruitment and retention of future talent, and helps ensure that Bermudians are prepared to fill essential roles that the country depends on.

Madam Deputy Speaker, by linking scholarship support to a clear public service commitment, the Government is ensuring that public funds are used responsibly and that Bermuda receives a meaningful return on its investment. We are supporting our people, strengthening our institutions, and preparing the public service for future demands.

I wish to thank the departments that have participated in this programme, the officers who have

supported the assessment process, and the applicants who have demonstrated their commitment to professional development and public service.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Government will continue to invest in Bermudians, support critical workforce needs, and build a modern, capable and service-focused public service for the benefit of the people of Bermuda.

Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

That concludes Statements given by Ministers. And that brings us to petitions . . . sorry, not petitions.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The Deputy Speaker: There are none.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Deputy Speaker: And I have several Members who have indicated that they wish to ask questions, but before we go to [questions on] the [Statements], we must deal with the questions on the Order Paper. And the first set of questions that we will be dealing with are to Minister Darrell, and they have been asked by the Honourable Ben Smith, and I think they all require oral answers. And so, we will start.

Member, can you read your question to the Minister?

QUESTION 1: INTERNATIONAL SPORTING EVENTS, MINISTER'S ATTENDANCE

Hon. Ben Smith: Yes, thank you, and good morning, Madam Deputy Speaker.

To the Honourable Minister: This summer, three major international sporting events were held: the FIFA World Cup, the Commonwealth Games and the Central American and Caribbean Games. Will the Honourable Minister please provide this Honourable House with details of his attendance at each of these events, including the dates attended and the official purpose of his attendance?

The Deputy Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I wish to advise this Honourable House that I did attend the FIFA World Cup during this summer period. However, Madam Honourable [Deputy] Speaker, my attendance was undertaken solely in my capacity as a private citizen, and not in my capacity as a Minister of the Government.

An Hon. Member: Aha!

Hon. Owen Darrell: All costs, every single penny, Madam Deputy Speaker, associated with my travel, associated with my accommodation, associated with my attendance, and any related expenses were paid personally by me.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Owen Darrell: With respect to the Commonwealth Games and Central American and Caribbean Games, I did not attend these events, Madam Deputy Speaker, as I was on Island, supporting a local sporting event, one called Cup Match.

An Hon. Member: Aha!

Hon. Owen Darrell: Cup Match Classic, which comes under most of my responsibilities, as well as a long-planned personal vacation.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Minister.
Your second question?

Hon. Ben Smith: Supplemental question. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

[Crosstalk]

The Deputy Speaker: To the, I guess, to the . . .

Hon. Ben Smith: Well, the Minister has just stated that he did not attend those events.

The Deputy Speaker: Right.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Hon. Ben Smith: So, my question based off of that is, did the Government send any other representative—

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. Yes.

Hon. Ben Smith: —considering that the Minister was unable to attend because of his conflict? Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Owen Darrell: I'm not sure, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: You said you didn't.

Hon. Owen Darrell: I think the Opposition Leader may have been there. I'm not sure.

The Deputy Speaker: I thought you said in your comment that you did . . . no one attended.

Hon. Owen Darrell: I did not attend.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

Hon. Owen Darrell: I cannot speak to anyone else.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
I think he's answered your question.

Hon. Ben Smith: So, I'll use a supplementary, a second supplementary—

The Deputy Speaker: A second supplementary. Go ahead.

Hon. Ben Smith: Was there anyone from the Ministry of Sport that was there to represent Bermuda at the Commonwealth Games and Central American Games, considering we have heard today how much of a big deal that was for Bermuda?

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. Thank you. That's a different question.
Minister.

Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam Deputy Speaker, I know that I did say earlier, and it is in the public domain, and we will continue to say it over and over, the amount of money that this Government spends to support athletes in all disciplines.

I know the Honourable Member may have been there. I cannot speak to who was there and on what capacity they were in, but I know that I have told this House many times, and it is on public record, that this Government supports athletes in a multitude of ways, and Sport matters.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
Second question?

Hon. Ben Smith: Second question. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

QUESTION 2: INTERNATIONAL SPORTING EVENTS, OFFICIAL MEETINGS

Hon. Ben Smith: For each of the FIFA World Cup, Commonwealth Games and Central American and Caribbean Games, will the Honourable Minister please identify for this Honourable House any official meetings he attended, with whom he met, and the purpose and outcome of those meetings?

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam Deputy Speaker, I will repeat for the record once again. My attendance at the

FIFA World Cup was of a personal nature. It was not connected to any official government business, any official government function or representation on behalf of the Government.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Hon. Ben Smith: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.
Is the Honourable Minister—

The Deputy Speaker: Supplemental?

Hon. Ben Smith: Supplemental on that question.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Hon. Ben Smith: Is the Honourable Minister able to tell us whether there were any official meetings at either the Commonwealth Games or Central American Games which should have had representation from Bermuda that did not?

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam Deputy Speaker, I know that the . . . I saw pictures that the Governor was there. I am sure there were meetings there. As far as anyone else that was there, I know the Minister from St. Lucia was there, because he sent me a message. There were a couple of other Ministers there, probably Ministers from all around the world.

But as I have stated three times this morning, Madam Deputy Speaker, I was not in attendance. So, I cannot speak as to who was in Glasgow, who was in Santo Domingo. But I am sure the Opposition Leader seems to have a lot of knowledge as to who was there, so maybe he can tell us.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
Second supplemental or your third question?

Hon. Ben Smith: Second supplemental, thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

Hon. Ben Smith: Considering we have heard that the Minister was not in attendance, but there was a Sports Minister meeting at the Commonwealth Games. Would the Honourable Minister let us know if he has received any briefing that would have potentially given Bermuda insight into how we can help our sporting going forward?

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I will say this. There was a time ago that I did attend a meeting similar that was for Youth Commonwealth Ministers, and it was unfortunate that we are not a nation, Madam Deputy Speaker, and it was unfortunate that the territories were stuck in a corner, and we had no voice at these meetings.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, as the Opposition Leader seems to have a lot of knowledge about meetings that were there, and I am not sure if he was there, he can ask someone else who [was] a representative for Bermuda at those meetings what was talked about, if they were invited, and maybe they can give him a briefing. But I was not there, Madam Deputy Speaker. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
Third question?

Hon. Ben Smith: Madam Deputy Speaker, the third question was answered in the Minister's Statement. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. Thank you.

[Crosstalk]

The Deputy Speaker: [Microphone not on.]

[Inaudible interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: Sorry. Can you state your question, please? I was not on the microphone.

Mr. Dwayne Robinson: Yes, thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: For the Honourable Minister Lightbourne. Yes.

Mr. Dwayne Robinson: Good morning, [Madam] Deputy Speaker. Thank you.

QUESTION 1: INTEGRATED RESOURCE PLAN 2026, LEGAL APPEALS TO THE SUSPENSION OF

Mr. Dwayne Robinson: Will the Honourable Minister please confirm for this Honourable House whether there have been legal appeals to the suspension of the Integrated Resource Plan 2026, and if so, also confirm the current expenditure and any estimated total cost to the taxpayer for the entirety of these proceedings?

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Alexa Lightbourne: Good morning, Madam Deputy Speaker, and to the listening audience.

The Ministry can confirm that there were two appeals lodged, both by the Regulatory Authority and the utility, relating to the Integrated Resource Planning pause. As of August 26, the Ministry's account for the expenditure is at \$24,000. But this does not take into consideration that the electricity tariffs and all the fees associated are coupled with whatever the Regulatory Authority's fees and legal fees may be, and, likewise, for the utility, which is often as part of the rate case.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Minister.
Supplemental or second question?

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Mr. Dwayne Robinson: Supplemental.

Just . . . I would like to ask the Minister if she would be willing to commit to this House to bring the final cost once these proceedings are concluded.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Alexa Lightbourne: Certainly, the Ministry can disclose its cost. But it should be known that, as I previously spoke to, the cost for the ratepayer (that will be to the Bermudian taxpayer, which is the question's framing) will include any costs that are associated with the utility, and also costs that are associated with the Regulatory Authority, of which that is not under the direct purview and ability to disclose of the Ministry.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
Second supplemental or second question?

Mr. Dwayne Robinson: Second supplemental. Thank you. And I thank the Minister for that answer.

If these legal challenges are successful, can the Minister inform this Honourable House of what the next steps will be for Government?

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Alexa Lightbourne: While I will not speak to hypothetical frameworks or possibilities, I am confident in the Government's policy. On behalf of the Bermudian public, I am confident in the IRP pause, which sought to rightsize and transition to be more aligned to what the Government's policy objectives are. And to rightsize our energy transition for the benefit of those who are paying exorbitant electricity fees and who are seeking for relief, both for those who have installed solar and other renewable technologies, and those who are traditionally consuming electricity through gas, fossil fuels.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Second question?

Mr. Dwayne Robinson: Yes, thank you.
Second question.

QUESTION 2: INTEGRATED RESOURCE PLAN 2026, PRIORITISING OF

Mr. Dwayne Robinson: Will the Honourable Minister please explain to this Honourable House how her Ministry intends to ensure renewable energy is given priority in our energy resource mix, as laid out in the National Electricity Sector Policy 2026, with the new BELCO facilities charge discouraging current solar energy users?

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Alexa Lightbourne: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. And I thank the Honourable Member for his question. Because what it does is it allows for there to be clarity in the *why* for the IRP pause, and the *why* the Government has sought to advance its policies.

And that is to ensure that the consumer, baked into the policy, is around consumer awareness and affordability, including the pillars of reliability and sustainability as well. And so, to continue to see a sector unravel in a direction that is not aligned to the Government's policy or the Government's wish as given to it by the people of Bermuda, in that they have asked for, not only their cost of living to be reduced, but also for their electricity to be not only reduced, but also cleaner . . . and so, the direction of travel, which would have initially committed to 85 per cent renewables, did not bear the fruits of that commitment. And so, the policy is seeking to prioritise that, and the policy is intended to inform what the Integrated Resource Plan is and the policies and procurement thereafter.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
Supplemental?

SUPPLEMENTARY

Mr. Dwayne Robinson: Yes. Thank you. Supplemental.

The answer given by the Minister, I just wanted some clarity as to it . . . it . . . it appeared in the public domain that she supported the tiered pricing changes that were laid out and approved by the Regulatory Authority. So, I just ask to confirm whether she supported these changes or not.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Alexa Lightbourne: So, I want to clarify that the support was for reviewing the rates and the costs that were being allocated across both traditional, so non-fossil fuel consumers, and those who have installed solar, which is called Distributed Generation. And so, it has been seen, and there have been reports to suggest that those who do not have solar installed in their homes are being . . . are paying fees associated with those who do not. So those who did not have solar installed were having costs added to their electricity bills that were not reflective of their consumption, which was part of a facilities charge.

The ministerial directive that was sent to the Regulatory Authority in 2025 sought to look at system planning, which included this as one of the ways in which they ought to review the entire system, that is, the electricity and the costs that are associated. It was not anticipated that there would be an à la carte, and so outside of system planning there would be a selection of one particular policy, one particular provision that was sought to also be included. But that is under the remit of the Regulatory Authority, and I cannot speak to how they prioritise their decision-making.

But I would say that the fairness of costs is what the Ministry advocated for, and to discontinue the fact that there would be those who are paying fees that are not associated with their usage, and so that is what the Ministry was in support of.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Minister.
Is that it?

[No audible response]

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

The questions for the Honourable Jache Adams posed by [Member] Dwayne Robinson have been deferred until the 11th of September. And the questions for the Honourable Jache Adams posed by Member Linda Smith have been deferred until September 25.

Thank you. So, for the questions on the Order Paper, they have now been dealt with.

And that takes us to the questions from Members on the Statements given by Ministers. And I have questions from Member Smith for the Minister of Housing.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Deputy Speaker: No, for the Minister of Housing.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Deputy Speaker: [Member] Linda Smith, yes.

QUESTION 1: HOUSING REHABILITATION AND REPURPOSING: EXPANDING BERMUDA'S HOUSING STOCK

Ms. Linda Smith: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Yes, my question is, approximately a year ago the Minister responsible for planning overturned a DAB rejection of a plan for a residential seniors' facility at Channel House, and we now see that the Government is moving forward with this plan. What happened to the original plan, and is there any private sector investment in the plan going forward that was released this week?

The Deputy Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Channel House property, as the Honourable Member may know, was put out to RFP [request for proposal]. We did receive several applications from different entities. We were talking to two in particular about possibly doing something at that site, and whilst I do not want to reveal any commercially sensitive information, we all know that there has been a major challenge at the hospital. And I was one of those who experienced a bed in the hallway. We know this has been a problem.

I know the Minister of Health is not here today, but she has been looking very feverishly at finding accommodations for that. And it was decided between the two of us that Channel House would fill that void quite nicely. So, those changes were made. And I am happy to say that hopefully in the near future, sooner rather than later, with the help of the Minister of Planning, that we can get our seniors in that facility sooner rather than later.

Ms. Linda Smith: Thank you very much, Minister.

My question was whether there is any private investment in this upcoming plan. I take it that the answer is no, that this is a complete Government project. And so, with that in mind, unless I am incorrect in that, my question is—

The Deputy Speaker: Supplemental question?

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Ms. Linda Smith: Yes.

My supplemental question is that . . . between \$8 [million] and \$10 million has been budgeted for this. And my question is: Are there any existing plans that will be facilitated and used as part of this new venture? And if so, what are some variations to the plan that may shift it from perhaps a residential kind of care facility to something that has a bit more of, I guess a medical bent to that, or so it appears? So, my question is: Are there existing plans, and have those plans helped to inform the \$8 [million] to \$10 million budget that was mentioned in the announcement?

The Deputy Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: There are some existing plans, and those plans are being looked at urgently by the respective ministries involved, and we look forward to the finalisation of that in the near future.

The Deputy Speaker: Second supplemental or second question?

Ms. Linda Smith: Second supplemental.

My question is: Do those plans include anything like rehabilitative services and wound treatment and things that could be done as an outpatient service? Because that also seems to be a backlog in terms of what is happening at the hospital, particularly the wound treatment aspect of taking care of elderly people who could be at home if they had that available to them. So, are there any outpatient services that are being considered for that facility?

The Deputy Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: No.

The Deputy Speaker: Do you have a second question or are you done? Second question?

Ms. Linda Smith: No, I am done.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

That takes me to Member Tucker. Member Tucker also has questions for you, Minister.

QUESTION 1: HOUSING REHABILITATION AND REPURPOSING: EXPANDING BERMUDA'S HOUSING STOCK

Ms. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

My question is very general. We all know that there are also a number of underutilised vacant government buildings. I appreciate that there are some that have been identified that are going to be used. But to me, there is still a lot of focus on tapping into the private sector and private sector properties, and rightfully so.

So, my question is whether the Government has identified additional government underutilised and vacant buildings and schools that they will use to also help to supplement, in addition to what they are already doing, to further supplement the housing stock.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: We are looking at all properties in Bermuda.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

Supplemental?

Ms. Robin Tucker: Yes, please just one supplemental.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Ms. Robin Tucker: And that is, can the Minister please confirm if there are any additional identified ones that are Government-owned and are underutilised and currently vacant that they have identified for use at this time. I appreciate that they are looking at all properties, but I am specifically asking about Government-owned properties.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: That will be announced in due course.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, thank you.
Any further questions?

[No audible response]

The Deputy Speaker: No.
Okay, that takes us to Member King. He has questions for you, Minister. Okay.

[Crosstalk]

Mr. Robert King: Good morning, Madam Deputy Speaker. Members—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Robert King: I do feel good.

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Robert King: We will see. It is early days. It is early days.

[Laughter]

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. Talk to the Chair.

QUESTION 1: HOUSING REHABILITATION AND REPURPOSING: EXPANDING BERMUDA'S HOUSING STOCK

Mr. Robert King: So, good morning to both sides of the House and the listening public.

This question is for Minister of Housing. According to the housing strategy and the needs of the community for housing, what is the projected number of units (whether they be through repurposed, abandoned, already available but need fixed up) and new development construction? How many units per year,

and how long will it take to resolve the issue as it currently stands?

The Deputy Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: As many as possible and as quickly as possible.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.
Supplemental?

Mr. Robert King: Thank you, Minister.

The Deputy Speaker: Is this a supplemental question?

Mr. Robert King: This is a supplemental, yes.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Mr. Robert King: Can the Minister speak to the actual number of projected units to be built, repurposed per year, understanding that the homeless figures from October of last year, I believe, were 1,331, and that the number of persons on the critical housing list, unless I am mistaken, was approximately 71. So, what number is projected to be built to meet the needs that currently exist? Actual numbers.

The Deputy Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: That is all in the public domain, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
Second supplemental or second question?

Mr. Robert King: Second supplemental, please.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

Mr. Robert King: Understanding that whenever we do renovations there are normally unanticipated costs, which is different from a new build. Does the Minister anticipate that there are going to be additional monies required and that the Minister will be seeking a supplemental to ensure that this plan comes to fruition?

The Deputy Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: That is a hypothetical question at this stage. It really is.

The Deputy Speaker: So, you cannot answer that; that is what you are saying? Yes.

Okay, that is all of the questions for you, Minister.

That takes us to Minister Darrell. Minister Darrell, your question is being asked on your [Statement]

on Sports, and I call on Member Smith, the Opposition Leader.

QUESTION 1: CENTRAL AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN GAMES 2026; AND 2026 COMMONWEALTH GAMES, BERMUDA'S PARTICIPATION IN

Hon. Ben Smith: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

First of all, I would like to thank the Minister for the Statement. Obviously, everyone in the House is in agreement with the congratulations to all the athletes who were mentioned. It is always great to see our athletes participating at that high level, representing Bermuda.

First question: Will the Honourable Minister provide this House with the total cost associated with Bermuda's participation in the 2026 Central American and Caribbean Games and the Commonwealth Games, and how much of that total cost was funded by the Government?

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am actually shocked that the Opposition Leader will ask that question because he, of anyone in this House, will know that the Government grants money to the National Sport Governing Bodies.

Now, what I do not do is tell the National [Sport] Governing Bodies exactly what they have to do and should do with that money, except when it is maybe elite athletes, when it is the junior athlete fund, you know. But the Opposition Leader will know that the Government has continued to support the National [Sport] Governing Bodies, of which there are 26. And while he had questions on the table earlier about where I go and where I do not go, I ask him, Madam Deputy Speaker, if he is coming to the opening football match this Sunday, the Charity Cup, that the Bermuda Football Association is putting on? Or if there are any others, because why I did not see him at the Eastern Counties series,—

An Hon. Member: Aha!

Hon. Owen Darrell: —Madam Deputy Speaker, or any other sporting events.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Owen Darrell: So, Madam Deputy Speaker, while I cannot answer the question as to how the National [Sport] Governing Bodies, of which he may be a part, spent their money at the games of which they competed, I can tell you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that there are very few sporting events that this Minister of Sport does not attend throughout the year.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
Supplemental?

Hon. Ben Smith: Supplemental. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Hon. Ben Smith: Madam Deputy Speaker, my question was not about the Minister attending or not attending on this particular Statement.

The purpose of this question, and this is where the supplementary comes from, is that the Minister stated that he gave the Government, provided a certain amount of money, for these games that happened over the summer. My question to the Minister is: Is he aware of what the actual total cost to attend those games was? Because if you are going to give money specifically towards the games, the reason why you would want to know whether there is a shortfall is whether, in the future, we have to increase the budget. My questions are about increasing the support of sport, and I am not doing this from a personal position. It is about how we increase the support for sport.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam Deputy Speaker, I cannot assist the Honourable Opposition Leader how he should ask his questions, but I answered the question that was asked to me.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, as we spend many long hours in this House, in this place, during budget time, the Opposition Leader would know that the Government budgets money that we are going to grant to the National Sport Governing Bodies. It is well documented. I said in the Statement that we assisted in giving \$100,000 to the Bermuda Olympic Association in support of travel and other needs. And, Madam Deputy Speaker, if the National [Sport] Governing Bodies believe, as they always do, that there should be more money granted from the Government, they put that in their grant request, and the Minister responsible for Sport takes it under advisement.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Second supplemental or question?

Hon. Ben Smith: Second supplemental.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

Hon. Ben Smith: Considering that the Honourable Minister stated how important and historic the teams that we sent to both Commonwealth Games and CAC Games were this summer, including a significant size of a team for CAC Games, is the Minister able to find

out for us whether there was a shortfall for the funding of those competitions?

The Deputy Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam Deputy Speaker, those discussions are with the individual National Sport Governing Bodies. And as the Opposition Leader quite rightly knows the teams just came back from their international competitions. And if there was a shortfall, they have, many of them, sponsorship ways and ways to find that money. But I can tell you that when the Government is supporting and is on record of supporting [with] millions and millions of dollars, increased from what previous Governments did, I am not sure how the Opposition Leader, who is a coach of a National Sport Governing Body, can come to this place and try to throw cold water on the support that this Government is giving that has never seen these amounts in previous Governments.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Do you have a second question?

QUESTION 2: CENTRAL AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN GAMES 2026 AND 2026 COMMONWEALTH GAMES, BERMUDA'S PARTICIPATION IN

Hon. Ben Smith: Second question. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker, let me put on the record that, first of all, I am grateful and thankful to the Government for the continued increase in the funding of sport. But that is not the purpose of these questions. I will continue to advocate for more support. The way you do that is find out what the numbers are, what the shortfalls are, so that when it comes to budget time we know that there should be an increase or not. I am grateful for the elite athlete funding that was provided to support a number of the athletes who competed at these Games.

Can the Honourable Minister advise how many athletes who participated in the CAC Games and Commonwealth Games were not designated as elite athletes, therefore did not receive that funding?

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Opposition Leader will know that in order to be considered for the elite athlete fund, the application must come from the athlete through the National Sport Governing Body. So, the Opposition Leader will know that there may have been some individuals competing at the Games who did not receive elite athlete funding because they did not apply, Madam Deputy Speaker.

And the Opposition Leader also knows that that is not an exercise that I can do on my feet at this time. But I am sure when the National Sport Governing Bodies meet, they can all get together, and that information can be compiled. I would ask, possibly the Opposition Leader, in his capacity in another place, may actually lead that committee.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Hon. Ben Smith: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Supplemental?

SUPPLEMENTARY

Hon. Ben Smith: Supplemental.

So, considering that I can state (and I know that the Minister will agree with me) that the number of athletes who participated in both of those Games is significantly higher than the number of athletes who get elite athlete funding, the reason I am pointing that out and asking that question is because the level of support that is needed to carry out a team that has 78 athletes is significant. And the cost of hotels, the cost of travel, all of those costs worldwide have gone up. So, as we try to participate at this level, it is having an impact. So is the Minister able to tell us, maybe not today, but get the information on how many of those athletes did not get that support? Which means that in the future we might have to support at a higher level, separate from the elite athlete funding.

The Deputy Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam Deputy Speaker, what I do not appreciate today is that the implication is coming from the Honourable Opposition Leader that the Government has not continued to support more to athletes, whether it be elite athletes, whether it be junior athletes, whether it be athletes who are competing on Saturday mornings at the BFA's junior football games, that the Government has continued to support.

And I would like to take this opportunity to also realise that the Opposition Leader and everyone knows that there is going to be a shortfall in funding when it comes to everything. And I would like to thank the private sector that has stepped up in many different sports. And some sports will argue that the private sector supports some National Sport Governing Bodies more than others. But to come to this place, Madam Deputy Speaker, as we have brought this Statement that is celebrating athletes and celebrating the success that they have had on the world stage, and celebrating that the people's funds have gone into increasing that support to these athletes, that we have done something wrong or we have not done enough. And everywhere it can be argued that people can do more. But I will argue

that this PLP Government has done more than a previous PLP Government of which that Member was a part of.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: You mean UBP, OBA or whichever it was.

[Laughter and inaudible interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: Third question, Member?

Hon. Ben Smith: Third question, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

QUESTION 3: CENTRAL AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN GAMES 2026 AND 2026 COMMONWEALTH GAMES, BERMUDA'S PARTICIPATION IN

Hon. Ben Smith: Given that Bermuda sent its largest delegation to multiple sport games this summer, would the Honourable Minister advise whether the Government has or will conduct a post-games review of the cost performance and overall value so that they are informed of what funding is needed for future games?

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Owen Darrell: Once again, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Opposition Leader is implying that these things are not already done. We do it every year when the Government starts to plan its budgets—

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Point of order—

The Deputy Speaker: Your point of order?

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: —Madam Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Owen Darrell: Point of order? I'm asking a question—

[Inaudible interjections]

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: The Minister is no doubt unintentionally misleading the House, because my colleague has not implied anything. He has just asked the question. The Minister is drawing his own conclusions, and it would be nice if he would be clear—

[Inaudible interjections]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: —about drawing . . . he is drawing own conclusions, so the public is not misinformed, and this House is not misinformed.

[Inaudible interjections]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Okay.
Minister.

Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am not really sure I understand what that was, but I am going to continue on where I was going. So let me change my language a little bit to make it even clearer.

The Progressive Labour Party Government and the public officers who are in the Department of Sport and Recreation, and every other government department around here, starts what is called a budgeting process that will start probably next month. And in that budgeting process, the directors of different departments, one of which is the Director of Sport, will meet with different National Sport Governing Bodies.

I am sure the Honourable Opposition Leader knows that the National Sport Governing Body has their own group, and maybe he should take his lobby efforts there, so that when we start the budget process, and the Minister responsible for Sport, in about January, looks at these budgets and decides the allocation he is going to take to Cabinet to convince his colleagues to grant an increase, as has happened every year, to the Sport budget, then I can tell you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that yes, those are already in place.

So, I am . . . I . . . The Honourable Member from the other side says that I am coming to my own conclusions. I am trying to figure it out. We came here this morning. We started with such a joyous and happy, and I mean, the planes were going out of here full with athletes who had support from all areas of this. And the Opposition Leader, I am shocked to hear again, Madam Deputy Speaker, is throwing cold water on the success of our athletes.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Madam [Deputy] Speaker, point of order.

An Hon. Member: How dare you!

[Inaudible interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: Your point of order?

An Hon. Member: How dare you!

[Inaudible interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: Point of order.
Speak to the Chair, please.

POINT OF ORDER*[Imputing improper motive]*

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: The Minister is imputing improper motive. And I would advise the Minister that next summer he tries to get a little more rest so he can come to this place with a good attitude—

[Inaudible interjections]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: —and take the questions in the spirit—

[Inaudible interjections]

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: —to which they are intended. Which is to improve the sporting performance. Thank you.

[General uproar]

The Deputy Speaker: Excuse me, that's not . . . take your seat. Okay.
Minister, are you finished answering? Yes.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Deputy Speaker: You have finished?

Hon. Owen Darrell: Yes.

The Deputy Speaker: Proceed.

Hon. Ben Smith: Supplemental. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Right.

Hon. Ben Smith: The Minister started his response saying that the Government already does what I asked for, which is that they will do a review specifically of multiple sport games so that they are aware of what that cost is, and if there is a shortfall. If that is the case, because that is what his answer was, would the Minister endeavour to bring us whether there was a shortfall for these events so that . . . once again my position here is not about cold water. My position is to advocate for more support to sports so that we can make sure that we can continue to grow the number of athletes who are going overseas.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

[Inaudible interjections]

An Hon. Member: There you go.

The Deputy Speaker: Did you—

Hon. Owen Darrell: I would like to thank the Opposition Leader for advocating for more support for sports. But the history would show that since I have been the Minister of Sport, and Progressive Labour Party Sport Ministers before me, the support for sports has continued to increase. And I have no doubt that it will continue as we go forward. So, thank you to the Opposition Leader for that.

That review, as he may or may not know, will come from the Bermuda Olympic Association's report that they will send to us. As I said before, this process is already in place. And when they apply for funding in the grant process, along with other National Sport Governing [Bodies] . . . and I will tell him that the process starts on September 1 (just a few days ago), and ends on October 31. So, while the Opposition Leader is doing his part to go, as I would say, you know, a different direction, that process is actually already underway. And as a member of a National Sport Governing Body, I am shocked that he does not know that.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
Second supplemental? Or . . . That is it?

[No audible response]

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

That ends questions for you on your Sport [Statement], Minister.

That moves us to Minister Hayward's Second [Statement] on sham marriages.

I call on Member King.

**QUESTION 1: SHAM MARRIAGES
POLICY PROPOSAL**

Mr. Robert King: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I have one question for Minister Hayward regarding the proposed changes. I think it makes good sense for the country to make sure that those are here for the right reasons, and I think it is a step in the right direction.

The first question I have is in terms of the new policies: What jurisdictions are we modelling our Bill with, our approach, in informing what is best for this community?

The Deputy Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Jason Hayward: I think what we have done from a policy standpoint is rightsize the solutions to Bermuda's jurisdiction. What we have done is recognise that sham marriages do exist in other territories. But you will not see a complete mirror image. And that is why we have not made direct reference to any other country's framework or any of their Bills or legislation.

I think the importance here is understanding the uniqueness of Bermuda and ensuring that we have

that level of synergy between the Registry General's department and the Department of Immigration so that we can have an approach which does not impede on persons' human rights and marriage rights but also ensures that we protect the integrity of our marriage framework and systems in Bermuda.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Do you have a supplemental to that question or a second question?

Mr. Robert King: I have a supplemental.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Mr. Robert King: Would the Minister . . . I know the Minister indicated that, anecdotally, there seems to be a rise, or there are a significant number of persons who are in sham marriages. Can the Minister speak to an approximate number that have been identified, and that action has been taken to remove them from this jurisdiction?

The Deputy Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Jason Hayward: In my Statement I embraced that there is limited empirical evidence. We do not have a definition of sham marriages. And as a result I cannot define current constructs to be sham marriages until it is clearly defined.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Second supplemental or second question?

QUESTION 2: SHAM MARRIAGES POLICY PROPOSAL

Mr. Robert King: Second question.

With regard to the mechanics of this new legislation, will there be a provision in there as well that will speak to language requirements for persons who are seeking to marry Bermudians? Because what we do know is, in terms of employment, language requirements.

The reason why I am saying that is regarding human rights and making sure that the person who is marrying a Bermudian understands his or her rights and their human rights are being protected. So, understanding what it means and what their rights are. That is my final question.

Thank you.

Hon. Jason Hayward: There is no language provision for one to engage in a marital relationship with a non-Bermudian.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

That is it?

[No audible response]

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

That moves me to Member Tucker, who also has questions for you, Minister. Member, please pose your question.

QUESTION 1: SHAM MARRIAGES POLICY PROPOSAL

Ms. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

My question is around . . . I am a little bit conflicted on the question, because there was a part in the Statement that said that there is no legislative power, I guess, for investigations to actually take place. So, I am wondering whether . . . like, what does the public do in terms of reporting? So, if they are aware that there is a, or I should say, if it appears that there is a sham marriage and they would like to report it to immigration, is it . . . what . . . is it purposeful? Like, why would they do it if there is no power to investigate? And so . . . that will be the first question.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

Minister.

Hon. Jason Hayward: And I believe the question speaks to the purpose of why I brought the policy. And we are moving forward with legislative amendments to make it abundantly clear to the public what constitutes a sham marriage, and how it should be reported, how we will investigate, and how we will adjudicate on those particular matters.

Notwithstanding that, there are matters that are being brought to our attention regarding marriages that people engage in that seek to circumvent either Immigration laws or other laws in Bermuda, and those are addressed on a case-by-case basis, but they are not defined as sham marriages because we have no legal definition for sham marriages currently.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Is there a supplemental? Yes? Okay.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Ms. Robin Tucker: Yes, please, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Can the Minister tell us how one goes about reporting a suspected . . . what would appear to be a sham marriage? Because, I mean, this has been going on for decades, right? I mean, we have seen it. So how do they report? Do they just go through the hotline? If the Minister can explain that.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
Minister.

Hon. Jason Hayward: So, when we move forward with the legislation, we will also move forward with guidance to the public as to the appropriate reporting mechanisms. I do not want the Bermuda public to believe that investigations are currently not taking place, but the legal parameters around those investigations are very limited.

I also want to indicate that we did have a framework in place where we were doing interviews between the Bermudian and the non-Bermudian to ensure that it was a legitimate relationship. We were then challenged by the . . . through legal means. And the courts actually ruled that what we were doing, as it pertains to ensuring that we were safeguarding marriage in Bermuda, did not have the legislative support required. As a result, we were forced to stop that practice. And ever since that, we have not continued with that level of interview and investigation.

Notwithstanding that, we do know of cases where there has been proof where financial transactions have been made and things of that nature, and they are investigated.

Notwithstanding that, you still have limited scope based on the law not having the appropriate safeguards in place to ensure that we protect the marital status and the marital framework that Bermuda intended to have in place for its residents.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
Second supplemental or second question?

Ms. Robin Tucker: Second supplemental, please, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I understand the dilemma, but can the Minister just sort of give some general guidance at this point to the public as to what they should be doing? I mean, I appreciate that Immigration is looking into it, not necessarily investigating, but can he give some general guidance as to what the public should actually be doing if Immigration should be looking into a situation?

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.
Minister.

Hon. Jason Hayward: So, there is already a framework in place where marriages can be challenged through the Registry General's Office. And so, every marriage in Bermuda is posted, gazetted. The purpose of gazetting is to see if anybody has a challenge against that particular marriage. And that is important because we have had family members say that *my family member is listed, but my family member is not sound of mind*. And as a result of that, it causes us to then pause and investigate. If we determine that somebody has power of attorney over that individual, because they are not of sound mind, then we have to question: How can

they can engage in this marriage? And we have found this and stopped those marriages from taking place.

And so, there are two mechanisms. There is a mechanism through the Registry General, which is the primary office responsible for marriage. If it relates to an immigration matter, then oftentimes the two departments work together. Or one can attend the church service, and when the pastor asks: *Does anybody have any objections to this marriage?*, one can raise their hand and object.

[Laughter]

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
Do you have a second question?

Ms. Robin Tucker: Yes, please, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

QUESTION 2: SHAM MARRIAGES POLICY PROPOSAL

Ms. Robin Tucker: Thank you to the Minister for that. I have yet to be at a wedding where someone has put their hand up, but I will certainly be looking forward to attending one if there is one.

So, my second question is: Currently, what is the immigration framework for the investigations? Right? So, can the Minister speak to that? How many people are actually doing it, and the responsibility?

I expect it is in compliance. It has been in compliance as far as I know. I have been doing immigration work since the 1990s. I am just wondering what is the total number of people that are actually looking into it?

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Jason Hayward: The compliance team in immigration is actually responsible for the investigations. But let me state clearly that we were forced to stop the investigative procedures that we were conducting because we did not have the legislative statutory remit to do so. And this is why we are putting the legislation in place.

What I have tabled today is the policy that will inform the legislation. The Cabinet has already approved the drafting of the legislation, so we are going to be drafting it, and the legislation should be here shortly. Once the legislation is to the House of Assembly, we will be sure to inform the public of all the steps that are necessary to take place moving forward, and we will utilise the framework that we have settled in law.

Notwithstanding that, if persons do have current complaints, they can make their complaints to the Immigration Department or have an objection to the marriage once that marriage is actually gazetted.

The Deputy Speaker: Any further questions? No? Okay.

Member Pearman has questions for you as well.

QUESTION 1: SHAM MARRIAGES POLICY PROPOSAL

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I thank the Honourable Minister for bringing to the Honourable House today his policy proposal on sham marriages. Thank you, Minister. I did read the policy as well.

In your Statement, you say that in relation to sham marriages there were, quote, "concerns" raised. Who was it that raised these concerns?

The Deputy Speaker: You mean as in a person, a body, or something?

[Inaudible interjection]

The Deputy Speaker: Body. Okay.

Hon. Jason Hayward: Members of the public would have raised concerns. And I gave one scenario where it was a legitimate concern raised based on a family member who they know did not have the cognitive ability to make an informed decision.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you. Supplementary.

The Honourable Minister said that he wanted the Bermuda public to know that investigations are currently taking place. Is the Honourable Minister able to share with this Honourable House approximately how many sham marriages are currently being investigated?

The Deputy Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Jason Hayward: Again, Members are using terms that are not—

The Deputy Speaker: Can't answer you.

Hon. Jason Hayward: —defined by law. And so, no sham marriages are investigated; but there are incidents that warrant a further look. And upon us looking at this particular matter we can inform the Registry General's department whether a marriage should proceed or not, or whether or not Immigration has objections.

There are other things that the Department of Immigration investigates as well. Whether or not somebody has legal residency in Bermuda to actually

engage in a marriage. Some people are illegally in Bermuda, and we find out that they are seeking to get married, and we are informing the Registry General's department that those persons are also not legally able to reside in Bermuda and engage in that particular marriage. There are a number of factors. And so, the investigations are not just pertaining to what we will consider to be sham marriages, but also persons who are illegally resident in Bermuda who are seeking to engage in marriage.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Second supplemental or . . .

Mr. Scott Pearman: Yes. Thank you.

Taking the Minister's clarification that perhaps it is best not to use the expression "sham marriage," can the Honourable Minister tell this Honourable House approximately how many incidents are currently being investigated?

The Deputy Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Jason Hayward: Certainly, less than a dozen.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you. Second question?

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you.

QUESTION 2: SHAM MARRIAGES POLICY PROPOSAL

Mr. Scott Pearman: This goes to the investigators. And in the policy document provided by the Honourable Minister, the Honourable Minister made the point that Bermuda's current legislation does not specifically define sham marriages or provide clear mechanisms for investigating suspected cases. And, as a result, the relevant departments have limited authority. Against that background, is the Honourable Minister able to share with this Honourable House how many investigators there are at the moment?

The Deputy Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Jason Hayward: The compliance section within the Department of Immigration is actually mandated to do any sort of investigations as it pertains to immigration. The Registry General will also have officers responsible for marriage. The legislation will seek to appoint public officers as to having the ability to investigate. And so, I do not think that the current staff and complement limits will limit the Minister's ability to appoint officers who will be able to investigate these matters. But currently, it will be the officers within the

compliance section; I do not have the exact number of full-time equivalents at this point.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you. Supplementary.

I think the Honourable Minister's answer indicated that there will be new investigators therefore hired. And if so, if that is right—

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Scott Pearman: Oh, no, there will not be? Will new investigators be hired? Thank you.

Hon. Jason Hayward: We are seeking to strengthen the full-time complement within the compliance sections of the Department of Immigration.

The Deputy Speaker: Second supplementary.

Mr. Scott Pearman: And second supplementary.

It was not clear from the Minister's earlier Statement. So, the investigators will now be at the Department of Immigration only? Or will there be investigators added to the Registry General?

The Deputy Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Jason Hayward: Both are responsible for different aspects of marriage. So, the Registry General has a set of responsibilities that will be defined, and the Department of Immigration has a set of responsibilities that will be defined. The Department of Immigration may not be involved in sham marriages if it involves two Bermudians. We can also understand that this framework does not just extend to a Bermudian and non-Bermudian marriage, and so we say that is trying to circumvent immigration or other laws. Because other persons engage in marriages as well for other reasons outside of relationships that may fall within the scope of the challenges that may not relate to immigration matters, and so there will be a need to have investigators in other areas.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

Do you have a third question?

QUESTION 3: SHAM MARRIAGES POLICY PROPOSAL

Mr. Scott Pearman: I do. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Again, in the policy Statement you discussed the investigation of enforcement, saying the Department of Immigration would be granted clear authority to investigate suspected sham marriages.

My question is in relation to the powers and also the safeguards in relation to these investigators. Will the investigators have the power to go into people's homes?

The Deputy Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Jason Hayward: I would suspect so. I think that to investigate a thorough investigation, and somebody says that they live in a residence and there is no evidence of that individual living in that residence, that may be part of the investigation. The Immigration officers have the power to go into person's homes now and go to a person's place of residence. So, I would not want to limit the ability of the investigators. We will ensure that everything is done according to proper process.

But I do not want to lose the intention of why we are here today. We are here today to ensure that we have a framework in place that has the legal support that is required so that we can protect Bermuda as a jurisdiction, protect the institution of marriage, and ensure that persons are not trying to utilise marriage to circumvent our laws and circumvent our Immigration policies.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
Supplemental?

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Mr. Scott Pearman: Yes. Thank you. Supplementary.

Again, I am just trying to get a sense of the extent of the powers and the extent of the safeguards when these investigators are going to go into people's homes. Are they going to be able to ask people about their marital relations?

The Deputy Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Jason Hayward: The legislation will clearly make . . . will make clear what the investigative powers of any person conducting investigations will be. And so, I will ensure that when the legislation is brought to this House, that we make clear at that time so that the Honourable Member has the clarity that he is actually looking for.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
Second supplemental?

Mr. Scott Pearman: Thank you. Second supplemental.

And just in response to that point, is the Minister able to confirm whether we will see the legislation during this current session with the next three sittings?

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.
Minister.

Hon. Jason Hayward: The answer is no.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

We have approximately two minutes left, and the next person who has questions to be asked of you, Minister Rabain, is Member Smith.

Make your questions brief if you want to get an answer.

Hon. Ben Smith: Thank you, Madam.

The Deputy Speaker: Scholarships and awards.

QUESTION 1: EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS 2026

Hon. Ben Smith: Yes. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

First, I would like to thank the Minister for bringing this here and thank the Government for the continued increase in funding for scholarships that I know a lot of our students appreciate.

But the number that he gave was that there were 499 applications, which means you were only able to give 100 of those, which leaves 400 people outside of that. Is there any mechanism to follow what that impact has on that group? I brought this up before that maybe that is a mechanism we can then talk to the private sector to fill that gap.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Recognising, Madam Deputy Speaker, we have little time, I will be very . . . I invite you to have that conversation with me offline.

The 499 could also be broken down to persons making duplicate applications because you . . . and I encourage people to do that all the time: do not apply for *just* a scholarship. Apply for the scholarship. Apply for a further education award. Apply for one of the specialist awards; you do not know. And so, I cannot say that while we receive 499 applications, they are all vetted at the same time, even though it is one person may have applied for four awards; they still get vetted four different times because the . . . So, we would have to really do a real deep dive to see how many individual persons are there, but I understand exactly what you are saying.

[Timer chimes]

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Question Period is now over, so let me just stop this.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

The Deputy Speaker: But let me just say this. We now have approximately eight minutes before we break for

lunch, according to that clock. Seven minutes. I just want to put it to the floor first since it is going to be a break, because I do recognise a Member from [constituency] 2 who does want to make a comment. Do we want to break for lunch first, or do we want to just start and then continue after lunch?

[No audible response]

The Deputy Speaker: Okay. We will start and continue after lunch.

Minister . . . I recognise the Member from constituency 2. He was on his feet first.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Thank you, Madam [Deputy] Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have a number of condolences I would like to do in my five minutes that you have allotted me.

Mr. . . . the death of Mr. Lionel Paynter, a dear friend of mine who I first met, Madam Deputy Speaker, at Youth Parliament, as a Youth Parliament councillor. I do believe (I stand to be corrected) that he may have been part of that illustrious Up With People group that was part of the Youth Parliament councillors back in the early 1970s when I participated.

Mr. Voorhees Swan. Voorhees Swan [was] a great cricketer from Southampton Rangers in Warwick. Voorhees has passed away. He and his brother were prolific, great bowlers and fielders for Southampton Rangers and many other teams feared playing against them.

One of your cousins, and I will associate you and the Honourable Member Ming with this, Mr. Stephen Ingemann from the Ingemanns of Ferry Reach. The last of the five brothers survived by his sister, Angela, and his daughters, Kristy and Wendy. I send my condolences to the Ingemann family.

My good friend, the late Kurt Thompson, who was one of the persons I played cricket with on the second team for St. George's way back in the late 1980s, early 1990s, was the only fellow I ever watched clean bowl Wendell Smith. He got my attention when he came down. Even Wendell looked back with amazement. Not too many people could claim the stumps of Wendell Smith.

And also, the passing of . . . a Member from constituency 1 . . . I will associate the Honourable Member Renee Ming with the passing of one of her constituents, Ms. Debra Brangman from down there in Cut Road, Salt Spray area of St. George's.

Finally, I would like to join in congratulating our athletes. And I just would like to single out the performance of Jessica Lewis who . . . standing in for the Minister who was actually there, I associate him. But that is the first athlete I have seen to be so humble. She had left the airport. I was sitting there, and she came back to me to say thank you for being there. I have been around a lot of great athletes in my life, and I ranked

her, and I have told people [about] her being one of the greatest athletes I have ever had [the] chance to meet because for someone to be celebrated in their country but to come back to say thank you showed a lot about the person that she truly is.

Thank you.

[Timer chimes]

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

I recognise the Member from constituency 14 *[sic]*. And Minister, you have the floor.

Hon. Owen Darrell: [Constituency] 15.

The Deputy Speaker: [Constituency] 15, sorry, yes.

Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I rise today to offer condolences to the family of Miss Eva Emily Albertha Outerbridge, formerly of 6 Northcliffe Lane, living to see the age of 106 years old, Madam Deputy Speaker. She was not only the matriarch of the Outerbridge family but also the matriarch of my constituency, Pembroke East.

As her family prepares to lay her to rest tomorrow, I wish to send special condolences to her children, her grandchildren, her 20 great-grandchildren and 14 great-great-grandchildren. Madam Deputy Speaker, I hope that she may rest in peace.

On other matters, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to send congratulations to Ms. Patti-Ann Trott. She is the senior accounts officer at the Department of Sport and Recreation, and she will be retiring today. After 42 years of service, Madam Deputy Speaker, we wish her a very happy retirement. I would like to associate MP Kim Swan—

An Hon. Member: And the Sergeant-at-Arms.

Hon. Owen Darrell: —and the Sergeant-at-Arms on that.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Owen Darrell: That is his sister.

[Inaudible interjection]

Hon. Owen Darrell: On another congratulatory note, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to send congratulations to the artistic siblings Shanna and Nahshon Hollis on their art show *Complementary*. As a special note, Miss Hollis is the Chair of the Bermuda Arts Council, and I had the opportunity to attend the opening a couple of weeks ago and their work, Madam Deputy Speaker, did not disappoint. I encourage everyone to support these local artists by visiting the Masterworks Museum before the show ends on October 3.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Owen Darrell: In the few moments I have right now . . . I would like to associate Independent Member MP King and others.

In the few moments that I have remaining, Madam Deputy Speaker—

The Deputy Speaker: Less than a minute.

Hon. Owen Darrell: —I would like to congratulate Nahki Wells on the magnificent start that he has made to his season with Luton [Town] Football Club over there in England. He has already scored five goals, and it seems like he is in amazing form as he prepares to represent Bermuda with our new head coach, Mr. John Barry Nusum, in a few weeks.

[Inaudible interjections]

Hon. Owen Darrell: And I would like to associate the House with Mr. Wells' success and the success of our new head football coach, Mr. John Barry Nusum.

I would also, Madam Deputy Speaker, like to congratulate the Bermuda Team for participating in the Pickleball World Cup in Vietnam. I wish them all the best.

And finally, Madam Deputy Speaker, you will love this one. I must congratulate the Bailey's Bay Cricket Club for becoming the 2026 Eastern Cup Champions.

[Desk thumping]

Hon. Owen Darrell: Well done to series MVP Terryn Fray, my constituent Derrick Brangman, who was named Bull of the Spirit.

[Timer chimes]

Hon. Owen Darrell: And although I would have liked for the Cup to stay in Harris' Bay, I am sure those folk down in Bailey's Bay will keep it nice and shiny till next year.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Sorry, Member, we have reached 12:30, so I need to call on the Deputy Premier.

[Inaudible interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: Members.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Members.

Hon. Zane J. S. De Silva: I propose that we now take lunch and return to the House at two o'clock.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

It has been moved we will take lunch, and we will return at two o'clock. Thank you.

Proceedings suspended at 12:31 pm

Proceedings resumed at 2:05 pm

[Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair]

The Deputy Speaker: We will resume.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

[Continuing]

The Deputy Speaker: I recognise the Member from constituency 33.

Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons: Good afternoon, Madam Deputy Speaker, and thank you for the opportunity.

I rise today on two sad notes and one positive note. I would like to begin by extending my heartiest condolences [regarding] my mother-in-law, Hazel Johnson, and to all who knew and loved her. She lived to a ripe age of 93 years old, and I think the thing that best sums her up is she was the embodiment of *love thy neighbour*. If you went to her house, almost up until the day she passed, she was feeding somebody. She was clothing somebody. She was helping to house somebody, even when they [might] look to be the most dubious person available. But she always had that open heart, open house, and love, and she produced perhaps the greatest wife I could ever have. And so, for that, we are thankful for her time on this planet.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I also would like to extend condolences to the family of Gloria [Eve-]Steins, my Aunt Gloria. Many people in the Sandys community will remember her. She was the secretary at West End Primary [School], going back to when my grandfather was the principal there. She had so many talents. But her biggest talent and impact on the community is that she knitted. She taught so many of the young ladies and a few young men how to knit in the White Hill community, and so she will be missed. She actually . . . I have a pair of green and white PLP socks that she knitted for me, even though she had never voted PLP before I got there. So that was a big switch. But we are thankful for her and all she contributed.

And finally, I would like to extend congratulations to another constituent, the newly . . . the new Doctor of Clinical Psychology, Cyrelah Raynor, Dr. Cyrelah Raynor.

[Inaudible interjections]

Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons: Cyrelah. I am sorry. She—

The Deputy Speaker: Tongue twister.

Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons: Tongue twister.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons: It has been a long day.

But we really, really are very glad for the progress and the achievement. We wish her much success. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Are there any other Members who [wish to] speak?

I recognise the Member from constituency 28. Member, you have the floor.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Thank you, Madam [Deputy] Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would just like to start off by giving some condolences [for] a relative of mine, Aunt Leonora Desouza. She passed since we last sat in this House. And to her family, her sons, [Frederico] and David, who I work with—Rico. And, as I said, she was a great aunt. She married one of my great aunts [*sic*]. She is a great aunt-in-law. So, to the whole family . . . [I] just want to send condolences to them. And again, it is always . . . be missed. We always miss someone like Aunt Leonora [who was] always so kind. And [I] did not get to see her as frequently as I would normally do. But, you know, all the memories that we have growing up will always be remembered in her passing.

With that, Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to join in sending congratulations. Much was said earlier in regard to sports around Bermuda. But this summer, the Bermuda Under-15 Girls Football team finished second at the Goombay Cup in The Bahamas. And as was mentioned by the Minister earlier, you know, the many sports teams and athletes that participated represented Bermuda—

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Associate.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: I associate MP Tyrrell.

—that represented Bermuda over the time since we last sat in this House. I would like to say congratulations to them.

And Madam Deputy Speaker, when we last sat in this House . . . You forgot to put my time on.

The Deputy Speaker: I know. I am watching my watch.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: When we last sat in this House, I did give . . . we recognised Ms. Kenni Thompson on her retirement from football. Well, as one person leaves, another comes in. [Since] the last time we sat,

Madam [Deputy] Speaker, Ms. Leilanni Nesbeth signed professional terms with Como, an Italian team, a woman's professional team in Como. So, while we have one . . . There are always Bermudians out there playing and representing. But while one left the professional ranks, we welcome another one into our ranks. And hopefully she will do good in her career and also represent Bermuda when the time is called.

And lastly, Madam [Deputy] Speaker, it has been overlooked that . . . And you know, I understand where your allegiances lie, but just a month ago we had the Annual Cup Match Classic. And for all those that don red and blue, I would like to say congratulations to the team, to the management, to the club executive and to all the fans that came out to watch our Somerset Cup Match team put the hurting on the St. George's team.

[Desk thumping and crosstalk]

The Deputy Speaker: Member, your time is pretty much just about up.

Seriously, though.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: My time might be running out, but we are still keeping the Cup. But that is what matters most.

So again, congratulations to the Somerset Cup Match team for retaining the Cup again.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, Member.

Are there any other persons who wish to speak?

I recognise the Member from constituency 26, the Government Whip. Member, you have the floor.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Thank you very much, Madam [Deputy] Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is with some sadness that I ask that condolences be sent to the Daniels family, on the passing of Carole Hetherington from Hermitage Road. Carole and I knew each other from [our] teenage years. In fact, there was a period where I thought she was my girlfriend—

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: —but I found out, sadly, it was not so. But we did get to work together later in life and still carried on a very joyful relationship. She was very outgoing and fun loving, and I think she is really going to be missed. Thank you.

On a more pleasant note . . . And I know the Minister of [Tourism and Transport, Culture and] Sport already this morning said several good things about sportspersons over the summer. But I must make mention of Sakari Famous, who won the bronze medal in the CAC [Central American and Caribbean] Games. She is actually in my family. So I do declare my interest.

She also had a personal best. And I think we are going to see even better from Sakari in the future.

And I also wanted to be associated with the promotion of John Nusum as the BFA [Bermuda Football Association] head coach. He is one of my constituents. I will associate MP Lister and the Minister Darrell [with that] as well. But I wish him well. John has a lot of experience, not only in playing, but he has also coached as well at the premier level. And I think he will do well at the head of the Bermuda Football Association. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Are there any other persons who wish to speak?

I recognise the Member from constituency 7. Member, you have the floor.

Ms. Robin Tucker: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I would like to extend condolences to someone's family and friends, someone that everybody in this building knows. And that is to the family of Junior Ming, otherwise known as "Scientist." I think that . . . I . . . I have known him for a really long time. And I can remember times before he was . . . what he displays, you know, what he is well known to be in the public eye in terms of having mental illness and all of that. Right? But I just do not want it to be lost on us not to acknowledge his passing because we also recognise that he is somebody's loved one. And so, on account that I personally have known him, I remember one day I was in my car. Because he had not spoken to me for a while, I thought that, you know, his mental illness had taken him so far out that he did not recognise and what-not. I was on Court Street. And so, he rode his bike up to my car and said, *Hey, Robin*. And then he stopped for a minute. And then he said, *You got some money so I could get something to eat?* Right? And it just was a . . . It was a reminder for me that we cannot assume that because someone has mental illness that they are immune, or that we can discount how we treat them, because I have seen people treat him not very nice as well. So, I would just like to extend condolences to his family and to his friends.

I would like to say congratulations to Jessica Lewis, who won a bronze medal at the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games.

And then I will, as I am taking my seat, extend congratulations to Barry Gibbons and his family. They are hosting the Devil's Hole Family 10th anniversary "Back to School" event in Devil's Hole this weekend. So, I would like to say congratulations to them as well for the contributions that they make to that community.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Are there any other persons who wish to speak?

I recognise the Member from constituency 10. Member, you have the floor.

Mr. Robert King: Yes. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I want to extend congratulations to Nahshon and Shanna Hollis, as was done previously. The brother and sister are both phenomenal artists. And I think what they demonstrate is the power of art and how it can transform and inspire. [Nahshon's] sister, Shanna, actually was inspired by him to become an artist. I thought it was the other way around. And if you will remember as well, he was the Charman Prize winner. He is a full-time artist. That is how he supports himself and does very well. And his sister, Shanna, is responsible for the Kaleidoscope Arts programme. They require the assistance of Government and others to help ensure that the programme continues.

Art and sport are so important for the youth of this Island. And I am happy and thankful that the Government is taking this seriously. And we need to make sure that the investment meets the demand because they are the future of Bermuda.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Are there any other Members who wish to speak?

There are no other Members? Okay.

I recognise the Member from constituency 36. Member, you have the floor.

Hon. Rev. Dr. Emilygail A. Dill: Good afternoon and thank you, Madam [Deputy] Speaker.

I would like to take the opportunity to offer condolences to the family of the late Yvette Watson. Yvette was a banking manager in my constituency at The Bank of N. T. Butterfield [& Son Limited]. I can remember having worked with her as a teenager at The Bank of N. T. Butterfield. She spent her entire working career as an employee of the Bank of Butterfield. She was an exceptional individual. She was a beautiful songstress who sang in many choirs and blessed many hearts. So, we offer our sincere condolences to her son, Jahkeem, and her entire family, the Vernon Temple [AME] Church family, and the many lives that she touched in the Sandys community, as well as the Bank of N. T. Butterfield family.

I would also like to offer condolences to the family of the late Damon Masters. He was the son of Ms. Anita Masters and deeply loved by his mother. He died suddenly last month and was funeralised. And we just thank God for his life and express our sincere condolences to his entire family.

Last but not least, I must offer congratulations to the outstanding women of Allen Temple AME Church for the fantastic job that they are doing during their Women's Season with a variety of activities, including outreach to the community.

[Timer chimes]

Hon. Rev. Dr. Emilygail A. Dill: So well done, ladies. Well done.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Are there any other Members who wish to speak on Congratulatory and/or Obituaries?

I recognise the Member from constituency 14. Member, you have the floor.

Hon. Alexa Lightbourne: Thank you, Madam [Deputy] Speaker.

I just want to rise this afternoon to give congratulatory remarks and commend the team at Devonshire Recreation Club, as well as . . . I do not know if the Minister of Economy and Labour spoke to it, but the last evening they participated in the second Bermuda Economic Development Corporation (BEDC) [Sports Club Business Planning] Incubator programme. And I wanted to congratulate the Devonshire Recreation Club and the other community sports clubs that were also in attendance and participated, receiving the \$5,000 stipend. And I think that it is a testament to the community work and their efforts and their meaningful contributions. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Are there any other Members who wish to speak to Congratulatory and/or Obituaries?

There are none, so we are moving on. Thank you, Members, for your contributions.

But before we move on, I would just like to express condolences to the family of Donna (Minors) Campbell, having lost her father [Melvin Arthur Horace Minors]. I would like to associate Member Campbell with my comments, as that was his father-in-law at one point. And so, condolences to her family, her children, grandchildren, and the like.

Thank you, Members. We will move on.

MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE

The Deputy Speaker: There are none that have been brought to my attention.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

The Deputy Speaker: There are none.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS FOR THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE ON MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

The Deputy Speaker: There are none.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The Deputy Speaker: We have a few Bills that will be introduced today.

GOVERNMENT BILLS

The Deputy Speaker: I call on the Minister of Education who will introduce the motion on the Bill for the [Deputy] Premier.

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

BILL

FIRST READING

POLICE (INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION) AMENDMENT ACT 2026

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am introducing the following Bill for its first reading, so it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: Police (International Co-operation) Amendment Act 2026.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.
I am calling on the Junior Minister of Finance.

BILL

FIRST READING

PAYROLL TAX RATES AMENDMENT ACT 2026

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am introducing the following Bill for its first reading so that it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: Payroll Tax Rates Amendment Act 2026.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Junior Minister. Calling . . . Junior Minister, you have another Bill to introduce?

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Yes, thank you again, Madam Deputy Speaker.

BILL

FIRST READING

FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY AMENDMENT ACT 2026

Mr. Dennis Lister III: I am introducing the following Bill for its first reading so that it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: Financial Intelligence Agency Amendment Act 2026.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. I think you have one more, do you not?

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Yes, I do.

The Deputy Speaker: Thanks.

BILL

FIRST READING

BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP AMENDMENT ACT 2026

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am introducing the following Bill for its first reading so that it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: Beneficial Ownership Amendment Act 2026.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, so that is all three.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: And I believe there might be two more?

The Deputy Speaker: There are two more on the [Order] Paper, but not by you.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Proceeds of Crime (Miscellaneous) Act 2026? It would be two . . .

The Deputy Speaker: I must have the wrong [Order] Paper.

Members, are you finding that on your [Order] Paper?

Mr. Dennis Lister III: From my understanding, they were just submitted.

[Crosstalk]

An Hon. Member: There were two—

[Crosstalk]

The Deputy Speaker: We are going to just rest for one minute so we can, . . .

[Pause]

The Deputy Speaker: So, here is what we will do. We will continue with what is there, and if there are two

more that will come, we will move the motion to allow you to introduce it later.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Okay.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay?

I think that is Order . . . I think it might be [Standing] Order 21, something like that. We will hear it then.

I will now call on Minister Darrell. Minister Darrell.

BILL

FIRST READING

CHARITIES AMENDMENT (NO. 2) ACT 2026

Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am introducing the following Bill for the first reading so it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: The Charities Amendment (No. 2) Act 2026.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

And finally, the Minister of Economy and Labour.

BILL

FIRST READING

REGISTRATION (BIRTHS AND DEATHS) AMENDMENT ACT 2026

Hon. Jason Hayward: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am introducing the following Bill for the first reading so that it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: Registration (Births and Deaths) Amendment Act 2026.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Thank you, Minister.

OPPOSITION BILLS

The Deputy Speaker: There are no Bills being introduced by the Opposition.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS

The Deputy Speaker: There are no Private [Members'] Bills.

NOTICE OF MOTION

The Deputy Speaker: I do believe we have one Notice of Motion that has been brought to my attention.

TAKE NOTE MOTION

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO HISTORIC LAND LOSS IN BERMUDA TAKE NOTE OF REPORT

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Madam Deputy Speaker, I refer to Item No. 3 on the Order Paper [under] Orders of the Day.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this Motion was not proceeded with previously because [of] the then pending court proceedings. Those proceedings have now concluded, and the impediment identified by the Speaker no longer exists. However, the Government does not intend to proceed with this Motion today, and I respectfully ask that the Motion remain on the Order Paper to be taken at the next sitting.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the House has the power under Standing Order 25(3) to order otherwise. In this circumstance where the Motion was held over because of the Chair's earlier ruling related to active litigation I ask that the Motion remain on the Order Paper for consideration of the next sitting.

STANDING ORDER 25(3)

The Deputy Speaker: It has been moved that the Motion be considered to remain on the [Order] Paper. Standing Order 25(3) allows that Motion to stay on the [Order] Paper. It is not something that a person would object to, so we will keep [the Motion] on the [Order] Paper.

And just for Members' edification, most Motions that are on there are allowed to stay on the Order Paper for three months. If that time is close to ending, or has ended, then you must move Standing Order 25(3) to allow it to remain on the Order Paper. And so, the Minister of Education has done that. So, it will continue on the Order Paper.

Thank you, Minister.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Deputy Speaker: It has been brought to my attention that the first Order that we will consider comes under the Minister of Tourism and Transport, Culture and Sport, as agreed by both the Opposition and Government to do that particular item first.

So, Minister, you have the floor.

Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I move that the Bill entitled the Motor Car and Auxiliary Bicycles (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 2026 be now read the second time.

The Deputy Speaker: It has been moved that the Motor Car and Auxiliary Bicycles (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 2026 be read a second time.

Are there any objections?

There are none.

Continue, Minister.

Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

BILL

SECOND READING

MOTOR CAR AND AUXILIARY BICYCLES (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT ACT 2026

Hon. Owen Darrell: Madam Deputy Speaker, this Bill gives effect to the Government's 2024 Throne Speech commitment to remove unnecessary red tape from transport services. It updates requirements that can be simplified without weakening safety or regulatory oversight.

The Bill makes four practical changes:

1. It removes the routine requirement for a medical certificate when certain drivers under the age of 70 renew their licences.
2. It reduces inspections for new private motor cars during the first five years.
3. It moves inspections of the public service vehicle licences from every six months to every 12 months.
4. It provides a formal framework for the shorter or instalment-based vehicle licensing in special circumstances.

The changes do not remove important safeguards. They reduce unnecessary appointments. They reduce unnecessary costs. And they reduce unnecessary administrative steps, while keeping the safety checks and regulatory controls that matter.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in practical terms, the Bill will save residents and operators time and, in some cases, money, while allowing TCD [Transport Control Department] resources to be used more effectively.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I will now talk about the removal of repeat medical certificates before age 70. Under the current system, Madam Deputy Speaker, a person applying for [an] initial driver's licence must complete a medical process that includes a health declaration and an assessment by a registered medical practitioner. A medical certificate is then required again when the licence is renewed every 10 years, until the driver reaches age 70. For many residents, that repeat requirement means arranging a doctor's appointment, paying an additional out-of-pocket cost, and completing a medical assessment, even where there has been no change in their health. The policy review found that Bermuda's approach is not the common standard among jurisdictions examined, many of which rely on self-

declaration or targeted medical review rather than routine, repeat certificates for all drivers.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Bill therefore preserves the medical assessment for the initial issue of a licence, but allows a person under the age of 70, renewing a licence for a private motor car or motorcycle, to submit a personal medical declaration instead. Applicants must disclose conditions affecting eyesight, hearing, consciousness, awareness, sleep, and their ability to drive safely and responsibly. The director may still require a certificate of physical fitness after reviewing the declarations. Once a person reaches age 70, a medical certificate continues to be required at each licence renewal.

The Bill also creates an offence for knowingly providing false or misleading information on [a] personal medical declaration punishable on summary conviction by a fine up to \$1,000. This removes [the] routine requirement while retaining the ability to require medical evidence whenever a potential impairment is identified.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the second area of reform concerns vehicle inspections. At present, a new private motor car is subject to an inspection pattern that includes an inspection when the vehicle reaches approximately three years old. The Government has reviewed whether that examination remains necessary for vehicles that are still relatively new. The evidence supports this change. TCD data for new motor cars registered between November 2018 and October 2021, and inspected upon reaching three years, shows that 5,225 vehicles passed and only 191 failed—a failure rate of 3.5 per cent. Some recorded failures were cosmetic or administrative rather than safety related. The Bill removes that third year inspection for qualifying new private motor cars while retaining examinations at other prescribed points. Each affected owner will also avoid the \$54 administrative and examination fee.

The estimated reduction in TCD revenue is approximately \$90,000 annually. Against annual revenue of approximately \$31.5 million, this represents only about 0.3 per cent.

The next section is revising public service vehicle inspection intervals. The Bill also changes the inspection frequency for public service vehicles from every six months to 12 months. Public service vehicles remain subject to regulatory oversight and must continue to meet the required safety and operating standards. That amendment does not remove the inspection requirement. It changes the frequency of mandatory examination. Moving to an annual examination maintains the required safety and compliance standards while reducing the burden of twice-yearly inspections. For operators, it removes one mandatory inspection visit each year while retaining the annual safety examination.

And the final piece to this amendment is the fourth policy, which formalises greater flexibility in the payment and duration of [a] vehicle licence. TCD has

over time accommodated shorter licensing arrangements in particular circumstances, for example, where a vehicle is awaiting a part that is unavailable in Bermuda or where a sale is imminent. The Bill puts a clear legislative framework around this already established common practise.

For private motor cars, motorcycles, and auxiliary bicycles, an owner may apply to the director in special circumstances either to pay licence duties in instalments or to license a vehicle for one, three, or six months. The amount is calculated at one-twelfth of the annual rate for each month of a shorter licensing period.

The Bill identifies circumstances that may justify this flexibility, including the unavailability of a required repair part in Bermuda, an impending sale or transfer, the owner's temporary absence from Bermuda, financial hardship, or other circumstances that are accepted by the director. Madam Deputy Speaker, this gives residents greater flexibility where their circumstances justify it. A person should not necessarily have to pay a four-year licensing cost immediately when a vehicle cannot be used for reasons outside of their control, when ownership is about to change, or when genuine hardship legitimately exists.

At the same time, the framework protects government revenue. Approval is not automatic, and where only a portion of the licence period is paid, any outstanding duties remain payable at the end of that period unless the relevant statutory requirements for storage, disposal, cancellation, or transfer have been met. The result is a more flexible system while government retains the necessary controls.

Madam Deputy Speaker, although these amendments deal with different parts of the transport legislation, they have one common purpose: To make government's process simpler without weakening the safeguards that protect the public. For residents, the changes mean fewer unnecessary medical appointments, fewer avoidable inspection visits, and lower cost in the circumstances covered by the Bill. Vehicle owners facing temporary or exceptional circumstances will have a fairer, more flexible licensing option. Public service vehicle operators will make one fewer statutory inspection per visit per year, while still completing an annual safety examination. For government, the amendment reduces unnecessary administrative transactions to allow the Transport Control Department resources to be used more efficiently.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there are safeguards throughout the Bill. Initial medical certification remains. Drivers age 70 and over continue to require medical certification at renewal, and the director may request a medical certificate where a declaration raises concern. False declarations, as stated, are also an offence. Vehicle inspections continue for both private and public service vehicles, although at revised intervals. Flexible licensing remains subject to the director's approval. And overall, the Bill makes these processes simpler for

residents and operators while maintaining the necessary safety and regulatory safeguards.

Madam Deputy Speaker, for these reasons, I commend the Motor Car and Auxiliary Bicycles (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 2026 to this Honourable House. And I move that the Bill now be read a second time.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Are there any other persons who wish to speak to the Bill?

I recognise the Member from constituency 30. Member, you have the floor.

Mr. Dwayne Robinson: Yes, thank you, [Madam] Deputy Speaker. It is nice to lead on a Transport Bill again. Feels like old times.

First things first, the One Bermuda Alliance supports anything that streamlines a process for Bermudians and that also takes into account our current cost-of-living crisis. Allowing for folks to pay in instalments, to pay less for having to get medical exams, and also being able to move through the process more simply, is something that we are definitely keen to support.

I just would bring forward something that I would hope the Minister might consider. In the outline of the Bill it does state things such as eyesight and a lot of physical impairments. But it would be impossible for me to speak on this Bill without speaking on the state of our roads right now. And I agree with the Minister in his remarks at the press conference, and also in this House, that a lot of it is behavioural. And Government is not going to be able to legislate its way out of this problem, per se. Obviously, legislation plays a role, but a lot of it is behavioural and comes down to people's choices.

So, what I would ask the Minister to consider is adding a mental health component and stipulating it alongside the physical requirements. Because what we are seeing is folks getting behind the wheel and having to get a physical examination. And we are not putting as much emphasis on the mental side of things that is causing that person to make these choices to put themselves, their family, and other people at risk on the road.

I mean, the number of times we see cars turned over and various single-issue accidents . . . I would like to see that this relicensing takes to account that we do seem to have a mental health issue in our country, and also a substance abuse issue in our country. And a lot of that can be assessed by having a mental component added to this medical declaration that is stated in this Bill. And that would give folks at least some sort of caveat there for behavioural and certain choices that are being made, because you could be physically healthy and still get behind the wheel and make poor choices based over something that is

happened in your life, [a] traumatic experience or whatever else, or something that is driving you towards substance [abuse]. So, that is just one recommendation. The Minister can take it or leave it.

I also think that there should be a carve out in this for folks who have had previous driving convictions and/or offences. I think that it may be incumbent on us to make things slightly more difficult for folks who have had a previous . . . And I am sure that might fall under the officer's ability to deny that medical declaration. But I do think it will be a stronger message if we enshrine it in the legislation to say: *Listen. If you had previous driving convictions, previous driving offences that are of a serious nature, then perhaps you are having to do a medical exam by somebody outside of yourself and that you be opted out of this self-medical declaration portion.* Because I think we need to start sending a stronger message to some of the repeat offenders in our community when it comes to driving on our roads, that it is not tolerated. And I think stronger language in the legislation would be a great start to that.

But I do commend the Government's tact when it came to the joint conference between the Minister of National Security and the Minister of Tourism and Transport, Culture and Sport. Oh dear, Minister of Everything!

[Laughter]

Mr. Dwayne Robinson: But—

The Deputy Speaker: Do not tell him that. He might think . . . He might actually believe that.

[Laughter]

Mr. Dwayne Robinson: But all in all, I think the Bill is commendable. We in the Opposition will support its passage. But I do wish to just give those things to the Minister to consider for future things when it comes to how they tackle road safety and how licensing plays a part in that.

My one question is: With the instalment payments, is that going to cause any increased administrative burden on TCD and any additional costs to keep track of and maintain, as it is something new?

Thank you, [Madam] Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay.

Are there any other persons who wish to speak to the Bill?

I recognise the Member from constituency 33. Member, you have the floor.

Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Let me turn my microphone on.

The Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons: I would like to just briefly touch on some of the comments made by the Opposition. The mental health component recommendation, I think, is one worthy of consideration. But I think based on the principle of what this Bill is trying to accomplish in terms of reducing unnecessary medical visits and costs, I would be concerned about adding an additional burden where there may not be a need for [it].

Now, I think if somebody has been diagnosed with a mental health condition that materially impacts on their ability to drive, that is a different matter. But it also has to get into the issue of stigma and things like that. Just because I think somebody is crazy does not necessarily mean they should not be driving. So, I do think that while we should consider it, I am concerned that it goes against sort of the principle of the Bill, which is in terms of reducing the unnecessary treatments where there may not be a need for it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what I think should be appreciated [is that], any Government, any good Government, should constantly ask itself in every ministry, in every law, in every policy: Is this still relevant? Is this still necessary? Is it still protecting who it was supposed to protect? Is it helping or hurting? And I think that that is an example of what the Minister has done and this Government has done—to be able to move legislation forward that is about improving the condition of our people. At a time when you needed these things, we have better medical treatment. We have better medical analysis. People are living longer. They are having healthier lives. And so being able to remove an unnecessary administrative burden and an unnecessary cost is good news.

And, you know, when I go to my constituents and I am able to say to them, *If you are having problems paying your licence and your fee, then you should be able to have some financial flexibility* . . . For a lot of people, that financial flexibility means a lot.

You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, just to use myself as an example, my birthday falls on January 29, two days before payday. And so, you know, when you go to license your car on the 29th, sometimes you may be a little short. And for people having the flexibility to not have the stress of figuring out how they are going to do this, that is a big step, particularly in these inflationary and high-cost-of-living times. So I think we should be very grateful for that.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would also like to say that when we go forward, I would encourage the Minister to analyse and take note of any challenges that may arise because [there are] some people who may have difficulty in terms of the process, in terms of applying for the staggered payments, or for the different issues, and just to monitor, make sure. And again, [go] with the concept: Is this working? Is this going forward? [so] that we are always making sure that nobody is being inadvertently left behind.

And with those brief comments, Madam Deputy Speaker, I take my seat and I am glad to support this Bill.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Are there any other persons who wish to speak?

I recognise the Member from constituency 25. Member, you have the floor.

Dr. Douglas DeCouto: Yes, thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Like my colleague and the other speakers, [I am] happy to support this Bill. I had a milestone birthday last year, and I had to go and get myself a doctor's visit. And that was quite a lot of hemming and hawing. And then I said, *I thought they got rid of this*. Because in fact, almost two years ago, I believe there was a statement in this House from the Government about getting rid of these doctor's tests. So, I personally am glad to see it and [am] in agreement.

[It is] probably worth reminding the Members and those listening that, in fact, it was this Government that put those tests in place that they are now taking away, which is great. So maybe a little mistake was made, a little overreach, and now a correction. So [I am] certainly glad to see that.

And also, like the Member from constituency 33, [I am] certainly glad to see the options in being able to spread the payments out and agree with everything he said. So yes, [I am] glad to see this happening almost two years after it was originally promised in terms of getting rid of the unnecessary doctor's visits. And just a reminder that, of course, this Government did put those doctor's visits in in the first place.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

[Inaudible crosstalk]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I just first want to start off by saying that it is always a commendation when the Opposition agrees with the legislation that the Government is bringing. This shows that these are common sense legislation amendments being brought, whether it is to streamline, to make something more efficient, and also to address, whether it be concerns or needs raised from the community, Madam Deputy Speaker. So again, with the comments by the Shadow Minister [of Home and Community Affairs] and also from MP DeCouto supporting this Bill . . . it is good to hear that.

As I read this Bill, Madam Deputy Speaker, the four key points that this Bill addresses, I first just want to start off [with] the one where you can have payment instalments. Instead of paying for a full year of your car licence—car, bike, truck, whatever vehicle—you can now do it in instalments. And why I say that is key is because earlier this summer, I had a friend whose

birthday was at the end of June. And they were struggling to get some funds together to license their bike. And so, they had a conversation with me. And they said they only had this amount, which, previously, they would not have been able to license the bike for, whether it be six months, three months. They would have [had] to come up with the full amount of the money to license their bike.

Now with this amendment, Madam Deputy Speaker, if they were only [able to] come up with a certain amount, and that gets them three months or six months of licensing their bike . . . One, that is their transportation. You have to get to a job. So, if you do not have your bike licence, you cannot get around. You cannot get to your job to make money. You cannot . . . If you have children, you have to take your children around. So, this addresses a concern for some sectors of our community that are not always able to—whether it is a car or a bike—pay for their insurance for a full year up front. And so being able to pay [for] three months, six months, or nine months while they can, they might have a certain amount of dollars right now, which will get them three months. And then they look, and say in three months' time, *maybe I saved up some more, put some more inside. And I can pay for another three or for another six or the remaining nine months*, Madam Deputy Speaker.

So, I think this goes a way to help addressing and even easing some of the issues for persons in our community that this . . . It would impact and benefit everyone. But for those who are most impacted by not being able to pay for a full year's licence up front, Madam Deputy Speaker . . .

Secondly, Madam Deputy Speaker, the amendment to now if . . . And Minister, please correct me if I have not got it correct, but if your car is under five years old and you have had it tested the first and second year (I believe I am correct), you do not have to get it tested again until you are four and five. Am I correct?

Yes. So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think that also because . . . If you buy a brand-new car, and you go to your services every . . . I believe it is every six months, you stay on top of your car maintenance, you have not been in an accident, no fender benders, nothing like that . . . If [you] go every first, second, third, fourth year to get your car tested when you have had no incidents with it . . . Again, that can be burdensome because the tester, you know, they go to the job, but, hey, they might . . . it could be a bad day.

They might say, *Well, you failed for this*. And it might not be anything actually wrong. As the Minister said, there were some cosmetic issues, not necessarily mechanical issues, that will hinder your car from operating. So, I think that is common sense. Also, [a] brand new car—if you have not been in an accident, whether it be a large accident or a small accident, you have not scraped it on a wall or something, to go and get it tested every year when the car is still in good condition, I think

that makes sense by the Minister to relieve every year for the first five years.

And similarly, with public service licensed vehicles. I know when I look around, Madam Deputy Speaker, whether it be minibuses, taxis, or other vehicles under the [PSVL] category, a lot of them are new, whether they be brand new, three months [old], or some might be two years old. But they are still in good condition. And I think the drivers or owners of these vehicles . . . I think they go over and beyond to keep these vehicles in good condition.

One, if you are a private owner and driver, that reflects in your business. So, you want to make sure that your taxi or your minibus is looking clean [and] operating properly. You get it waxed. Every week you are out waxing your car down. So, again, to have to go every six months to get your [PSVL] vehicle tested . . . If it is in good condition, similar to a new car, I think it makes sense to extend that from six months to 12 months. Again, it is less of a burden on the owner or the driver. But as I said, they keep it in good condition. So extended from six to 12 months, I do not see that being much of a difference for these owners because they stay on top of their vehicles.

Next, with regard to the medical [certification], having to go every year, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am not at that age of 70 yet. But I think that, I would say, fortunately for the years I have been alive so far, I had my licence. I have not had bad health,—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: I can put it. I went 40 last year. I felt just as I was going 30, Madam Deputy Speaker. But having to go and get—

[Inaudible interjections and laughter]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: But having to go get a physical every year when I know that I am in good shape . . . I have not fallen, broken a leg. I have not had to get any serious surgery for any ailments. I still have my eyesight. I might have to wear glasses, but I still have my eyesight. I still have good hearing. So, the requirement to go every year to get a physical, I think, as the law says, up until the age of 70 . . . I think we will all . . . Unless you are an exceptional case where maybe you are at an age where last year you were in better health than you were this year and you go to your doctor and they might flag something. But I think that for those in good shape to go every year to get a doctor's certificate to say that you can see, you can hear, your reflexes are still good . . . I think by taking that away until we get to the age of 70 . . . Again, I think, and as mentioned by the MP who spoke before me, this was something that was newly implemented. So, prior to, we did not have to. So, I think just rewriting back to the old way . . . I think that makes sense again.

And again, also, it is a reduction of medical costs. I know for those who live on a tight budget, those who do not always have the extra cash to come out of their pocket and pay medical costs . . . I know for them, that is a relief. They do not have to worry about: *When I go to license my car, now I [don't] have to worry about paying for medical.* And that is one less expense they have to worry about.

So, as I said, these are common sense amendments to this Bill that can help streamline [things]. And the benefit for the public, the end user, is one, reduction of medical costs; two, reduction of having to go and take your . . . If you are a [PSVL] licensee, you do not have to go in every six months to get your vehicle licence. If you just bought it last year, it is still in good condition, so extending that for 12 months . . . And again, for the instalment payments of licensing, again, that will . . . Everyone, I said, can be impacted or benefited. It is a core section of people that I think will feel this change the most. Whereas I said if they only had a certain amount of dollars and they have to license their bike for a year or a car for a year, but they do not have the full amount, at least now they know that they can say: *Okay. Well, I can license it for this three- or six-month period and then work on getting the additional funds to extend for the next six months to complete that year.*

[I am] trying to make sure that I hit all my points, Madam Deputy Speaker. And again, [I] just want to thank the Minister and his team at the Ministry. I know the work they do from my time as road safety chairman. I know that they are doing a lot to improve the conditions of our testing procedures and looking to, again, help or make our roads safer. So, for all the work that they are doing, from the Minister to the PS [permanent secretary], to the directors and technical staff, I want to thank them for all that they are doing.

And I will with that—

[Inaudible interjection and laughter]

Mr. Dennis Lister III: —[I] take my seat. And again, thank you for the opportunity to speak, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other persons who wish to speak?

I recognise the Member from constituency 26. Member, you have the floor.

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am going to be very brief, but I certainly want to have the opportunity to speak on the Motor Car and Auxiliary Bicycles (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 2026, only to congratulate the Minister for the hard work that he and his technical people are actually doing down at TCD.

One of the things that I certainly will highlight is how he is making the ease of processes taking place

down at TCD. I can remember the days when I hated to go to TCD, and I am sure a lot of other people did as well. [I] dreaded going down to TCD. But I think it has improved since this Minister has actually taken over. And again, as I said, I want to congratulate him and his staff for easing up on a lot of the processes that are taking place down at TCD.

The idea of having to be able to spread the payments is a good common-sense thing. I mean, we know times are hard for people. And I think this is something that a lot of people who need their vehicles will certainly want to take advantage of. So, this is another certain thing. And I certainly want to say to the Minister, *Keep it up*. The last medical clause . . . well, that goes without saying. I mean, anyone would like to keep more money in their pockets anyway.

But let me digress just slightly in terms of the Bill itself and talk just a little bit as the Honourable Opposition Member spoke about traffic on the road. It is not something that, as he says, we are going to legislate ourselves out of. It is unbelievable the sort of things that we see on the roads just coming. I mean, I live in Warwick, and to get into town in seven minutes and eight minutes is . . . You see all sorts of people doing (I call it) gymnastics on the road. It is impossible to think that they can actually continue to get away with some of the things that they are doing. Trucks overtaking on stretches, bikes—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: —bikes—

[Laughter]

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: I am not going to talk about minibuses because I have an interest there. So, I will not talk about the minibuses right now—

[Inaudible interjection]

Mr. Neville S. Tyrrell: —but bicycles passing on corners. I mean, it is so unbelievable. There are about three main shop corners on my way into town from Rocklands, and I have seen cycles almost like two inches getting through. And they just continue on. So that is what is worrying me so much more than the amendments that we are having here being hopefully passed today. But it is the behaviour on the roads that I am certainly concerned about.

My grandson came home this summer from boarding school. And I just refused to get him on a cycle this summer. And we made out with him. I mean, we had to take him around ourselves, obviously. But I just did not feel comfortable, him not having a lot of experience on our roads, for this summer to be out on a bike and not knowing that he could go back to boarding school at the end of summer.

So, these sorts of things play on people's minds. And I encourage all of us in here to talk to our friends, talk to our families about their behaviour on the road. And I would not expect anybody in here [to be] part of that gymnastic group that I am talking about, but please talk to your family about their behaviour on the road. It is really to a level where I really do not know what to do. I have no clue how to get over it. But as I said, this Minister and his technical officers are doing their best to try and make things better for people and their cars.

So again, Minister, I support the Bill and wish you all the best.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any other persons who wish to speak to the Bill?

I recognise the Member from constituency 2. Member, you have the floor.

Mr. Hubert (Kim) E. Swan: Yes, thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Just to concur with speakers who have complimented the Minister and TCD for the work that is done in that space, I have heard a number of speakers not resist to speak to the trauma that exists on our roads and the mind-set that is causing people to drive recklessly as if it was the new normal.

The previous speaker says he does not know what the answer is. I am going to reiterate something that I say regularly on my show, my radio programme, and that is that the answer to the roads is to get more people on the water. And I am not talking about getting them on the water racing boats. I am talking about investing, as was done 20 years ago, 25 years ago, with many objections, to get even more ferry service around Bermuda between St. George's . . . And I want to thank the Minister responsible for Transport for the Orange Route that has really been expanded and does a great job.

I believe greater opportunities exist for us to get more people on the water commuting to Hamilton to alleviate the amount of need for persons to be on the road. And I believe [in] that lies an opportunity for us to change the paradigm, change the mind-set, by allowing persons to commute much more easily around the Island. I alluded to the Orange Route, which just this week two trips from Dockyard landed 1,000 people into St. George's. That was 1,000 less people on the road. That was 1,000 less people being transported in minibuses that are overtaken on corners.

Let's make no mistake about it. There is some irresponsible driving going on in Bermuda. And we must address it. I believe—I believe earnestly—that greater investment, greater resources, are needed to provide greater use of our waterways as a means of transportation. And I believe that we maybe need to look at ways in which persons pay a premium to be able to use the roads to drive into some congested areas. I

believe it is that. If people do not want to respect the laws, they have got to pay.

And I think of my late neighbour who was a transportation economist, and he prided himself on going to the London School of Economics. The late Herman Basden, the director of PTB [Public Transportation Board]. He used to speak in a matter-of-fact way. I think it is going to take some matter-of-fact action and some deliberate action to remediate some careless, reckless, unthoughtful-like behaviour that is taking place on our roads.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Are there any other persons who wish to speak to the Bill?

I recognise the Minister from constituency 14. Member, you have the floor.

Hon. Alexa Lightbourne: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. And I too will be brief in my contributions.

I wanted to also rise in support of this Motor Car and Auxiliary Bicycles (Miscellaneous) Act 2026, recognising that . . . And I will echo some of the sentiments my colleagues on both sides of the aisle have raised today in terms of the behaviour and how we wish to change the driving culture. But as a Minister responsible for [the] cost of living, I am going to always be in support of what is a reduced or reduction in costs for a family, recognising that each cost that is added, whether it be procedural or otherwise, is one more cost that a family who is already stretched and who can least afford it would be expected to contribute. And so, I do wish to commend the Minister and his team for the efforts to bring this Bill forward.

I did hear the comments around it being some time, but I do note the 2024 Throne Speech, which was then announced formally in the House in December of that year. And then now, having come to September, [we are] able to reflect and evidence a solid Bill that is reflective of the Government's commitment. And so, it is indeed a commitment and a promise kept for this administration, added to its promises that it has made before and [that it] will continue to deliver on behalf of the people that it has sought to serve.

I also wish to just note that the Bill also adds and is able to give a complement to [the] reduction of [the] cost of doing business. So [it is] not only a cost-of-living reduction, recognising the costs that families have to pay for their licensing fees, but also an ease of doing business. Because a businessowner, as we know, who does not have to close his shop in order to carry out this routine check and who may be able-bodied and eligible to, with a vehicle or otherwise, not have to endure this sort of additional compliance, this is easing and allowing for a businessowner to remain open, for example, in the instances where they ordinarily would have had to close if they were a sole proprietor and work for themselves. And so, I do recognise how

each small cost adds up to what is an overall cost-of-living decrease.

It was recently quoted in the paper about the cost-of-living arithmetic that families have to go through. And so, we accept that and we do believe that every single effort and cost that is reducing what an ordinary family or business has to pay, we would be in support of. And so, we are thankful for the Bill coming today to support in that way.

I also appreciate and recognise that the safety provisions that are included in the Bill will be maintained, noting that they are not going to disregard some of the key provisions that they are intended to ensure—that there are safety and honesty of riders and those who are on the road. And so, the declaration of members to be declared fit at 70 and ensuring that the enforcement powers are going to be implemented around them is also an added and positive provision.

I also wanted to share that oftentimes there are, you know, members of the public who say that, you know, going . . . I think my colleague mentioned today that going to TCD becomes a chore. And so, I think the way that government is also seeking to streamline its efforts, increase its efficiencies, and redirect its interest on processes that ordinarily would require more due diligence, more oversight, is also an overall enhancement. It is not only a cost-of-living benefit for businesses and families, but also efficiency for government and how it is using its public officers to best deploy skillful and quality services to the public. And so, removing that barrier, being able to have more streamlined and effective operations, and reducing one more paper administrative task that an individual has to carry out will enable [them] to better direct their attention to more important matters.

In short, I wish to just commend the Minister for bringing this Bill to the House. And I do look forward to it also being passed today.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Are there any other Members who wish to speak to the Bill? There are none.

I call on the Minister.

Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I appreciate all of the comments that have come and the support that has come from both sides of this Honourable House. As it has been said, and most people will recognise, this has been a Throne Speech [initiative] that we have discussed for a long time, Madam Deputy Speaker. And I appreciate the Honourable Member from the other side for reiterating the fact that this Government will continue to work and continue to go through every necessary step to make sure that things are put in place as swiftly as possible but as efficiently as possible so we do not have to go back and redo things.

So, I think we have gotten this right, Madam Deputy Speaker. And I hear it more than anyone because my office happens to be at the Transport Control Department. So, when people are downstairs and they say: *I came to get my licence renewed, and they told me that I have to get a medical examination*, I am the one that has to say: *Yes, absolutely. That is something that we are working through*. But unfortunately, you know, for some people, the next question is: *Well, you know how much that cost?* and, *I do not have the money*. And, you know, it is something that we are happy to finally be able to get over the line.

I want to speak real quick to the one about the public service vehicle licence. And, you know, I know individuals who have had taxis, for instance, for a very long time, and there are many taxi operators that actually do not know that they actually are supposed to get their vehicle licence every six months. And, you know, we talked in this House before about enforcement and the like. And, you know, once looking at it, it only made sense that we have the public service vehicle licence. As my colleague said, no one is going to want to get in your vehicle if it is unsafe or unsightly. So, I am happy to do that, as well as the new cars and the like.

So, with that said, Madam Deputy Speaker, I now move that the Bill be committed.

The Deputy Speaker: It has been moved that the Bill entitled Motor Car and Auxiliary Bicycles (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 2026 be committed.

Are there any objections?

There are none. So moved.

I call on the Member from constituency 31 to take the [Chair].

House in Committee at 3:12 pm

[Ms. Linda Smith, Chairman]

COMMITTEE ON BILL

MOTOR CAR AND AUXILIARY BICYCLES (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT ACT 2026

The Chairman: Good afternoon, all.

Honourable Members, we are now in Committee of the Whole [House] for further consideration of the Bill entitled [Motor Car and Auxiliary Bicycles \(Miscellaneous\) Amendment Act 2026](#).

At this point, I call on the Minister to take the floor.

Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I would like to move that clauses 1 through 7, that is all of them, be moved.

The Chairman: The Minister has moved that clauses 1 through 7 be approved.

Are there any objections to that?

Move the clauses 1 through 7?

Are there any objections? No.

Minister, proceed.

Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

If I could just go through the purpose of this Bill, the Bill amends the Motor Car Act 1951, the Auxiliary Bicycles Act 1954, and related regulations to provide abbreviated licensing periods, reduce selected vehicle inspection requirements, and replace routine medical certificates. We have personal medical declarations for the certain licence renewals before age 70.

Clause 1 is the citation. It provides the title of the Act.

Clause 2, the Motor Car Act 1951, amends the inspection regime for new private motor cars, changes public service vehicle examinations from every six months to every 12 months, creates instalment and abbreviated licensing arrangements for private cars and motorcycles in special circumstances, and amends driver's licence renewal requirements to allow a personal medical declaration for qualifying applicants under the age of 70.

Clause 3, the Auxiliary Bicycles Act 1954, creates equivalent instalment and abbreviated licensing arrangements for auxiliary bicycles in special circumstances with provisions governing outstanding licensing duties.

Clause 4, Motor Car (Drivers' Licences) Regulations 1952, requires a medical certificate for initial driver's licence issuance, specifies non-private classes and applicants age 70 and over, allows a personal medical declaration for qualifying private motor car and motorcycle renewals under age 70, and permits the director to require a medical certificate after reviewing the declaration.

Clause 5, the Motor Car (Examination, Licensing and Registration) Regulations 1952, makes consequential amendments to support flexible licensing periods for private motor cars and motorcycles and the determination of examination dates.

Clause 6, Auxiliary Bicycles (Examination, Licensing and Registration) Regulations 1955, makes consequential amendments to support abbreviated licensing periods for auxiliary bicycles and related licensing arrangements.

And clause 7, commencement, provides the Act comes into operation on a day appointed by the Minister by notice published in the *Gazette*.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

Are there any Members who would like to speak on clauses 1 through 7?

Minister Robinson.

Mr. Dwayne Robinson: Thank you. I will be very brief because I know a few folks spoke after me in the

general debate, so the Minister might not have gotten to my questions.

In clause 2, I just had a question about the increased administrative burden on TCD for this new implementation of payment schedule. I just wanted to know whether or not that would increase any administrative burden on TCD or any additional cost to Government.

Also, I wanted to clarify in clause 4, because I did not want to leave the House without it being clear that it was not a suggestion, regarding the mental health portion, to add an additional examination. But what I was suggesting was that in clause 4, where it lists (and I could not refer to clauses in the general debate, but in clause 4, where it lists) eyesight, hearing, consciousness, awareness, sleep, or his (or her) ability to drive responsibly, I just figured instead of alluding to it, we add “of sound mind” or “of clear mental health” to that portion there in section 4 to be listed.

That is all.

The Chairman: Is there any other Member that would like to speak?

If not, Minister, if you would like to respond to MP Robinson's comments.

Hon. Owen Darrell: All right, thank you, Madam Chairman.

[Regarding] the question in clause 2, I think, where it asked about any additional administrative burden on the Transport Control Department, I would first like to say that we heard in the debate about how processes have become a lot better at Transport Control. I mean, there would be stories before how people would have to take the entire afternoon from work, or the entire morning, or sometimes the entire day to go down and do their business at the Transport Control Department. But I can assure you that the capable public officers that we have there are confident that this process will be managed effectively with the resources that they have. And they are actually welcoming these changes because the amount of time, as you can anticipate, that individuals take dealing with customers trying to explain to them: *Yes, this was a Throne Speech initiative that they have heard about*, and, *Yes, the Government is still working on it*, is something that is still in place. So that, you know, communication and those types of burdens are something that TCD is very happy to finally get. And they are very confident that there will be no burden and the process will be effectively managed.

I believe I see where the Honourable Member from the other side . . . And I think it was clause 4 you were talking about, the medical requirements—

The Chairman: Yes, that is correct.

Hon. Owen Darrell: You know, this can be managed effectively through the self-reporting. It gets very

difficult and very tricky when you get into mental assessments. I can rest assured, and I can tell you that I am no physician and that is not my area of expertise. But I do want to caution, as one of my colleagues said in the debate here, that I do not wish us to add that thinking that we are doing something better and then get us back to a position of red tape and more administrative burden based on, you know, how and who is the individual to do mental assessments and things of that nature. I want to caution us from adding something and making a change that may take us back to where we are trying to get from.

So, while I do hear that, and if the Honourable Member from the other side will trust that we will look at that and we will take it under advisement, I think that the piece in here where it is the director . . . If there seems to be cause through self-declaration or other means that we are informed that further investigations, I guess, should be looked at, I think that the Bill currently gives us some leave to do so, Madam Chairman. So, if I will ask for that leeway for us to manage that.

The Chairman: Thank you, Minister.

Are there any other comments or questions?

So, it has been moved that clauses 1 through 7 be approved.

Are there any objections to that motion?

If there are no objections, clauses 1 through 7 are approved.

Minister, please take the floor.

[Motion carried: Clauses 1 through 7 passed.]

Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I just want to say thank you to all Members of the House for their support on this. I am sure that the public will be greatly relieved to hear this. We do realise that we may be, from a communication standpoint, in the same position that the Honourable Member, Dr. DeCouto, spoke on before, where a headline will read that we debated this today, and a headline will state that we passed this in this Honourable House, and as some people do not know the processes of legislation, I can guarantee you that on Tuesday morning at 8:30 am when TCD opens, there will be someone that will be standing at the door that says, *But they passed it on Friday*.

So, I would like to just say and communicate to the public that although this is step one to that process, there are other legislative processes that we hope will happen swiftly so that we can fully be able to deliver this suite of red tape reduction services to the public and all of the individuals . . . all of the Honourable Members of this House currently serve.

So, with that said, Madam Chairman, I do not know if I said this already. I move that the preamble be approved.

The Chairman: The Minister has moved that the pre-amble be approved.

Are there any comments? Members?

Okay.

Any objections? No.

Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you.

The Chairman: There are no objections, so it is approved.

Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I move that the Bill be reported to the House as printed.

The Chairman: It has been moved that the Bill be reported to the House as printed.

Are there any objections to that motion?

If there are no objections to that motion, the Bill will be reported to the House as printed.

[Gavel]

[Motion carried: The Motor Car and Auxiliary Bicycles (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 2026 was considered by a Committee of the whole House and passed without amendment.]

[Pause]

House resumed at 3:24 pm

[Ms. Lovitta F. Foggo, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair]

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

MOTOR CAR AND AUXILIARY BICYCLES (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT ACT 2026

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Members, it was moved that the Bill entitled the Motor Car and Auxiliary Bicycles (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 2026 be reported to the House as printed.

Are there any objections to that?

There are none, so the Bill has been approved.

As I understand it, there are no other matters under the Standing Orders that will be taken today. However, I do recognise that the Minister of Education wishes to move, the Junior Minister, sorry, Member Dennis Lister III, wishes to move a Motion.

Member.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I have two that I am going to table right now.

The Deputy Speaker: Well, read your Motion.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 14

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Yes. I move that Standing Order 14 be suspended to enable me to introduce a Bill to the House.

BILL

FIRST READING

PROCEEDS OF CRIME (MISCELLANEOUS) ACT 2026

Mr. Dennis Lister III: I am introducing the following Bill for the first reading so that it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: the Proceeds of Crime (Miscellaneous) Act 2026.

The Deputy Speaker: And just before you do that, you did move that Standing Order 14 be suspended.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Yes.

The Deputy Speaker: And were there any objections to that?

There were none.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 14 suspended.]

The Deputy Speaker: So now, continue.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 14

Mr. Dennis Lister III: All right, thank you.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I move that Standing Order 14 again be suspended to enable me to introduce a Bill to the House.

The Deputy Speaker: It has been moved that Standing Order 14 be suspended so that he can put the Bill to the House for its first reading.

Did you want to read the title of the Bill?

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Yes, I do.

The Deputy Speaker: Go ahead, please.

BILL

FIRST READING

PROCEEDS OF CRIME AMENDMENT ACT 2026

Mr. Dennis Lister III: I am introducing the following Bill for its first reading so that it may be placed on the Order Paper for the next day of meeting: Proceeds of Crime Amendment Act 2026.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

I understand that there is a second Bill that you wish to do as well because—

[Inaudible interjection]

The Deputy Speaker: I already asked if there were any objections.

They said no, so you read the Bill. So, there is a second—

[Inaudible interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: You did the Proceeds of Crime Amendment Act 2026, and then you had the Proceeds of Crime (Miscellaneous) Act 2026.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Right. I just read them both.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Deputy Speaker: Oh, okay.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Yes, but I just read them both.

The Deputy Speaker: That is right.

[Laughter]

The Deputy Speaker: I thought you said the same. I thought you were repeating the first one.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Oh, no.

The Deputy Speaker: I did not realise that you were doing the second one.

Mr. Dennis Lister III: Yes. Okay.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Thank you.
So, are there any objections to that going on?
So moved.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 14 suspended.]

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Junior Minister. And thanks for the clarification.

That settles the items that have been listed to deal with the Government business to deal with.

I now call on a Minister to . . .

[Inaudible interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, yes. I now call on Minister Darrell to do the third reading.

You can see I am racing, right? You see I am racing, right? It is Friday.

[Laughter]

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 21

Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I move that Standing Order 21 be suspended to enable me to move the Bill entitled Motor Car and Auxiliary Bicycles (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 2026 be now read a third time by its title only.

The Deputy Speaker: Are there any objections to that? Because we want this to go into law.

[Inaudible interjection]

The Deputy Speaker: Yes, we do.
Are there any objections, Members?
There are none.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 21 suspended.]

BILL

THIRD READING

MOTOR CAR AND AUXILIARY BICYCLES (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT ACT 2026

Hon. Owen Darrell: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I move that the Bill be now read a third time by its title only and passed.

The Deputy Speaker: It has been moved that the Bill be read a third time by its title only and passed.

There are no objections to that.
The Bill has now passed.

[Motion carried: The Motor Car and Auxiliary Bicycles (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 2026 was given a third reading and passed.]

The Deputy Speaker: Now that . . . I recognise the Minister of Education.
Minister.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Diallo V. S. Rabain: Madam Deputy Speaker, I move that the House now adjourn until Friday, September 11 at 10:00 am.

The Deputy Speaker: It has been moved that the House now adjourn to Friday, September 11 at ten o'clock.

Are there any persons who wish to speak to the motion?

I recognise the Member from constituency 33. Member, you have been on your feet a lot today. You have the floor.

**APPRECIATION FOR THE WORKS AND
ENGINEERING WORKERS PAVING ROADS
AND MAINTAINING INFRASTRUCTURE**

Mr. Jamahl S. Simmons: I have had a break. My voice has been rested up.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I just wanted to speak oh so briefly and give thanks to the Works and Engineering workers who have been out there paving our roads and maintaining our infrastructure. And what struck me, and why I wanted to get on my feet and give them this praise and thanks, is because they come under a lot of abuse, a lot of criticism. I just have a lot of sympathy for people who have to work out in the hot sun the way they do with the eyes of the entire country on their every move and criticising their every move and analysing their every move. They are doing a job that is hard. It is thankless. And it is really, really . . . They deserve a lot more appreciation.

And I just want to take a brief moment for all of us to remember. Yes, nobody is above criticism, but these are Bermudian men and women who are doing a job in conditions that most of us would not want to do. So, I encourage you to see the people. When you get a chance, toot your horn, speak to them. They do appreciate it.

And with those brief words, Madam Deputy Speaker, everyone, have a wonderful Labour Day and never forget, if it was not for the unions, we would not have had many of the freedoms that we have today.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Member.

Are there any other persons who wish to speak to the motion?

There are none.

The House stands adjourned until September 11, [at] 10:00 am.

[Gavel]

[At 3:31 pm, the House stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Friday, 11 September 2026.]