



Sixth Youth Parliament
of the
Cayman Islands Branch
of the
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association



Hansard Report

Verbatim transcript
of proceedings of the Sixth Youth Parliament
Held at the Legislative Assembly
Of the Cayman Islands
On Monday
11 March 2013

**VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT
HANSARD
COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION
SIXTH YOUTH PARLIAMENT
MONDAY
11 MARCH 2013
9.17 AM**

PRAYERS

Pastor Andrew Ebanks: *Almighty God, from whom all wisdom and power are derived: We beseech Thee so to direct and prosper the deliberations of this Sixth Youth Parliament of the Cayman Islands Commonwealth Parliamentary Association now assembled, that all things may be ordered upon the best and surest foundations for the glory of Thy Name and for the safety, honour and welfare of the people of these Islands.*

Bless our Sovereign Lady, Queen Elizabeth II; Philip, Duke of Edinburgh; Charles, Prince of Wales; and all the Royal Family. Give grace to all who exercise authority in our Commonwealth, that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety may be established among us. Especially we pray for the Youth Parliament, that they may be enabled faithfully to perform the responsible duties of their high office. All this we ask for Thy great Name's sake.

Let us say the Lord's Prayer together: *Our Father, who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.*

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

Hon. Mary J. Lawrence, MBE, JP, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and President of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Cayman Islands Branch: Please be seated.

I now call on the Honourable Dwayne S. Seymour, MLA, Minister of Community Affairs, Gender and Housing, Chairman of the CPA's Organising Youth Parliamentary sub-committee.

OPENING REMARKS

by

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour, MLA, Minister of Community Affairs, Gender and Housing and Chairman of the Sixth CPA Organising Youth Parliament Committee

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour, MLA, Minister of Community Affairs, Gender and Housing, Chairman of the CPA Organising Youth Parliament Committee: morning. First, I would like to start by asking everyone in this Parliament to give a round of applause for all the hard work by the staff of the Legislative Assembly and the youth that are taking part in this session today. Give them a round of applause please.

[applause]

Hon. Dwayne S. Seymour: Since 1977 Commonwealth Day has been celebrated on the second Monday in March each year, a day when schools are open in all Commonwealth countries. It is an opportunity to promote understanding values, the dignity of citizens and opportunities for youth across the Commonwealth.

I recognise His Excellency the Governor, Mr. Duncan Taylor, and Mrs. Taylor, and their son. I [also] recognise Madam Premier, Honourable Juliana O'Connor-Connolly, who is the first female Premier of the Cayman Islands (another milestone); the Honourable Minister Mark Scotland, the Honourable Minister Cline A. Glidden, Jr., and the Honourable W. McKeever Bush, First Elected Member for West Bay, and past elected Members. If there are any other Members here . . . I recognise the Deputy Governor also, and the Chief Officers. I do not see any other . . . sorry, yes, the Honourable Anthony Eden, Deputy Speaker and Second Elected Member for Bodden Town. Thank you for coming to this very important [event] in the history of the Cayman Islands. And seated next to me, is Madam Speaker, [who] is from the beautiful district of Bodden Town.

Again, this is an important milestone in this history of Youth Parliament. Never before has any elected Member saw it fit, with the support of the staff of the Legislative Assembly, to host Youth Parliament annually or back to back. Governments in the past have opted to either, not have it at all or to miss one year, or take a break from it and pick it back up whenever they saw it necessary. I am elated that they chose me as Chairman of this committee. And I am happy to report as Chairman, since being elected in 2009, we have had Youth Parliaments consecutively in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013.

I can tell you that Madam Clerk, Mrs. Zena Merren-Chin, would pull her hair out when I said, yes we are having it again! But she went right to work. And Ms. Nana Bothwell and Mrs. Sharon [Smith] and all the other team in here went to work, as usual, putting both hands in and came to the rescue of Youth Parliament on an annual basis. I am sorry if I put too much pressure on you, but I thank you for all the hard work you have done over the years as this ends our fourth year of being elected and the elections are coming up. We don't know what's going to happen there.

Parliament annually, through hard times has seen the need for a Youth Parliament. But I want to publicly thank my colleagues and the legislative staff again for all of the hard work and the support you have given me since taking on this task that I so enjoy. Whether it is singing or sports, or whatever, I love to see our youth being groomed for the future and that is one of the many reasons for my desire to keep the fire burning with Youth Parliament annually. I actually campaigned that elected officials were disconnected from our youth and did very little, to nothing, to directly impact the lives of our young people and to engage them to be interested in politics and to have a greater appreciation and respect for all the hard work that most politicians do.

So, we need to continue to engage our youth and to act on their concerns to show that we care about what we are leaving behind for them. We need to constantly remember who we are working for and what we are building for their future. It is the youth of this country, the boys and girls who are still in school, teenagers who are in college and in university, who are the future leaders of this great place we call home, the Cayman Islands, which include Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, and guests in the stranger's hall, listening by radio or by television, this is one of my main reasons for ensuring, with the help of the Legislative Assembly staff, we have the Youth Parliament every year without fail. I would like to thank our sponsors also who made this possible to ensure that by the experience learned or gained by the youth that we could be assured that our future was safe [with] the knowledge that we impart, by the opportunities we give the youth of this country—my children, your children, our Island—a better future.

I would like to thank our sponsors: Cayman National Bank, Ernst & Young, Cayman Airways, Walkers, Kirk Freeport, Dolphin Discovery, and there are a number of restaurants who also assisted. GIS, Radio Cayman. I want to thank Ms. Jen Dixon, who came in and gave a brief demonstration to the Youth Parliamentarians; Mr. Brent Holt, Ms. Tammy Ebanks, Ms. Vanessa Allard, and, particularly, I want to thank the staff, especially Ms. Nana Bothwell, Ms. Marlyn

Moxam, Mrs. Sharon [Smith], Madam Speaker, Mrs. Zena Merren-Chin.

I want to thank all the parents and teachers from each school, all the students who are here to support your peers who are going to deliver today for us the first time today. We can note another historic milestone that the actual Youth Parliament will be live all day long, thanks to the vision of some of the elected Members who were able to make the Government TV station available today.

I am happy to also report in my selfish manner that we have a lot of good Bodden Towners who are in the Youth Parliament today. Thank you, Bodden Town parents, for sending them out and getting interested in this part of Parliament.

Again, I want to say this is an important day and I hope that whoever takes over as chairman will continue having this Youth Parliament annually. And if you agree with me please clap. Thank you.

[Applause]

WELCOME ADDRESS

by

Hon. Mary J. Lawrence, MBE, JP
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
President of the Cayman Islands Branch of the CPA

Hon. Mary J. Lawrence, MBE, JP, Speaker, President of CPA Cayman Islands Branch: Protocol has already been established, so I won't repeat all of the names the Honourable Minister called out, just to say that as the Speaker of this Legislative Assembly, I welcome each one of you and I appreciate your interest in this Youth Parliament and in securing for your children a place in the future of the Cayman Islands.

This is the sixth Youth Parliament, and the fourth to be arranged in my term of office as Speaker. The students participating here today were selected by their respective schools, and the staff of this legislature has worked with them since October 2012, at least once a week, to prepare them for today.

Over the three years we have seen a gender shift in the students. The Youth Parliament is made up mostly of young women. In fact, of the 23 students who are participating today, only 5 are boys. While, as a woman, I appreciate the fact that the girls are coming forward, I am also concerned that more boys have not availed themselves of the opportunity to get a glimpse of what being a legislator is all about. Politics and government, despite what you hear, are worthy professions without which no country can survive as a democracy.

The theme chosen for this year's Commonwealth Day is "Opportunity through Enterprise." There is opportunity everywhere. But that fact does one little good if one does not accept the challenge offered. The technological age has opened up new vistas for

all ages. Last year the speaker at the University College commencement service was a young man who had not yet finished high school, but already had made his mark in his own country with his development of educational programmes. Just last week, a 15-year-old Moroccan young man hacked the Election website in the Cayman Islands—two very different ways in which knowledge and opportunity have been used by young people in recent times.

But what about us here in the Cayman Islands? Are we taking advantage of the opportunities offered to us which can be the springboard to new and innovative ideas and can propel us into enterprises and careers and personal and business development that we never imagined we were capable of? Do we believe that only the big and expensive ideas are worthy of note? Or are we aware of the small things that are just as important?

A man walking across a field of burrs one day was annoyed that so many stuck to his pants and how difficult they were to separate. But then he began to think. And from that encounter he would develop Velcro. It would replace shoelaces and zippers and eventually become the sealant factor used in airplanes and spaceships.

A housewife frustrated at how long it was taking her to paint her house nailed a tin can to a stick, wrapped some cloth around it, and today we have the paint roller.

Unfortunately, too many of us walk around as the older folk used to say—with one eye shut and hoping we don't see out of the other. And so we miss out on the opportunities that come our way. We don't have public transportation in our Islands, but we do have a reliable mini-bus service linking the districts because someone took a look at the situation and, instead of joining the complainers, got a mini-bus and got on the road with it.

Someone started a wedding service to locals and visitors. Today Cayman has become a wedding destination. A church saw a need and offers free tutoring programmes to students who need extra help for exams. Those students excel. A service club recognised the need for a literacy programme and started one.

Look around you at the many times we have seen a need and developed a service to meet it. But regrettably, the positive is getting lost in the sea of negativity which is invading our Islands and our society. There are far too many who sanctimoniously enunciate the negatives they perceive in our country and in so doing lose sight of all that is good and positive in the Cayman Islands. We hear a lot these days about how bad everything is—the children are bad, the parents are bad, the young people are bad, the schools are bad, the government is bad, the politicians are bad, the churches are bad. And as the negativity colours our thinking, we fall victim to the “what's-the-use-of-trying” syndrome and allow the negative thoughts of

others to dictate who we are and what we can become.

Today is a good day to take a fresh look at who we are and renew our vision of where we can go and what we can do and what we can be.

Every day I see tourists in Heroes' Square across the street examining the monuments we have erected and reading the inscriptions under them. This country has a proud and varied history. But I don't see Caymanians and Caymanian residents pausing by them. So today I want to draw your attention to two of those monuments.

The first is the monument to women and what it really signifies. There is an older woman handing up (and that's a Cayman term) a scroll to a modern, young woman. The scroll signifies the petition which set in motion the opportunity for young women to vote and to serve in political office. Without the efforts of those women whose names appear on the inscription, the young women seated here today would not have been allowed to cross the threshold of the Cayman Islands Legislative Assembly.

Those women put on their one pair of shoes and walked the dusty roads of this country to hold meetings and organised themselves into a formidable force to change things. They knew that while they could work in their homes and in the businesses of this country, change would only come, when they could vote and elect women to serve as representatives in these chambers. Take a look at it when you leave this building today. There's an older woman in her Sunday best handing the petition to the modern young woman who is holding a globe in her hands, offering her the possibility to hold the world and all its opportunities close to her.

In the 50-plus years since, only nine women have held elected office in this country. You can call me political for saying this, but I am going to say it: We are the greatest force for change in the Cayman Islands. More than 50 per cent of the voter's register are women. More than 50 per cent of the workforce are women. More than 50 per cent of the professionals are women. Yet every four years when the opportunity presents itself to make changes we find every flimsy excuse to walk away from the challenge.

I want the men and boys to look at the second monument you will see when you walk out of this building. It is a monument which reflects the strong traditions of the father and son in an age when men taught their boys how to be men. There is an old sea captain on the deck of his small vessel with his son beside him. He is not looking at his son because he has trained him to listen to what he has to say and to follow instructions. The young boy is possibly 12 or 14 years old, for that was the age they took them to sea with them. His father is charting the course, scanning the horizon for danger, reading the weather signs and passing the information on to his son who is learning to steer the ship.

That young boy will take up the challenge at 16 to sail the Seven Seas on the deck of the world's largest ships with an impeccable reputation for hard work and commitment, and an insatiable thirst for knowledge, challenges and opportunities he had learned to meet and accept under the tutelage of his father who returned home to build the country we enjoy today.

In our Cayman community we need to accept the challenge of searching out and exploring new horizons, new opportunities afforded to us in education and enterprise. As young people you live in a country with the best scholarship programme I have ever come across, a programme that can take you to the heights of performance. I was at the University College convocation this Saturday evening. I was dismayed to hear the President say that last year the College was offered four full CARICOM scholarships for its students to attend a college in Canada. Only two students took up the offer.

Some of us don't like the cold, and some of us don't like to go too far from home. But thinking like that locks you in a very small box. This year they are offered five full scholarships. These scholarships include everything, from airfare to winter clothes to a stipend. He was imploring parents to work with him and his staff to persuade students to take them up, or else they would go to other countries.

Opportunities are here, but it takes effort, discipline and commitment for us to turn them into the building blocks that we can use to create the enterprises which will build a great country. The challenge belongs to all of us. It is time to dream, to explore and to build.

I thank you.

[Applause]

COMMONWEALTH DAY MESSAGE— OPPORTUNITY THROUGH ENTERPRISE

Hon. Mary J. Lawrence, MBE, JP: I am now honoured to read the Queen's message.

A message from Queen Elizabeth II, Head of the Commonwealth, to mark Commonwealth Day on March 11th:

“This year's Commonwealth theme, ‘Opportunity through Enterprise’, is a celebration of our achievements, particularly those that may have seemed challenging, daunting or even impossible, which have helped to build strength, resilience and pride in our young people, in our communities and in our nations.

“Great achievements in human history have a number of common characteristics. From climbing the highest mountain, to winning a sporting competition, making a scientific breakthrough, building a successful business or discovering

unique artistic talent – these outcomes all begin as a simple goal or idea in one person's mind.

“We are all born with the desire to learn, to explore, to try new things. And each of us can think of occasions when we have been inspired to do something more efficiently, or to assist others in achieving their full potential. Yet it still takes courage to launch into the unknown. Ambition and curiosity open new avenues of opportunity.

“That is what lies at the heart of our Commonwealth approach: individuals and communities finding ways to strive together to create a better future that is beneficial for all.

“Our shared values of peace, democracy, development, justice and human rights—which are found in our new ‘Commonwealth Charter’—mean that we place special emphasis on including everyone in this goal, especially those who are vulnerable.

“I am reminded of the adage, ‘nothing ventured, nothing gained’. As we reflect on how the Commonwealth theme applies to us individually, let us think about what can be gained with a bold heart, dedication, and teamwork. And let us bear in mind the great opportunity that is offered by the Commonwealth—of joining with others, stronger together, for the common good.”

Thank you.

OPENING OF THE CPA SIXTH YOUTH PARLIAMENT

by

**Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly, OBE, JP,
MLA, Premier**

**Minister of Finance, District Administration,
Works, Lands & Agriculture**

**Joint Vice-President of CPA Cayman Islands
Branch**

Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly, Premier, Joint Vice-President of CPA Cayman Islands Branch: Madam Speaker, all, Good morning.

Around the world, Commonwealth Day is being observed. And here in Cayman, as a part of that observance, the Cayman Islands Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association is hosting a Sixth CPA Youth Parliament. It is indeed very encouraging and inspiring to stand before this Assembly of young people that are participating in this Youth Parliament. The presence of yet another group of young people in the Chamber of our Legislative Assembly tells us that good citizenship, civic consciousness and a desire to serve one's country is alive and well in the youth of our Cayman Islands.

Regardless of the impression that we may get from what we read in the news, or what we hear from other people, there are many, many young people who are preparing themselves for a bright future, preparing themselves to take advantage of the opportuni-

ties that life will offer them, preparing to make our Islands an even better place to live than what it is today.

The theme of this year's Youth Parliament is "Opportunity through Enterprise." Many successful people have said that opportunity is not something that is just offered to you. It is not a parade passing your way that you can simply drop into. They say an opportunity is something for which you have prepared yourself. If you are not prepared to take advantage of the opportunity then it is all quite meaningless. Your preparation is your enterprise. Whatever form that may take, it will not be easy.

The great American inventor, Thomas Edison, said that opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work. Enterprise not only requires work, enterprise requires boldness. Enterprise requires energy. Enterprise requires an adventurous spirit. The fact that you are here today sitting in this Parliament makes me believe that each of you possess these most significant characteristics. You are indeed a representative of those young people with whom our future rests. I am sure that many of you will be among tomorrow's leaders whether it is in the public service or the private sector.

I hope that the time you spend on this parliamentary project inspires you to seek your full potential. The Cayman Islands needs young people just like you. We need you to strive for excellence. Never settle for below that mark. Your experience here gives you just a glimpse, a snapshot perhaps, of what it takes to run our country. But I am sure you will have an even better understanding of how your Government works and how to be a better citizen as a result.

I would like to congratulate all of those who have organised this Youth Parliament. In particular, my colleague, the Honourable Minister Dwayne Seymour and his committee members, the Honourable Cline Glidden, MLA; Ellio Solomon, MLA; Captain Eugene Ebanks, MLA; the Clerk of the Assembly, Mrs. Zena Merren-Chin, and her diligent staff. Once again I want to reiterate that you have all done an excellent job in organising this Youth Parliament.

Congratulations to our Youth Parliamentarians for making that extra special effort to prepare for today and for being brave enough to step into this honourable Chamber.

To all of the young people here today, I say that if you feel the call to serve, then, give it due consideration, for there is no greater call than serving your country. It is here that decisions are made which affect the lives of persons of all levels of the social strata. We need bright, principled, honest minds with high ideals making those decisions for our beloved Cayman Islands which will allow it to continue to flourish for generations to come.

With that said, it is my honour to declare the Sixth Commonwealth Parliamentary Youth Parliament open.

[Applause]

Hon. Mary J. Lawrence, MBE. JP: And now, the members of the Commonwealth Youth Parliament will take their seats.

SIXTH CPA YOUTH PARLIAMENT PROCEEDINGS

[Ms. Jada Andrade, Clerk, presiding]

The Clerk: Please be seated.

Administration of Oaths or Affirmations by His Excellency, Mr. Jamal Hinds, Governor of the CPA Sixth Youth Parliament.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS OR AFFIRMATIONS

By His Excellency, Mr. Jamal Hinds, Governor of the CPA Sixth Youth Parliament

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

The Clerk: Affirmation by Ms. Leshontae Missick, Deputy Governor.

Affirmation

Ms. Leshontae Missick, Deputy Governor

Hon. Leshontae Missick: I, Leshontae Missick, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law.

The Clerk: Oath of Allegiance by Ms. Chynna Martinez, Attorney General.

Oath of Allegiance

Ms. Chynna Martinez, Attorney General

Hon. Chynna Martinez: I, Chynna Martinez, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law. So help me God.

The Clerk: I now invite the two Ex-Officio Members to take their seats.

ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Electoral District of West Bay

The Clerk: Oath of Allegiance by Ms. Sasha Rankin, First Elected Member for West Bay.

Oath of Allegiance*Ms. Sasha Rankin**First Elected Member for West Bay*

Ms. Sasha Rankin: I, Sasha Rankin, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law. So help me God.

The Clerk: Affirmation by Mr. Jerome Bailey, Second Elected Member for West Bay.

Affirmation*Mr. Jerome Bailey**Second Elected Member for West Bay*

Mr. Jerome Bailey: I, Jerome Bailey, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law.

The Clerk: Oath of Allegiance by Ms. Geovanna Dominguez, Third Elected Member for West Bay.

Oath of Allegiance*Ms. Geovanna Dominguez**Third Elected Member for West Bay*

Ms. Geovanna Dominguez: I, Geovanna Dominguez, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law. So help me God.

The Clerk: Affirmation by Mr. Erick Faustino, Fourth Elected Member for West Bay.

Affirmation*Mr. Erick Faustino**Fourth Elected Member for West Bay*

Mr. Erick Faustino: I, Erick Faustino, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF GEORGE TOWN

The Clerk: Oath of Allegiance, Ms. Diana Tibbetts, First Elected Member for George Town.

Oath of Allegiance*Ms. Diana Tibbetts**First Elected Member for George Town*

Ms. Diana Tibbetts: I, Diana Tibbetts, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law. So help me God.

The Clerk: Oath of Allegiance by Ms. Francine Wright, Second Elected Member for George Town.

Oath of Allegiance*Ms. Francine Wright**Second Elected Member for George Town*

Ms. Francine Wright: I, Francine Wright, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law. So help me God.

The Clerk: Oath of Allegiance by Ms. Moesha Ramsey-Howell, Third Elected Member for George Town.

Oath of Allegiance*Ms. Moesha Ramsey-Howell**Third Elected Member for George Town*

Ms. Moesha Ramsey-Howell: I, Moesha Ramsey-Howell, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law. So help me God.

The Clerk: Oath of Allegiance by Mr. Matthew Greaves, Fourth Elected Member for George Town.

Oath of Allegiance*Mr. Matthew Greaves**Fourth Elected Member for George Town*

Mr. Matthew Greaves: I, Matthew Greaves, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law. So help me God.

The Clerk: Oath of allegiance by Ms. Kirsten Ebanks, Fifth Elected Member for George Town.

Oath of Allegiance*Ms. Kirsten Ebanks**Fifth Elected Member for George Town*

Ms. Kirsten Ebanks: I, Kirsten Ebanks, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law. So help me God.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF CAYMAN BRAC AND LITTLE CAYMAN

The Clerk: Electoral District of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

Affirmation by Mr. Joel Gayle, Elected Member for Cayman Brac and Little Cayman.

Affirmation*Mr. Joel Gayle**Elected Member Cayman Brac and Little Cayman*

Mr. Joel Gayle: I, Joel Gayle, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF BODDEN TOWN

The Clerk: Electoral district of Bodden Town.

Affirmation by Ms. Kimberley Wood, First Elected Member for Bodden Town.

Affirmation*Ms. Kimberley Wood**First Elected Member for Bodden Town*

Ms. Kimberley Wood: I, Kimberley Wood, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law.

The Clerk: Oath of Allegiance by Ms. Kadejah Bodden, the Second Elected Member for Bodden Town.

Oath of Allegiance*Ms. Kadejah Bodden**Second Elected Member for Bodden Town*

Ms. Kadejah Bodden: I, Kadejah Bodden, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law. So help me God.

The Clerk: Oath of Allegiance by Ms. Alma Chollete-Lopez, the Third Elected Member for Bodden Town.

Oath of Allegiance*Ms. Alma Chollete-Lopez**Third Elected Member for Bodden Town*

Ms. Alma Chollete-Lopez: I, Alma Chollete-Lopez, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law. So help me God.

The Clerk: Affirmation by Ms. Haileigh Moore, the Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town.

Affirmation*Ms. Haileigh Moore**Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town*

Ms. Haileigh Moore: I, Haileigh Moore, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful

and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF NORTH SIDE

The Clerk: Electoral District North Side.

Oath of Allegiance by Ms. Tristina Robinson, Elected Member for North Side.

Oath of Allegiance*Ms. Tristina Robinson**Elected Member for North Side*

Ms. Tristina Robinson: I, Tristina Robinson, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law. So help me God.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF EAST END

The Clerk: Electoral District North Side.

Oath of Allegiance Ms. DeMa-al Nelson, Elected Member for East End.

Oath of Allegiance*Ms. DeMa-al Nelson**Elected Member for East End*

Ms. DeMa-al Nelson: I, DeMa-al Nelson, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law. So help me God.

The Clerk: I invite the Government Bench and Opposition Bench to take their seats.

[Pause]

The Clerk: Please be seated.

STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR OF THE CPA SIXTH YOUTH PARLIAMENT

His Excellency the Governor of the CPA Sixth Youth Parliament Mr. Jamal Hinds: His Excellency the Governor, Honourable Premier, Honourable Members and Ministers of Cabinet, Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Government and Opposition Members of this Honourable Youth Parliament, welcome to the CPA Sixth Youth Parliament.

This is my first time participating in Youth Parliament and I would like to say that I am honoured to have been given the privilege to contribute in this historic ceremony as the Governor of Youth Parliament. It has been a tradition for the Governor to say a few words at this stage of the proceedings, therefore, let me congratulate all members of the Sixth Youth Par-

liament for working religiously over the past six months to ensure that today's proceedings will be memorable and demonstrate that we, the youth, are true leaders of Cayman's future.

Education for the youth of the Cayman Islands and the participation in programmes such as this is of the utmost importance because our generation is the future of this beautiful country we all call home. Our current political leaders are faced with a mountain of challenges ranging from ecological to economical. However, as times goes on we, the youth and future leaders of this country, will be faced with the same problems and it will be our turn to create the solutions that will benefit the people of our Islands.

As we approach the election season I urge all Caymanians to express their right to vote for the candidates who they believe will sit in these lovely green chairs and collectively come up with solutions to the many problems that our Islands face today. Regardless of the outcome in May, let that not stop us from working together, because if we truly love Cayman, we will put all differences aside to get the job done.

I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in making this Youth Parliament a successful venture. I would also like to thank Mrs. Smith, Ms. Bothwell, Mrs. Merren-Chin and Madam Speaker for all the hard work and support they put in to ensure that today goes smoothly. A huge thank you must go out to our parents for their guidance, love and support over the years in shaping us into strong individuals.

I wish the members of this honourable Youth Parliament wisdom and courage, not only for today's debates, but for the future as we transition into leaders of our Islands.

Thank you for your attention and I hope you enjoy.

[Applause]

PROCLAMATION NO. 1/13 CPA SIXTH YOUTH PARLIAMENT

The Clerk: Cayman Islands CPA Sixth Youth Parliament Proclamation No. 1 of 2013, by his Excellency Jamal Hinds, Governor of the CPA Sixth Youth Parliament of the Cayman Islands.

WHEREAS the sessions of the Cayman Islands Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's Youth Parliament shall be held at such places and begin at such times as the Governor of the CPA Youth Parliament from time to time by Proclamation shall appoint;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jamal Hinds, Governor of the CPA Sixth Youth Parliament, by virtue of the powers conferred upon me HEREBY PROCLAIM THAT a session of the CPA Sixth Youth Parliament of the Cayman Islands shall be held at the Legislative Assembly Building on the Island of

Grand Cayman beginning at 10 am on Monday 11th March 2013.

NOMINATION OF MEMBER WITH LONGEST SERVING UNBROKEN SERVICE, MOTHER OF THE HOUSE, TO PRESIDE OVER ELECTION OF SPEAKER

The Clerk: Nomination of Member of the CPA Sixth Youth Parliament who has the longest unbroken service, the Mother of the House, to preside over the election of Speaker.

I now call for the Mother of the House to preside over the election of Speaker.

Ms. Kirsten Ebanks, Fifth Elected Member for George Town: I beg to nominate Ms. Diana Tibbetts, the First Elected Member for George Town, being the member who has the longest unbroken service in the CPA Youth Parliament to preside over the election of the Speaker.

The Clerk: The motion has been duly moved by the Fifth Elected Member for George Town. Is there a seconder?

Ms. Geovanna Dominguez, Third Elected Member for West Bay: I beg to second the motion.

The Clerk: The motion has been duly moved and seconded. I now put the question that Ms. Diana Tibbetts do preside over the proceedings of the Sixth Youth Parliament for the election of Speaker.

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

Ayes.

The Clerk: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Ms. Diana Tibbetts to preside over the proceedings for election of Speaker.

NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF SPEAKER

[Ms. Diana Tibbetts presiding]

Ms. Diana Tibbetts, First Elected Member for George Town: I now call for nominations for Speaker of this honourable CPA Sixth Youth Parliament.

I recognise the First Elected Member for West Bay.

Ms. Sasha Rankin, First Elected Member for West Bay: I beg to nominate Ms. Ann-Alecia Moore to be the Speaker of this honourable CPA Sixth Youth Parliament.

Ms. Diana Tibbetts: Does Ms. Moore accept the nomination?

Ms. Ann-Alecia Moore: Madam Chairman, it is my pleasure to accept the nomination.

Ms. Diana Tibbetts: Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations?

If there are no further nominations, I declare that Ms. Ann-Alecia Moore to be the Speaker of this honourable Sixth CPA Youth Parliament.

I now invite the Speaker designate to take the Oath of Office.

The Clerk: All rise.

Affirmation

Ms. Ann-Alecia Moore

*Speaker Designate CPA Sixth Youth Parliament
Administered by the His Excellency the Governor*

Hon. Ann-Alecia Moore: I, Ann-Alecia Moore, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Her heirs and successors, according to Law.

The Clerk: Please be seated, but remain in your seats.

[Pause]

[Hon. Ann-Alecia Moore, Speaker, presiding]

The Speaker: This honourable CPA Sixth Youth Parliament is now in Session. Please be seated.

STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE SPEAKER OF CPA SIXTH YOUTH PARLIAMENT

The Speaker: Before I proceed to the Order of Business, I crave the indulgence of this honourable CPA Sixth Youth Parliament to say a few words.

His Excellency the Governor, Honourable Premier, Honourable Members of Cabinet, Honourable Leader of the Opposition and Honourable Members of this honourable Youth Parliament, family, friends and all of our listeners and viewers by radio and television, I bid you all a good morning and welcome you to today's Sixth Youth Parliament.

It is indeed my privilege and distinct honour to have been chosen to serve as the Speaker of the House of this honourable CPA Sixth Youth Parliament and preside over today's sitting. This is my third year participating in the Youth Parliament, and every year I

stand here with dignity and pride to take part in this prestigious and rewarding event.

Today I take this opportunity to raise some important issues that are affecting the youth in our society. Over the past few years we have lost several of our peers to reckless and drunk driving, suicide and even gang violence. How many more of our young people must we lose before we strive to do something to address these social dilemmas of our society?

These issues are not confined to any particular household or district, but, rather, it is a national concern for each and every resident of the beloved Islands. It is easy for us to turn a blind eye when something happens and/or place the blame to one set of people, but what will we achieve by doing this?

An author by the name of Edmund Burke once said that the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing. If our society continues to sit back and do nothing, these social dilemmas will no doubt remain and continue to adversely affect the youth. When seeking solutions to problems that affect the youth, what better place to start with [than] the youth themselves? However, I observe that there is a tendency for many of the older generation to overlook us young people and our potential.

Before turning to professionals in Canada, the United States, England and other jurisdictions, we should seek the insight of our intelligent and ambitious young people who are more than willing to voice their opinions and concerns. There are organisations on Island that do present us young people with the opportunity to vocalise prevalent issues and solutions, such as the Cayman Islands Youth Assembly, and even this honourable Youth Parliament. However, it is unfortunate to see that the effort and input from our young people is so very often overlooked and disdained. When will our society open its eyes and realise that we are the youth of today, shaping tomorrow?

Today, we, the honourable Members of the Sixth Youth Parliament, bring valuable contributions to the table with the aim of providing solutions to bring about positive changes in our society. I hope that the viewers of the public will listen with keen ears to the valid points and issues that my fellow Youth Parliamentarians will address today.

Over the past few months I have watched each and every one of my peers dedicate their time and work diligently to produce the debates you will hear today. You will note that each of us are true ambassadors who will show that this generation is engaged, passionate, and keen to get involved in the political process. By getting involved in Youth Parliament this reflects that we are willing to take responsibility for articulating the vision of young people today in that we care about our beloved isle and want to make a positive change.

Not only has this honourable Youth Parliament provided us with an opportunity to build confidence and improve our public speaking skills, but it

has given us insight into the importance of our parliamentary system and the extensive responsibilities that come with being a politician. As you all listen to our debate, bear in mind that we are the political future of our beloved isle and allow us to prove to you that we have valid opinions and solutions which should not be overlooked.

Finally, may today's proceedings mark another memorable and fulfilling Youth Parliament sitting. I wish my fellow Youth Parliamentarians good luck and look forward to the positive outcome of today's proceedings. Today, this is your opportunity to speak out, based on your convictions and concerns, and to speak to people whom you represent. Thank you.

NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF DEPUTY SPEAKER

The Speaker: We shall now proceed with the order of business.

I now call for nominations for the Deputy Speaker of this honourable CPA Sixth Youth Parliament.

I recognise the Elected Member for East End.

Ms. DeMa-al Nelson, Elected Member for East End: Madam Speaker, I beg to nominate the Fifth Elected Member for George Town to be the Deputy Speaker of this honourable CPA Sixth Youth Parliament.

The Speaker: Does the Fifth Elected Member for George Town accept the nomination?

Ms. Kirsten Ebanks, Fifth Elected Member for George Town: Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to accept the nomination.

The Speaker: Are there any further nominations? [pause] Are there any further nominations? [pause] Are there any further nominations?

If there are no further nominations, I declare the Fifth Elected Member for George Town to be the Deputy Speaker of this honourable CPA Sixth Youth Parliament.

We will take a five minute suspension to allow for the swearing-in of Cabinet. But please remain in your seats.

[Speaker's Procession]

The Speaker: I will now invite His Excellency the Governor into the Chamber to announce the assignment of responsibilities to the honourable Ministers of Cabinet of this honourable CPA Sixth Youth Parliament.

[Pause]

The Speaker: Please be seated.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES TO HONOURABLE MINISTERS OF CABINET

By His Excellency the Governor of the CPA Sixth Youth Parliament

His Excellency the Governor of the CPA Sixth Youth Parliament Mr. Jamal Hinds: Honourable Members of the CPA Youth Parliament, I have charged the Elected Ministers of Cabinet with the following responsibilities:

- Hon. Diana Tibbetts, Premier, Minister of Finance, District Administration, Works, Lands and Agriculture.
- Hon. Sasha Rankine, Deputy Premier, Minister of Education, Financial Services and Employment.
- Hon. Kadejah Bodden, Minister of Health, Environment, Youth, Sports and Culture.
- Hon. Joel Gayle, Minister Tourism and Development.
- Hon. DeMa-al Nelson, Minister of Community Affairs, Gender and Housing.

PRESENTATION OF INSTRUMENTS OF APPOINTMENT

By His Excellency the Governor of the CPA Sixth Youth Parliament

APPOINTMENT OF PREMIER

His Excellency the Governor of the CPA Sixth Youth Parliament Mr. Jamal Hinds: To the Honourable Diana Tibbetts, in exercise of the powers conferred upon me I, Jamal Hinds, Governor of the CPA Sixth Youth Parliament of the Cayman Islands do hereby, by this instrument, appoint you, the Honourable Diana Tibbetts, to be the Premier of this CPA Sixth Youth Parliament with effect from 11 March 2013.

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY PREMIER

His Excellency the Governor of the CPA Sixth Youth Parliament Mr. Jamal Hinds: To the Honourable Sasha Rankin, in exercise of the powers conferred upon me I, Jamal Hinds, Governor of the CPA Sixth Youth Parliament of the Cayman Islands do hereby, by this instrument, appoint you, the Honourable Sasha Rankin, to be the Deputy Premier of this CPA Sixth Youth Parliament with effect from 11 March 2013.

APPOINTMENT OF LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

His Excellency the Governor of the CPA Sixth Youth Parliament Mr. Jamal Hinds: To the Honourable Kimberley Wood, in exercise of the powers conferred upon me I, Jamal Hinds, Governor of the CPA Sixth Youth Parliament of the Cayman Islands do hereby, by this instrument, appoint you, the Honourable Kimberley Wood, to be the Leader of Opposition of this CPA Sixth Youth Parliament with effect from 11 March 2013.

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

His Excellency the Governor of the CPA Sixth Youth Parliament Mr. Jamal Hinds: To the Honourable Erick Faustino, in exercise of the powers conferred upon me I, Jamal Hinds, Governor of the CPA Sixth Youth Parliament of the Cayman Islands do hereby, by this instrument, appoint you, the Honourable Erick Faustino, to be the Deputy Leader of Opposition of this CPA Sixth Youth Parliament with effect from 11 March 2013.

The Speaker: This honourable CPA Sixth Youth Parliament will suspend for 15 minutes.

Proceedings suspended 10.47 am

Proceedings resumed 11.19 am

The Speaker: Please be seated, proceedings are resumed.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

BILL

FIRST READING

Affiliation (Amendment) Bill, 2013

The Clerk: The Affiliation (Amendment) Bill, 2013.

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

SECOND READING

Affiliation (Amendment) Bill, 2013

The Clerk: The Affiliation (Amendment) Bill, 2013.

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Community Affairs, Gender and Housing.

Hon. DeMa-al Nelson, Minister of Community Affairs, Gender and Housing: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I beg to move the Second Reading of a Bill entitled the Affiliation (Amendment) Bill, 2013.

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

Hon. DeMa-al Nelson: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I stand here to support and justify why we as Government have chosen to amend three sections of the Affiliation Law.

Affiliation can be defined as being adopted or accepted as a member, or to be closely connected. With that definition clearing up any confusion as to what affiliation is we can now explore this Law. Section 3(1) states, “**Any single woman who is with child or who is delivered of a child may**” (under certain circumstances which are explained) “. . . **make complaint, on oath or affirmation, before a Justice of the Peace alleging some man to be the father of the child.**”

Our first amendment is simply deleting the word “single.”

We believe that not only single women should have this right but any woman, regardless of their marital status or their relationship status, should also be entitled to the same protection under the law as a single woman.

As the Government, we feel that we should not hinder whosoever desires to have higher authority acknowledge the biological father of their child which would, in turn, help these women attain child support regardless of their status. We do not know the situation with which these women were faced, such as rape, abandonment or any other type of abuse from the fathers. In such cases these women could go into another relationship. So, because these women are no longer single, they no longer deserve the right to attain child support from the biological father? I certainly hope not.

Since the beginning of time, women have been left with the responsibility of the rearing of their children. Men were seen as the breadwinners and went out and worked while the women stayed home to complete their domestic responsibilities and also to take care of their child’s or children’s emotional, physical, spiritual, and disciplinary wellbeing. As great as the responsibility was for women and lopsided in favor towards men, over the years men have become disingenuous, and the already unstable position of the family dynamics has deteriorated to what it is today. The women are now not only left with the emotional, physical, spiritual, and disciplinary areas of their child’s life but they are also burdened with the financial responsibilities.

How is this considered to be a fair distribution of parental roles? It should be classed for exactly what

it is—gender inequality—and we as Government will no longer stand aside and watch as our future crumbles due to the financial state of these mothers. It is unfair that both the mother and the father were involved in the creation of the child, but only the mother has total responsibility to raise and take care of the child.

UNICEF's 2007 Report [["The State of the World's Children 2007"](#)] has some very important key messages: Gender equality and the well being of children go hand in hand. Gender equality furthers the cause of child survival and development.

Our second and third amendments will also have a great effect for the maintenance of our youth. We will basically be extending the child support section of this Law to 18, which is the legal age of adulthood in the Cayman Islands. It can then be stopped at 21 or until the completion of full time education.

We as Government do strongly believe that every individual has the right to obtain education and further their skills and qualifications. Obviously, while they are completing their fulltime education they are not able to financially sustain themselves, so they are heavily dependent on their parents and guardians for financial support. I am sure that all the citizens of these three amazing Islands want our youth to be qualified members of society. They should not be deterred from their aspirations and goals due to lack of finances. They should not sacrifice their education due to the judicial system not protecting them as much as possible.

Some of our youth steal and also sell illegal substances, among other criminal activities, just to make ends meet. Because these individuals most likely do not have a tertiary education they most likely are not qualified to get jobs. They will turn to something else to survive, which means a continued rising of criminal activities.

What's one of the leading causes of criminal activities? In one word: joblessness.

What causes joblessness? In three words: not being educated.

Why aren't our youth being educated? In four words: because of financial bondage.

Do you have any idea how many smart Caymanian children are lost on the streets with no prospects, all because the mothers work two and three jobs just to stay poor? And when I say poor, I mean nothing is going on. These mothers, in turn, spend less time with their children so they fall through the cracks. As you can see, Madam Speaker, these women and children need help.

What we are doing with these amendments is promoting the idea of shared family responsibilities. This is essential for equalising relations and opportunities between men and women, lessening the likelihood of financial bondage robbing our youth of tertiary education, and, of course, exploring the extent to which the legal system can help bring this about.

Passing these amendments will ease the financial strain put on our Government, and, in turn, society. There will be more rounded individuals with the knowledge needed to be productive members of society. So vote yes to our amendments and take part in what will be a historical move in the progression of our Islands.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I call upon the Third Elected Member for George Town.

Ms. Moesha Ramsey-Howell, Third Elected Member for George Town: Thank you Madam Speaker.

According to section 3(1) of the Affiliation Law, it clearly identifies that single mothers are catered [to]. However, Madam Speaker, we ought to illustrate why not only single women should get maintenance from the child's biological father, but, rather, any woman should gain this option.

First and foremost, father's play a pivotal role in the conception process. Madam Speaker, in accordance with the 1996 Revision of the Maintenance Law, Part 2, Duty to Maintain, section 3, every man is required to maintain his own children.

Madam Speaker, it is a fact that not every woman who has a child is always the sole caretaker of that child. Many women out there either legally or out of good will have taken on the role of being the caretaker of a child. It could be said that this is so due to abandonment or the possible death of the child's parent or parents. So, Madam Speaker, it brings us to the argument as to why they should gain the same option.

Some women may not be able to provide for the child or children. Furthermore, some women may have to possess numerous jobs in order to sustain the maintenance of that child. However, there is also the fact that some women may not have the physical capacity to work and maintain the child—for example, an elderly grandmother.

Madam Speaker, according to the Human Rights, divorce or separation does not end the legal obligation for financial child support. Parents still have the legal responsibility to provide adequate child support. Moreover, according to the Cayman Islands Bill of Rights, it clearly outlines that all children in the Cayman Islands are entitled to basic education, which, in most instances, would take them to the age of 17.

This brings me to the second amendment, which asks why maintenance is necessary until the age of 18 and/or when the child is in fulltime education.

Madam Speaker, as a child grows older their basic needs change. In accordance with the 2012 revision of the Children Law, children born out of wedlock, by law the existing maintenance order can only

be extended up until the age of 18. Conversely, the Maintenance Law and the Affiliation Law merely allow maintenance for a child born out of wedlock until the age of 17. Contrariwise, children born in wedlock are eligible in the Grand Courts for maintenance until the age of 21, or upon the completion of tertiary education, which is consistent with other jurisdiction's laws relative to children, such as the UK.

To concede, having provided evidence, we have showed that the prospect of motherhood and guardianship is not only applicable to the birth mother, but also to any other woman who has primary custody and care of the child. Nonetheless, we have recognised Schedule 1 "Financial Provision for Children Orders for Financial Relief against parents," Paragraph 1(1) of the 2012 Revision of the Children Law states, and I quote: "**On an application made by a parent or guardian of a child, or by any person in whose favor a residence order is in force with respect to a child, the court may make**" an order to a primary applicant to the biological father.

Thank You Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I call upon the Third Elected Member for West Bay.

Ms. Geovanna Dominguez, Third Elected Member for West Bay: Thank you, Madam Speaker,

The Government wants to extend the Affiliation Law to include married women as well as single women. The problem with this amendment is that we cannot assume every human being is honest in all they do. We, the Opposition, suggest that the Government consider if the law [should] be changed. And if approved, then more than one man may become involved with the maintenance of the child, leading to an abuse by the woman.

In the case that the biological father is legally obliged to pay or maintain the child and the woman is remarried, her new husband may also be obliged to pay if he has claimed the child as his own. This woman would be abusing the law by gaining maintenance from both men. Taking the scenario further, if she is to divorce her current husband and again remarry, her new husband is, again, legally obliged to maintain the child if he claims he or she as his own. This means she now has three men maintaining her child, which is an abuse of the privilege.

Women may abuse this privilege also by claiming money from multiple men, even though the needs of the child are covered. If she is then asking for support or money from other men, other than the child's father, what is she truly doing with the money she is receiving that she claims is to be used for her child's needs?

However, if we're all about equality, why not open up the law to include men as well? Having read

it, 'Any person who is with child or who is delivered of a child may,' et cetera, as the law would state. For instance, what if the child is left in the father's care and the mother has a higher source of income than the father? It is then obvious that the father would have to seek maintenance from the mother to help out with the child. In some cases even the father has no source of income at all, and would need support for the child from the mother. However, we are aware that the father can seek maintenance from the mother through other laws, such as the Maintenance Law and the Children Law.

Also, married women are already able to apply for maintenance through the Matrimonial Causes Law, as well as the Children Law. Opening the law up to any woman would open up another window for inconsistency. Is this realistic?

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I call upon the Third Elected Member for Bodden Town.

Ms. Alma Chollete-Lopez, Third Elected Member for Bodden Town: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

How does Merriam Webster define the term "Maintenance"? Maintenance, Madam Speaker is defined as support to sustain against peril. Any woman should be able to obtain the option of receiving maintenance from the biological father. Not just because I believe that women deserve the rights to be equal, but because it's only logical for the law to protect the woman and child of abandonment from the biological father.

I am plainly siding with the amendment to this law in order to protect the future of Cayman, our children.

An individual can bear up to 45 Dels [units] of pain, but when it's time for a woman to give birth she feels up to 57 Del units of pain. That, Madam Speaker, is 12 units more than one person can hold. So, do you mean to tell me it's right for a mother to experience such excruciating pain which amounts to 20 bones being crushed simultaneously just for the father to wander off and to go about his business, whilst avoiding his responsibility as a parent to provide and support his child, emotionally and financially? That is utter foolishness, if you ask me. Mothers are not just nurturers and just someone to seek assistance [from] in time of need, but, rather, [are] of great importance and contribution towards the upbringing of a child.

Madam speaker, as you can see, any woman that is fertile can get pregnant. But it takes a great deal of commitment along with hard work to fulfill the role as a mother. But what if a woman experiences a financial crisis and is unable to provide support for her child. Don't you think it's only reasonable that she opts for maintenance from the biological father? After all,

he is part accountable for the existence of the child, don't you think?

In the [UNICEF report](#), ["The Universal Declaration of Human Rights"] Article 25(2) states, "**Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance.**" It goes on to say, "**All children, whether born out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.**" So, if the law's purpose is to protect the people of Cayman, why are excluding the rights of any women wanting to obtain maintenance?

In the [Canadian Children's Rights Council](#), if a husband is found to be a victim of paternity fraud and has been deceived into paying for or acting as the child's social father for a brief period of time, family court judges frequently order him to pay financial support for the child in support of the social father-child relationship rights. Madam Speaker, this only shows how important it is for a father to take consideration and priority to provide and sustain his child.

In the [Children's Rights Council](#) of America, it states that neither divorce nor separation ends the legal obligation for the biological father to offer child support—even if the marriage or common law relationship has been broken. Nonetheless, fathers should acknowledge their responsibility in the lives of their child. Any woman, regardless of [her] relationship status, should be able to obtain such options concerning the needs of the child.

In the Cayman Islands, it's no secret that over the many years that have gone by, the importance of woman in society has been underestimated and taken for absolute granted. Madam Speaker, equal opportunity furthers the cause of child's survival and development for all members of the Caymanian society. Like I said before, I am not prejudiced against fathers or of the male sex, for I do believe in equal rights and that men should always acknowledge that they have the legal obligation to serve as a parent who provides for his child, both emotionally and financially, in terms of the mother's stability.

With the maintenance being compensated, the mother is being assisted in the maintaining of the child, which is beneficial to his or her upbringing. Even if the father and mother are separated and the father finds himself in the state where he isn't concerned about his child, but is willing to fund for maintenance, the point of the amendment is for fathers to acknowledge their legal priority to assist financially, if not emotionally.

In contrast to the biological father having a lower income and incapableness to support for his child, it is still his legal obligation for the mother to obtain maintenance from him for the benefit of the child, as he is also the sole responsibility in assisting and supporting the child. Commonly, if he is unable the court wouldn't subtract illogically; but, rather, [would] subtract sums that are reasonable and affordable for him.

Amending this law isn't to promote promiscuous acts amongst our women, but to protect them along against abandonments, separation and rape crimes. In Cayman we want the best for our people. And in order to protect our people, it is important that we start by protecting and seeking the precise measures of our beloved Islands' future. This is why any woman should be permitted the option of receiving maintenance from the father.

Thank you Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I call upon the Honourable Minister of Health, Environment, Youth, Sports and Culture.

Hon. Kadejah Bodden, Minister of Health, Environment, Youth, Sports and Culture: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We, the Government, feel that it is necessary to make the amendments previously stated to the Affiliation Law. Madam Speaker, the people of the Cayman Islands never fail to stress that the future of our Islands is, in fact, in the hands of our young people. At 15 years of age, a child's education is just beginning. The real finances have not even begun to emerge and the reality is that nowadays in order to acquire a job that will ensure adequate financial benefits sufficient enough to sustain a comfortable life, an individual will most likely need at least an associate's degree, which, as you know, not many people can acquire at the age of 15.

Times have changed since this Law was last revised and education may not have been as crucial as it is now. So, it only makes sense that a parent be obligated to provide financially for their child until they are able to fend for themselves and [that] we, as the people responsible for ensuring the wellbeing of this country, implement the tools to ensure that this is done.

According to the Bill of Human Rights, Article 25, everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. It is not uncommon for the parents of the child to be separated, unmarried, or uninvolved in any kind of relationship. But maintenance ensures that this does not mean that the single parent who lives with the child has to fend for the child by their financial means alone.

Madam Speaker, if this is the case, and the Law states that at the tender age of 15 the parent is no longer legally obligated to maintain his or her child, and decides that he or she won't, where does this leave the child? Significant psychological damage can take place if children discover that their father or

mother has opted to cease to play a role in their lives. With a lack of fiscal support from a parent those unfortunate children whose lives are condemned to poverty due to parent's non-payment of child maintenance are directly affected, not only physically, but emotionally as well.

According to [Robert Kuttner](#), children who live in poverty are: “. . . **statistically at greater than normal risk for every bad social outcome in later life associated with early chronic trauma. . . The child is more likely to have poor cognitive and emotional skills . . . do poorly in school . . . to have poor eating . . . to use drugs and excessive alcohol, . . . to drop out of school.**” As an adult, “. . . **they are more likely to suffer physical and mental illnesses, to have difficulty forming secure attachments to a life partner, to get into trouble with the law, to be incarcerated, and to die prematurely. . . . Some remarkable individuals surmount these odds, but to be poor is to be at greater risk.**”

Living in poverty is a very real consequence of a parent's failure to fiscally support their child. It really benefits a child's health to know that they are loved, wanted and cared for. Not having that reassurance can lead to self-esteem issues, depression, behavioural issues, anti-social behaviours, the development of a lack of affection because of missing support from fathers or mothers, as well as missing out on key psychological developments. At the age of 15, a child is still growing and acquiring new behaviours and learning to accept [himself], so [he is] very susceptible to negative psychological and behavioural changes.

Madam Speaker, it is clear that the economy is not what it used to be, and some parents just cannot provide for their children as well as they would like. In cases such as this we are left with a child who may possibly be stressed, confused, angry and anxious about the lack of income coming into the household, and, in extreme cases, a child who has to skip a meal or two simply because there is no food. Let's face it; a child who cannot eat is a child who cannot learn. Not only does this affect the child, but it affects the parent—typically a mother trying to provide for that child singlehandedly as well. He or she may have to work long hours or multiple jobs just to provide the very basic needs for his or her child.

Madam Speaker, this Bill may have been revised in the time when the need for child maintenance was not as pressing an issue as it is today. But the truth of the matter is that it has become more and more common to have cases where child maintenance is needed, such as in a single parent household. Things and times have changed and we, as the Government, feel it is our duty to change accordingly so that future generations are better equipped, as well as provided with the necessary tools needed to make sure our community remains a successful and comfortable place to call home.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I call upon the Fourth Elected Member for George Town.

Mr. Matthew Greaves, Fourth Elected Member for George Town: Madam Speaker, Members of Government, my fellow colleagues, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good morning to all.

Madam Speaker, as the Fourth Elected Member for the George Town constituency, it is my intention to briefly address the Government's proposed amendment to the Affiliation Law, 1995. Madam Speaker, in doing so I will look at the Law as it now stands. I will then go on to look at the proposed amendment to the abovementioned law and the implication of making such an amendment.

Madam Speaker, the [amendment] which the Government is proposing, seeks to change the definition of which category of women would receive child maintenance. The Law currently states in section 3(1) that any single women who is with a child or who is delivered of a child may . . . and the Law went on in section 3(1)(a), (b) and (c) to define the timeframe in which a man becomes obligated to provide the financial support for a child who the single mother identifies the father to be.

Madam Speaker, in essence, the Government seeks to reclassify the underlying principle and intended purpose of how the current Law was designed to work, which, we suggest, would define: 1) which category of female is entitled to make claims for child support; and 2) which father within a certain timeframe is legally obligated to financially participate in the child's life.

Madam Speaker, the Government is also ignoring the spirit of the Law which we would assert was to protect *single* mothers whose child was born out of wedlock. The Government plans to make this change by simply omitting the word “single” to now read “any woman.” While I believe the Government, in proposing this [amendment], has the noblest of intentions, which are obviously grounded in perception of fairness and equality, also, Madam Speaker, we believe to pacify international trends and special interest groups without any consideration for our socio-complex society and our strong moral values, it is, however, the view of the Opposition that this [amendment] lacks a wider consideration to many factors.

Madam Speaker, we believe that the spirit of the Law that specifies any single woman was intended first to ensure that any child born to a single woman would receive the financial support needed and the burden would not be placed solely on the mother. We also believe that the Law was deliberate in its intention by making the distinction between a single woman and any other woman to ensure that they were covered under law, as all other categories of women

would be otherwise protected under the Matrimonial [Causes] [Law].

Madam Speaker, this proposed [Bill] by the Government would give blessings for all category of women to lay claims for child support regardless of the fact that the child may already be supported. The amendment is to open a potential floodgate argument which would create a further social hardship in our society.

Madam Speaker, removing “single” from “women” could see potential claims being made by women who chose to enter into a contractual agreement with a male for fertilisation purposes—potential donors—thus avoiding regulated fertilisation clinics. This removes the legal protection provided to all parties, Madam Speaker, with a lack of contractual freedom and provide to men to agree about child support. This leaves men at a disadvantage and creates a reverse equality to the male counterpart. Whether a man consents to the pregnancy or not, he is obligated to maintain a child as long as he is deemed to be the father. This, I suggest, Madam Speaker, will breed other sets of disparities as men have no say in this matter, they must merely deal with it.

Madam Speaker, it is our view that changing the wording in the statute creates a bias and imposes an unfair duty on a particular parent based on gender. Example, Madam Speaker, if a husband and a wife who have a child were to separate without being divorced, the father would have to pay child support to the child if the kids live with the mother. But, in a case where the kids live with the father, the mother would not be liable to pay child support.

Madam Speaker, in closing, we propose that allowing the current Law to remain as is will provide transparency, equity and a level playing field for all females with limited possibility for misuse or abuse, while the Government’s proposal lacks definition, potential to a floodgate argument and also breeds inequality.

Madam Speaker, as a God blessed society, we have an obligation to provide a level of protection necessary for our children’s prosperity. This, I suggest, should not be done for the ideals of external influences and pressure, but should be influenced by our own ideals, integrity and our fundamental principle as a God-fearing society. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I call upon the Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Sasha Rankin, Deputy Premier, Minister of Education, Financial Services and Employment: In Article [26(1)] of the [Human Rights Law](#), it clearly states and I quote, “**Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary**

education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.”

Madam Speaker, one of the Government’s goals is to amend section 10 of the Affiliation Law in respect to the sustainment of this significant human right of education. Section 10 of the Affiliation Law states, and I quote, “**No order for the maintenance and education of any such child made under this Law shall, except for the purpose of recovering money previously due under such order, be of any force or validity after the child in respect of whom it was made has attained the age of fifteen years, or after the death of such child: Provided that the court making the order may thereby direct that the payments to be made under it in respect of the child shall continue until the child attains the age of seventeen years, in which case such order shall be in force until that period.”**

The Government intends to delete the word “fifteen”, substitute the word “eighteen”, and the words “seventeen years”, and substitute the words “twenty-one years or completion of full-time education.” In the Cayman Islands it is expected that a child start school at the minimum age of four and finish at the minimum age of seventeen. Therefore, Madam Speaker, it is evident that giving a parent the freedom of ceasing child support is not sufficient in meeting a child’s educational needs. We tend to preach that the youth are the future of our Cayman Islands. But how are we practicing what we preach by putting some children at a disadvantage to achieve?

Caymanians not having the necessary qualifications and/or skills to fill jobs that are in the market may be a major contributing factor to the increasing unemployment rate in the Cayman Islands. Madam Speaker, in the [2011 Labor Force Survey](#) it states that as the educational level increased, participation in the labour force also increased all the way to college/university level, except among women. The rate ranged from 30.2 per cent among those with no qualification to 90.8 per cent among those with post secondary education. Labour force participation among those with a college/university education was 90.0 per cent. The participation rate of males is higher compared to females across all educational attainment categories.

For that reason, Madam Speaker, it is imperative that every child has the opportunity to not only attain secondary level education, but every child must be given the chance to acquire a qualification beyond high school to prepare him or her to enter the labour force. Madam Speaker, this is evident as the 2011 Labor Force Survey Report also discovered that, and I quote, “**Youth unemployment rate remained the highest compared to other subgroups of the unemployed. Males and those in the 15 to 24 age group continue to experience high levels of un-**

employment in 2011. The unemployment rate among males remained at 6.7 percent in 2011.”

This shows that the absence of this necessary development in a child's education will result in another child who will fall under the increasing statistics of unemployment. The survey had concluded that, and I quote, **“The majority of the unemployed had high school or lower level education (72.0%) and had worked before (75.1%). More than 50 percent of the unemployed were without work 12 months or more, while almost one in every six never had a job. On the whole, they have been without work for longer than six months and have relied mainly on financial support from spouse/partners, parents, or other relatives and friends.”**

Therefore, this illustrates, Madam Speaker, that it is crucial for the Government to extend the age of child maintenance to 18, or until the child has attained the completion of full-time education. This dilemma of unemployment often influences individuals to seek an alternative method of earning income, which, in most circumstances, is a life of crime.

Madam Speaker, one of the recommendations of [Yolande Forde's study](#) of education and school experiences of inmates in the Northward Prison, states, and I quote, **“There needs to be a school program of technical and vocational education. This would most likely include, but not be limited to, the development or utilization of a technical training institute to teach viable income-generating skills. We must allow non-academics to leave the school system with more than just a low self-esteem. Moreover, after the age of compulsory school attendance, it is often at the discretion of the student to explore avenues to continue his education or training. However, it is apparently at this transition stage that many ill-equipped and inadequately educated individuals often enter the ‘wasteland of unemployment’—out of school and out of work. They lack guidance and direction. This program should therefore be flexible enough to allow such persons, under some special arrangement, to remain in the system beyond the age of sixteen in order to leave that institution with some proper certification in a vocational or technical field.”**

Therefore, Madam Speaker, whether a child is academically inclined, or whether a child has great potential in the vocational field, it is important that every child has the support of his or her father by way of financial backing to enable every child to achieve a level of learning which will equip him/her to enter the work force of these islands.

Thank You Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I call upon the Elected Member for North Side.

Ms. Tristina Robinson, Elected Member for North Side: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

What is maintenance? Maintenance is the process of maintaining or preserving someone or something. If a man and woman are currently separated and have a child of their own, regardless of their current marital status they both have an obligation to financially and emotionally provide for their child or children.

Madam Speaker, as you may already know, having a child is a two-part responsibility. Therefore, I believe that it is in the child's best interests to have both parents actively involved in his or her life until the child is capable of taking care of itself. A separation or divorce should not change parents' ongoing duty to support their child because, despite the problems between both parents, the child is an innocent factor in this situation and by all rights both parents should help to maintain the child because it may have several serious consequences—such as the child suing both parents.

Though it is a rare commodity, some children actually sue their parents. We see this in the [Huffington Post](#) New York article where 32-year old Bernard Anderson Bey, homeless man, sued his parents for neglect, being that he felt unloved and abandoned. Madam Speaker, a child needs to be financially supported and oftentimes a single woman cannot support the baby alone, much less herself. Yes, the woman has the option of an abortion, but those cost money too. And abortions can often lead to emotional pain, guilt, anxiety, and depression which will require the woman to spend money on therapy and antidepressants. So, it's not like the woman gets a free ride either.

Furthermore, I find it ridiculous that in the Affiliation Law a child is considered independent at the age of 15. Fifteen, Madam Speaker? I myself am 16 and I still depend on my parents to provide me with money, and I know many other teenagers who would still depend on their parents. In my opinion, the age should be increased to 18 or in fulltime education, which would most likely be the age of 22.

Madam Speaker, I think we should consider the fact that these laws were made decades ago when children were expected to be independent after their high school graduation. Unfortunately, times have changed. I think all parents would agree with the fact that the child should first earn his college degree and then try to become self-determining. At the age of 15 the child cannot receive their driver's licence, get accepted into college, pay school fees, and would not qualify for a job either. If we increase the age to 18 or older this could increase the amount of qualified employees because by this age they would already have earned at least one college degree.

Madam Speaker, we, as the Government, care about our community and are passionate for our youth to be heading in the right direction to become

successful in life. My conclusion is: raise the age to 18 years or fulltime education, and assure that both parents have an obligation to financially and emotionally provide for their children. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I call upon the Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Erick Faustino, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Unfortunately, in today's society all too many relationships break down. And one of the most emotionally challenging aspects is how to deal with children and the issues surrounding child support.

Child maintenance is a periodically paid financial support for a child whose parents parted the way. It is received by the parent who cares for the child on a daily basis from the other parent. The money goes towards the daily living costs of the child. What many parents do not realise is that child maintenance can be arranged privately without involving a third party. Of course, this is only a viable option if the relationship has remained relatively amicable and both parties are willing to negotiate in a civilized manner. It is called "private agreement."

This option can be the most painless and does not involve any legal proceedings and is merely an agreement between two people. Anyone considering this kind of child maintenance arrangement must, however, be confident that the two parties can trust each other and cooperate effectively and will be sustained in the terms agreed. A private agreement can offer greater flexibility as legal authorities do not need to be involved. You must take additional steps to terminate your court ordered child support obligations or face paying or receiving payments beyond the child's support end date. Child support generally ends when the child reaches the state age of majority, goes off to college, dies, or gets married.

The issue with the amendment to this Law is that married women can already seek maintenance under the Maintenance Law, as well as the Children Law. The purpose of this Law was to protect single women, not to exclude those who are married, as married women are already catered to by the laws. If you do wish to change this Law on the basis of gender equality then why not include men who can also seek maintenance under the above stated laws?

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I call upon the Honourable Minister of Tourism and Development.

Hon. Joel Gayle, Minister of Tourism and Development: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Cayman Islands is often described as a Christian country. We do not take this description lightly or as a mere pat on the shoulders. Our people believe strongly in the scriptural admonitions in the Holy Bible that sets our guidelines on the family. Parents, we are told, are obligated to train their children in the way they should go. Parents have a moral responsibility to care, nurture, protect and provide for their children. The law is there to offer full protection to the vulnerable and the weak and to set in place policies that would ensure that all citizens are treated fairly, non-discriminately, and that each person's welfare is accounted for.

The law recognises the age of 18 as the age of maturity, for the acquisition of a driver's licence, to vote for your choice of government, and to drink alcoholic beverages. I hope none of us here choose to travel on that road. Let's face it, what opportunities are available for youth under the age of 18 to live independently of their parents or guardians? We are in school, by and large, until 17. Then, if we are to get a decent job to earn a decent living we must have more than a school-leaving certificate or a high school diploma. When a child is in fulltime education, that may sound vague and long, but the reality is that the law is set to [be] reasonable and fair to all parties concerned.

Most parents encourage their children to go on to college/university. The truth of the matter is that we still need their help. The long hours invested in our education will pay more dividends if we do not have to take on the added stress of rent, food, and other general expenses. We do have many heroic stories of those who worked, juggled between jobs and studied. And whilst they learned an invaluable lesson of self-reliance, the downside, many will tell you, is that the experience was not lovely and if they had a chance they would choose the route of maintenance by their parent, guardian or benefactor.

Madam Speaker, let's take a brief look at other jurisdictions. In Canada, child support is a legal right of a child to receive financial support from his or her own parents. That right exists whether or not the child's parents were ever married and whether or not they ever lived together. That right continues until the child turns 19 years old. If the child is still dependent at the age of 19 or older, owing to illness or disability, or because the child is still in school, for example, then the right to financial support will continue.

In Singapore, under [section 69 of the Women's Charter](#), you can apply for maintenance for your child from the other parent if he/she neglects or refuses to provide their child with reasonable maintenance for yourself, from your husband if you are a married woman whose husband neglects or refuses to provide reasonable maintenance; for yourself from your parents if you are over 21 and you are still a fulltime stu-

dent. The law states that it is a duty of a man to maintain his children.

Thanks, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I call upon the Second Elected Member for George Town.

Ms. Francine Wright, Second Elected Member for George Town: Thank You Madam Speaker.

I agree with the proposed amendments to the Affiliation Law regarding the age change as stated in section 10. According to Cayman Islands law, the Education Act 2009, a student must remain in fulltime education until the age of 17 years. Also, according to the Child Protection Law a child cannot maintain a fulltime job until the age of 16 years. With this being said, it is then both unfair and unjust to end maintenance at 15 years when a child at this age cannot financially support themselves.

The average working hours of a full time employee is between 40 to 46 hours a week and the average hours for a college student is also 40 hours a week. Studying and going to class restricts students in how much they can work and also the types of jobs they can acquire. To be able to be in fulltime education it is near impossible to be a fulltime employee, as you would need very flexible hours to fit around your class schedule, this may force students into low wage, low skills-jobs.

Yes, it is possible for such students to get part time jobs, but with the average cost of living for a single person in these Islands easily passing \$1,500 dollars a month—sharing a room with someone, that is, not including school fees—and the average salary for a part time employee rarely passing \$7 dollars per hour, a student would not be able to maintain themselves without financial assistance. The stress of having to work to maintain a steady GPA and financially support themselves can lead to a decrease in children trying to pursue further education, putting stress on the government when these individuals become a part of the 22 per cent of young people who are unemployed and need to be offered financial support on welfare.

Furthermore, in the Cayman Islands some foreign workers can claim health benefits for their children up to the age of 21 years. If our law has provisions of expat children, should we then put our own children at an unfair advantage by ending their maintenance at age 15?

In regard to the amendments to section 3(1) to enable any women other than single woman to seek maintenance for a child not born of a marriage, in a culturally diverse island such as the Cayman Islands, with more than a 135 nationalities residing here (according the Cayman Islands' 2010 Census of Population and Housing Report), people are intermingling

and entering into marriages with people from different countries. Now, I ask you: Picture a woman who marries a man who is then "rolled over," having served his seven allotted years within these islands. With his absence she may have moved on and had a child with another man. In the event that they should separate, this woman would not be provided for under the current law because of her marital status.

Furthermore, think of a woman who is separated from a deranged husband who is controlling and domineering and will not consent to a divorce, or in the case that an estranged person cannot afford a divorce. In the event that this woman should move on with a new partner, if they should have a child and the relationship is then dissolved, there is no financial support for her under the current Affiliation Law.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, to protect our youth from the mental and physical stresses of trying to balance work and school, as well as to offer protection for all women under all circumstances, these amendments should be passed.

Thank you, Madam Speaker

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? I call upon the Honourable Premier.

Hon. Diana Tibbetts, Premier, Minister of Finance, District Administration, Works, Lands and Agriculture: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As you can see, today the Government is proposing to make three crucial amendments to the Affiliation Law which promotes equality and human rights, as my honourable Minister of Gender and Housing has stated. Today, I want to show how these amendments will help benefit the Government in the financial aspect.

As we know, today in our Islands, just like in the rest of the world, we are going through hard financial times are our economy is going through a struggle to recover from the recession. Currently right now in this fiscal year there are 361 women between the ages of 18 to 45 seeking financial assistance from the Department of Children and Family Services [DCFS] and most, if not all, of these women have dependent children.

Forty-seven per cent of these women are seeking financial assistance from the DCFS due to insufficient child maintenance or no child maintenance at all. Out of the 361 women, 224 are single female parents—that is, 62 per cent of the women seeking financial assistance currently are single parents. Last fiscal year it was reported that 203 single female parents were getting financial assistance from the DCFS. Out of those women, 78.3 per cent were single female parents getting the financial assistance due to insufficient child maintenance or no child maintenance at all.

The DCFS benefits families with dependent children. But in these hard economic times and the tight budget the DCFS has, it makes it hard on them

as they have to be very selective on who benefits from these services. The fact is that some fathers, in particular, do not take up their responsibilities to provide for their children putting an added strain on the government to ensure that the child's needs are met. The problem could simply be solved by allowing any woman to get the financial assistance from the father or current partner, and to increase the age of the children that can prolong the maintenance for the child's benefit.

Law practitioners have been asking for the age to increase to at least 18 and we have to face the fact today [that] if we want our future generation to be successful they are encouraged to get at least one degree at university level as this will help them to progress in life.

Madam Speaker, we cannot underestimate the importance of women's rights and in gender equality, for gender equality furthers the cause of child survival and in development for all society. In the [UNICEF 2007 Report](#), there were several key messages. Two in particular state that ". . . **gender equality furthers the cause of child survival and development.**" Gender equality produces a double dividend. It benefits both the women and children.

As you can see, Madam Speaker, we, the Government, want to help women get the financial assistance they deserve as it takes two people to make a child. So why should only one raise the child? Child maintenance is for the benefit and protection of the child's interests and basic needs for survival. We want the children to get the fair opportunity of having both parents in their lives to help raise the children giving them the necessary financial assistance. The Government should at least step in and help raise these children just because of these selfish fathers who are refusing to help maintain a child he helped to create. We want justice for the mothers and children who are suffering inadequate finances to live a decent life.

Madam Speaker, I hope everyone here today hears the plea from the Government to make the crucial changes in this Law that will help the women, the future generation of Cayman, and help to relieve the strain on Cayman's finances with the limited finances we have. We cannot help everyone, sadly, due to our economic state. But we should not be carrying the burden for these selfish men who don't want to take up their duties as fathers providing for their children.

Times have changed. And now it's time to amend a law to fit with our new society and make the women, but especially the children, live a life that would benefit Cayman in the future.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I call upon the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Kimberley Wood, Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like the Government to consider marriage as well. What happens if the child gets married before they finish their fulltime education? Should the parents still be held responsible for their child and their maintenance?

Although it is a rare occurrence, some children do get married by the age of 18, 19, et cetera. In this event, do a female's parents still have to maintain their child? Or is that still her husband's duty?

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

If no other Member wishes to speak, does the Honourable Minister wish to exercise her right of reply?

Hon. DeMa-al Nelson: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My colleagues and I have already shared the reasons why these amendments need to be made to the Affiliation Law. We, the Government, strongly believe that any woman, regardless of her status, deserves a chance to attain child support from the biological father. It is so sad that women are constantly left with the responsibility of raising their child, or children, themselves. And when they fall short, we, the Government, are burdened with the responsibility which costs us hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in assistance while the fathers run off carefree.

Madam Speaker, this has been going on for far too long, and today we are putting a stop to it. It cannot possibly be right for fathers to stop paying child support or child maintenance when a child is 15 years of age, or not helping them through fulltime education themselves. We are not abusing the law. And if we are, Madam Speaker, we are asking the Opposition to enlighten us on what law that is.

In the case where three men are supporting a child or where it is suspected that the needs of the child are not already being met, this situation can be dealt with [by] the courts and the case investigated. This way we can ensure that the system is not being abused.

Another point I would like to make, Madam Speaker, is that in changing the law to be less sexist and opening the law to *any man* would mean scraping the Affiliation Law completely and starting over. We cannot amend the Law to include men just yet because of various reasons. But, Madam Speaker, I would like the Opposition to know that Rome was not built in a day.

[Laughter]

Hon. DeMa-al Nelson: We want to amend the Law to protect married women who may be trapped by other laws, like the Marriage and Maintenance Law.

Is the Opposition trying to call these unfortunate Caymanian mothers promiscuous? As I said before, men helped in the creation of these children and should help in raising them. Madam Speaker, we are not a biased Government and we believe that any woman should have the right to maintenance from these able-bodied men who refuse to take care of their children.

By keeping the word “single” we are promoting discrimination among the people of our Islands. What is the difference between that and discriminating against something such as race? We say we are a Christian society. And Christians do not discriminate. So let’s be a Christian society. Nowadays, it is not as common to have a single father as it is to have a single mother.

Madam Speaker, the Opposition has made a lot of points that, to me, are ridiculous and stupid.

[Laughter]

Hon. DeMa-al Nelson: I am not trying to, you know . . . but all I am saying is that these fathers, Madam Speaker, get these women impregnated and they run off and they don’t do anything about it and these women are burdened with the financial responsibility of these children and we, the Government, have to go in and help them.

What we are trying to do is protect these women and those children so that they have a more flourishing future. We don’t want our future generations to be uneducated, poor, needing assistance, on the roadside bumming for money. We are trying to help these mothers. And it is very unfortunate, Madam Speaker, that the Opposition cannot see why we are trying to help these mothers.

The Leader of the Opposition made a statement, or asked the question actually, what should be done if a child gets married in college. Obviously (I am not trying to be rude or anything), if the child gets married the parents should not have to take care of the child any longer. And if you actually read out all the amendments we are trying to make, it says, “up to the age of 21, or in full time education.” Please take that into consideration.

This is a term that I use very often: Lots of these mothers are on an IGA budget. IGA is . . . have you ever been to Fosters’? IGA is like the cheapest brand you can go. Like, trust me, I have been in the IGA bucket, I am still in the IGA bucket, and if the Opposition is trying to say (if I may, Madam Speaker) that we should not help these mothers, that they are the ones that get pregnant even though in certain circumstances when they are married they might get separated . . . like in the case of Kim Kardashian . . . Kanye, and that poor little man that she is with.

[laughter]

Hon. DeMa-al Nelson: They broke up, right? And the husband refuses to divorce her and the girl goes out with Kanye. He already knows the situation; she’s pregnant with the baby and all that. Yes.

So, because her relationship with Kanye West goes sour, should that man whom she’s with, the husband, pay child support when Kanye West got her pregnant? Is that what the Opposition wants, Madam Speaker? Is that what the people of the Cayman Islands have come to? That we should burden other men with the responsibility of the children that they had no [part] in creating? Is that what we stand for? Do we have morals? Are we a Christian society? Think about that.

So sad.

[Laughter]

Hon. DeMa-al Nelson: It is wrong, and quite frankly, ridiculous.

Thank goodness we have found these errors and are trying to fix them. So vote yes, and do not attempt to hinder the progression of our youth who, by the way, unless you have forgotten, are our future.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: The question is that a Bill shortly entitled the Affiliation (Amendment) Bill, 2013, be given a second reading.

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

Ayes.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Affiliation Bill, 2013, given a second reading.

The Speaker: The House will now go into Committee to consider the Bill.

House in Committee

COMMITTEE ON BILL

[Hon. Ann-Alecia Moore, Chairman]

The Chairman: Please be seated.

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

Would the Clerk please state the Bill and read the Clauses?

Affiliation (Amendment) Bill 2013

The Clerk: The Affiliation (Amendment) Bill, 2013.

- Clause 1 Short title
 Clause 2 Amendment of section 3 of the Affiliation Law [(1995 Revision)] – complaints by single women or by guardians appointed by the court
 Clause 3 Amendment of section 10 of the Affiliation Law [(1995 Revision)] – Order to cease on child dying or attaining fifteen years unless extended by court

The Chairman: The question is that clauses 1 through 3 do stand part of the Bill.

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

Ayes.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Clauses 1 through 3 passed.

The Clerk: A Bill for a Law to amend the Affiliation Law [(1995 Revision)] to extend the law to all women and extend the period of maintenance; and for incidental and connected purposes.

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

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

Ayes.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Title passed.

The Chairman: The question is that the Bill be reported to the House.

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

Ayes.

The Chairman: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Bill to be reported to the House.

The Chairman: The House will now resume.

House resumed

[Hon. Ann-Alecia Moore, Speaker]

The Speaker: Proceedings are resumed, please be seated.

REPORT ON BILL**Affiliation (Amendment) Bill, 2013**

The Speaker: Honourable Minister for Community Affairs, Gender and Housing.

Hon. DeMa-al Nelson: Madam Speaker, I have to report that a Bill shortly entitled the Affiliation (Amendment) Bill, 2013, was considered by a committee of the whole House and passed without amendment.

The Speaker: The Bill has been duly reported and is set down for Third Reading.

Suspension of Standing Order 47

The Speaker: Honourable Premier.

Hon. Diana Tibbetts, Premier, Minister of Finance, District Administration, Works, Lands and Agriculture: Madam Speaker, I move the Suspension of Standing Order 47 to enable the Bill to be given a third reading.

The Speaker: The question is that Standing Order 47 be suspended.

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

Ayes.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: Standing Order 47 suspended.

THIRD READING**Affiliation (Amendment) Bill, 2013**

The Clerk: The Affiliation (Amendment) Bill, 2013.

The Speaker: Honourable Minister for Community Affairs, Gender and Housing.

Hon. DeMa-al Nelson: Madam Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill shortly entitled the Affiliation (Amendment) Bill, 2013, be given a third reading and passed.

The Speaker: The question is that a Bill shortly entitled the Affiliation (Amendment) Bill, 2013, be given a third reading and passed.

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

Ayes.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Agreed: The Affiliation (Amendment) Bill, 2013, given a third reading and passed.

The Speaker: We will now suspend for lunch and return at 1.30.

Proceedings suspended at 12.31 pm

Proceedings resumed at 1.35 pm

The Speaker: Proceedings are resumed. Please be seated.

OTHER BUSINESS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Private Member's Motion No. 1—Establishment of Programmes for Special Needs and Gifted Children

The Speaker: I call on the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, the First Elected Member for Bodden Town.

Hon. Kimberley Wood, Leader of the Opposition: Madam Speaker, I beg to move Private Member's Motion No. 1, entitled Establishment of Programmes for Special Needs and Gifted Children:

WHEREAS there is presently only one school in the Cayman Islands which provides for students with special needs in the community;

AND WHEREAS the facility is limited in the programmes that are provided to the students

AND WHEREAS there is no established programme for academically gifted students in the Cayman Islands;

BE IT NOW THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the Government considers establishing specialised programmes for the gifted/talented students and provide additional programmes to facilitate the educational requirements for all special needs children in the Cayman Islands.

The Speaker: Is there a seconder?

I call upon the Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town to second the Motion.

Ms. Haileigh Moore, Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town: Madam Speaker, I beg to second the Motion.

The Speaker: Private Member's Motion No. 1 has been duly moved and seconded. I call upon the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, the First Elected Member for Bodden Town, to speak thereto.

Hon. Kimberley Wood, Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

A child may be classified as a person with special educational needs if his/her capacity to participate in and benefit from education is restricted due to an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability. Currently, we have only one school designed to accommodate the needs of our children with learning disabilities.

Students with specific learning disabilities now account for more than half of all disabled children served, and more than 5 per cent of all students ages 6 through 17 enrolled in school.

For example, in the 2006 Special Educational Needs Report by the Ministry of Education Training and Employment, it was stated that 38 per cent of Cayman Brac High School students appeared on the Special Education Needs Register, which is more than triple the international standard. So, if we clearly have children among us who would benefit from academic assistance, then why have we not strived to provide such for them? It is unreasonable to expect one school to be able to efficiently care for and teach these students.

So what happens to those children who attend mainstream public or private schools? Public schools are too big for individual attention and, at the moment, do not have any set classes for children who need academic assistance. Currently there are approximately 5,000 students enrolled in government schools compared to about 2,500 in private institutions. The student/teacher ratio is inevitably too large and so they are not suited for students with special needs. Parents may not have the funds to have their children attend private schools which usually have smaller class sizes. This is why we suggest placing special needs facilities into schools for the benefit of our children in need of assistance.

Special facilities with a lower student/teacher ratio would be more than beneficial to our children. This means that special classes have small numbers of students. These facilities can be built within mainstream schools which will allow for social interaction between students. Students can be placed in special classes for some subjects and mainstream for others, depending on their needs.

Early intervention programmes should also be introduced and enforced, for early diagnosis and treatments of delays, such as delays in speech. Early intervention may result in the correction of any problem during early childhood resulting in a fewer number of special needs students. Currently it costs, on average, C\$38,000 a year to support and educate a special needs child. This is more than triple the average needed to provide an appropriate education for others more fortunate. Early intervention programmes save money in the long run as less is needed for the special education needs students if their condition is treated and corrected early.

In regard to staffing for these classes, as an alternative to bringing in more specialists we suggest we build our internal capacity by training those already employed in these areas.

A gifted child or student may be defined as one who demonstrates high levels of ability, in one or more content areas, when compared to their chronological peers. Like all students, those with high academic ability deserve to be challenged, motivated, encouraged, and given the opportunity to learn at a pace and depth that is appropriate for them. Gifted students require modification of their educational programme if they are to achieve in accordance with their capabilities.

Unfortunately, there are no established programmes for our gifted students at the primary level or high school level. This ultimately results in them having to attend mainstream classes and ultimately not being challenged academically or otherwise. We, the Opposition, suggest a programme be put in place within schools to challenge our gifted and talented students. Too often their capabilities are not extended by the curriculum leading to boredom, dissatisfaction and aggravation. Based on studies mainly carried out in the United States, 10 per cent to 30 per cent of those students considered gifted could potentially drop out due to boredom in the classroom, perhaps leading to juvenile delinquency.

My colleagues will now expand on our ideas and discuss how we propose to go about implementing them.

Thank you Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I call upon the Honourable Premier.

Hon. Diana Tibbetts, Premier, Minister of Finance, District Administration, Works, Lands and Agriculture: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We, the Government, like the idea and the interest of the Opposition. But right now, in the financial state the country is currently in, we cannot take on such an intense project and put ourselves [under] a heavier burden. It is estimated that the government's debt will be approximately \$575.4 million as of June 20, 2013.

As the Opposition has clearly forgotten, we got ourselves into major debt trying to build two new high school facilities—Clifton Hunter, which recently opened, and John Gray, which we cannot even finish due to financial difficulties. To open the eyes of the Opposition, Madam Speaker, these two new high schools we are trying to complete have cost us approximately \$200 million.

Madam Speaker, the overall expenditure limits the Government as set for the next three financial years. The Government may make changes to programmes or services, but it will most likely make a

reduction in one area in favour of an increase somewhere else. The three-year plan does not include a provision for increased borrowing, and specific approval will have to be sought from the Secretary of State in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) before the Government can take on any additional debt. Such approval is unlikely, unless it is an emergency situation or a solid business case has been established to justify the need for the additional borrowing.

Madam Speaker, we cannot assure when our economy will recover due to the fact that economic recovery is dependent on many factors. Some factors are outside of the control of the Cayman Islands Government, such as the state of the broader world economy. The economy is expected to have a gradual recovery based on increases in tourism and the progression of several capital development programmes. While this is expected to occur over the near to medium term, it is not assured or known when our economy will possibly recover.

With this in mind, Madam Speaker, we want the Opposition to know that they can achieve their goals in a more realistic, cheaper and effective means of methods, as what they are currently proposing could lead to a big disaster for future generations to come in Cayman. My Government will elaborate in enlightening the Opposition in ways that they can achieve the goals they desire that will help benefit Cayman but will not put a strain onto the already tight budget.

First, restarting the gifted and talented programme they had in 2007 to 2009, instead of changing the whole school curriculum system where the student only focuses on their best subject, as the Opposition proposed, as there are academic and social disadvantages if we did this.

Secondly, instead of expanding Lighthouse School infrastructure we could just temporarily give them a portion of Mary Miller Hall, as it is not needed for Lighthouse School to expand. Actually, the goal of the Education Ministry is to cap the number of students at Lighthouse and, instead, integrate the students into mainstream schools and reallocate the special support teachers there.

Thirdly, in the Brac it is not necessary for special needs facilities to be built or to hire more staff, as they do not need this. Further, we, the Government, are willing to fund inexpensive equipment such as specialised iPads, smart boards, et cetera, but we will not fund equipment that they want but that is [not] crucial and needed for their learning.

Lastly, in reality right now the Government cannot add new posts. So we cannot hire more teaching staff. Instead, we can utilise all the resources we currently have and upgrade our teacher posts and also have community volunteers which will help to save money.

Madam Speaker, we (the Government), are not heartless, but a group that is realistic. We can admit that we cannot afford to take this on, but we can help gifted and talented as well as special needs students in other various ways that would benefit our society and will not put a strain on our current finances. Also, Madam Speaker, the rest of my Government members will elaborate how the Opposition is going about this in all the wrong ways and [will] have dangerous consequences to our future generations.

We are a Government that wants to benefit our society in a smart and cost-effective way and this is why we do not approve the Opposition's Motion.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I call upon the Elected Member for North Side.

Ms. Tristina Robinson, Elected Member for North Side: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I am here to inform you about what the Gifted and Talented programme is all about. So, therefore, what is gifted and talented? Gifted and talented is a programme used to offer a differentiated, enriched academic environment for students with advanced learning abilities to use instructional methods and materials designed to develop thinking processes that enhance independent study and personal effectiveness.

This programme was first introduced to the Cayman Islands by Mr. Brent Holt and Mrs. Waahler. What students did they consider as gifted and talented? "Gifted and talented" meant those students with an IQ of 120 and scored [in the] top 2 percentile in the CAT Test, meaning they have a demonstrated potential ability of high performance in academics and therefore need differentiated or faster educational services.

In the Cayman Islands, students in this gifted and talented programme were chosen based on their outstanding performances in literacy and numeracy tests. Recommendations from teachers, counsellors and school leaders were also implored and taken into consideration when compiling the pilot group. However, the Gifted and Talented programme only focused on students who were born academically gifted, but not those who were talented in music, sports, drama, et cetera, due to the fact that Cayman already has a numerous amount of facilities that the talented children could use, such as the Truman Bodden Sports Complex, Cayman National Cultural Foundation, the Cayman National Curriculum, and many more.

Why did the Gifted and Talented programme failed? The major reason why the programme failed was because of the funding. The funding was \$65,000 per year plus another \$10,000 for materials, which all add up to \$75,000 a year. Another reason why the Gifted and Talented programme failed was because of

them not having the proper policy due to the fact that they already had the qualified teachers but not the required materials.

On the other hand, we, as the concerned Government are willing to fund it, but were not willing to implement it during school hours because changing the whole school curriculum system where students only focus on their best subject can cause a social and academic disadvantage, so, therefore, we believe it is best to implement the programme after school.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I call upon the Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Erick Faustino, Deputy Leader of the Opposition: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We, the Opposition, believe that all children in the Cayman Islands should benefit from an expansive balanced and relevant education regardless of what disabilities they may have. Children should be a priority, especially when they require special attention. Children should have the ability to utilise and maximise their skills and potential without having to worry about their Island or home not having the right facilities and specialists.

An effective way to handle such situations is to identify current strengths of the systems, barriers of effectiveness and proposed solutions for improvement. The issue of the matter is not about quality, but rather quantity. The main issues revolve around understaffing, lack of trained specialists, programmes and facilities. Other issues involve this quantity foolishly invested in coliseum-size schools—Clifton Hunter.

According to the Cayman Islands National Healthcare Conference, there are only five educational therapists, four occupational therapists, four early intervention teachers, and speech and language therapists. The majority of the staff members are special support assistants with 78, many who are just volunteers. This is a very fundamental factor because the demand for special education needs is drastically increasing.

The Cayman Islands National Healthcare Conference statistics show that in 2009 to 2010 only 91 children needed early intervention programmes to diagnose and treat any symptoms of disabilities. By 2011 to 2012 the number skyrocketed to 162. Light-house School is the only special educational needs day-school placement in the Cayman Islands. In 2009 the number of students enrolled was 71. By the end of 2012 the number rose up to 96—an astonishing 136 per cent increase!

One special educational needs day-school placement, shared with the Sister Islands, will not suffice the children who are dearly in need of treatment.

It cost about \$38,000 to accommodate one student annually in the Lighthouse School. An alternative to this is to expand special needs programmes to other public and private schools. This will cost about \$11,800 per year per student. It enables special children to interact with normal children in hopes of them becoming more sociable. This also prevents special children from adopting other special children's symptoms by spreading out the children to different schools while increasing the student/teacher ratio. This also deals with the Government's tight budget concerns.

In the early ages of mental child development it is vital for children to get help as soon as possible if the children are showing symptoms of child development disorders, such as, speaking impediments, physical motor skills, and social or emotional functioning. An early, intensive, appropriate treatment programme will greatly improve the outlook for most young children to prevent severe or long-term cases.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I call upon the Honourable Minister of Health, Environment, Youth, Sports and Culture.

Hon. Kadejah Boddan, Minister of Health, Environment, Youth, Sports and Culture: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

As my colleagues have previously stated, we, the Government, agree with the Opposition's proposal to offer additional services and/or programmes to better facilitate gifted students. However, we, the Government, have identified significant weaknesses in their Motion and would like to offer some constructive criticism and perhaps propose some alternative suggestions.

One main issue with offering programmes to these students during school hours is the social disadvantage. These gifted students will not always have the opportunities to socialise with those who are on the same intellectual level as they are. Therefore, if they are isolated from students who are not gifted, they may become socially inept as they do not know how to interact well with others around them.

School is designed to mould young people into responsible, well-rounded, productive members of society. Being in a traditional school environment is important because, in addition to academic achievements, it helps build an individual's foundation for social and cultural growth. Programmes that segregate gifted students from their peers are elitist and socially isolating for gifted children, while placing non-gifted children at an unfair disadvantage, given that these gifted children will most likely receive the best mentors, tools and equipment. This provides the perfect conditions for resentment to take root in the lives of our young people and grow exponentially. In doing so, Madam Speaker, are we not, by way of setting an ex-

ample, promoting segregation and exclusivity among our young people as well?

Purdue University conducted a [study](#) on 432 gifted 8th grade students across 11 states in 2006 to investigate whether gifted children were especially vulnerable to the effects of bullying. The research found that more than two-thirds of gifted students had been bullied. **"Bullying in the gifted-student population is an overlooked problem that leaves many of these students emotionally shattered, making them more prone to extreme anxiety, dangerous depression and sometimes violence, says a Purdue University researcher."**

"All children are affected adversely by bullying, but gifted children differ from other children in significant ways," says Jean [Sunde] Peterson, an associate professor of educational studies in Purdue's College of Education."

She went on to say, **"Many are intense, sensitive and stressed by their own and others' high expectations, and their ability, interests and behavior may make them vulnerable. Additionally, social justice issues are very important to them, and they struggle to make sense of cruelty and aggression. Perfectionists may become even more self-critical, trying to avoid mistakes that might draw attention to themselves."**

"Interviewed students described depression, unexpressed rage and school absenteeism as responses to bullying." Also, a substantial number of students reported having violent thoughts.

"Peterson says the fact that students consider acting in violent ways was one of the most troubling findings in the study, and one that should be explored further."

"The disturbing thing about this is that we don't know what those violent thoughts are," she says. 'They could involve kicking a trash can or blowing up their school. We just don't know. But the fact that so many [of those] . . . who were bullied had violent thoughts about their perpetrators should make all of us pay attention.'"

Madam Speaker, it is our understanding that the programmes the Opposition is proposing will be designed to accelerate these extraordinary young people through their education at a faster rate than students who are not gifted. According to the University of Michigan, and I quote, **"Students who are placed in an accelerated learning environment might feel isolated without the emotional support of friends they had before joining the program for gifted students."**

It is contended that if students are tested and are admitted to early entry before attaining the required age, students may lack necessary maturity, attention span and physical competence to achieve, for example, poor handwriting. In addition, curriculum may be inappropriate for the age of the student, for example, sexual material in literature classes.

So where does this leave us, Madam Speaker? The quality of the physical and social learning environment is critical. Gifted students are often socially ostracised. This could be due to various reasons, such as being seen as a teacher's pet, being out-of-class for enrichment activities, or have difficulty relating to their peers. Perhaps, Madam Speaker, we can explore the possibilities of implementing a cluster grouping programme for said gifted students outside of school. This can be treated as any other extracurricular activity and eliminates problems that may come with segregation and feeling different from peers.

This allows the gifted students to learn from each other with the help of mentors or tutors. In this physical environment adequately challenging stimuli, such as books and games suited to their abilities can easily be provided. Simply put, greater efforts need to be made to keep these gifted students in mainstream schools to keep cultural and social development going. But this cannot be done if they are constantly being herded into separate classes away from the rest of their peers. Being able to have access to their friends is vital for social growth and a healthy lifestyle.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I call upon the Honourable Attorney General.

Hon. Chynna Martinez, Attorney General: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

We, as the Government, believe it is vital to educate our youth as they are the future of our country. That said, we are striving to transform them into upstanding citizens of society. However, for this to be possible, we must give them the opportunity to a natural, balanced education. Therefore, a gifted and talented programme like the Opposition is promoting is not the way to go about this.

Programmes that segregate gifted children from their peers are socially isolating for gifted children and place non-gifted children at an unfair disadvantage. The programme should be for the advancement of students, whereas the programme that was implemented had an adverse effect. The main feature of this programme is that those students deemed to be gifted and talented are being grouped into one classroom. With this grouping, the level of fairness is questioned. The gifted students would require the best teachers, best materials, and would be involved in many more enrichment activities than the normal class would.

Gifted programmes are often seen as being elitist in places where the majority of students receiving gifted services are from a privileged background. This puts the non-gifted students at an even greater disadvantage academically, socially and mentally than they already might be now and even for the future.

The additional resources put into educating brighter students puts those non-gifted students at a greater disadvantage. Learning resources may be allocated to gifted children that could have been distributed equally among all children. This, then, requires us, the Government, to spend additional funds to provide these resources to all students—funds which we do not have.

According to this scheme, a student is identified as being gifted or talented if they achieve a score in the top 2 percentile on the CAT test in any one of the three areas, verbal, quantitative and non-verbal. Having strengths in that one, or more, subject area they are then pulled out of their regular classes to be put in a gifted class for that subject area. The Opposition is underlying the importance of students being well-rounded, but they have forgotten that the basic information found in all classes will be helpful in various aspects of life.

It cannot be expected that we, the Government, will change a timetable and endure all the hassles that come along with doing so just to accommodate a handful of students. So, Madam Speaker, if we sided with people on the basis of their capacity to learn we would thereby deprive them of a vital educational opportunity which exists in the contacts between peoples of different levels of intelligence in the usual classroom.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I call upon the Second Elected Member for West Bay.

Mr. Jerome Bailey, Second Elected Member for West Bay: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I recently heard the story of a young girl who was blind but she went to college. She was determined to get a college education. So she asked her friend to read her textbooks and make audio copies for her. She studied by listening to the audio and passed her exams. I am moved by her determination.

Madam Speaker, education is a powerful instrument for social change, and often initiates upward movement in the social structure, thereby helping to bridge the gap between the different sections of society. And there is no one who will disagree that all students should have equitable access to learning, opportunities for achievement and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their education.

Madam Speaker, the reason for this is quite simple; it is our right as a part of God's creation. It is our right as humans. It is our right as a part of the wider society. Robert [Green] Ingersoll said, "**Give to every [human being] [every] right that you claim for yourself.**"

Madam Speaker, some children experience difficulties in school ranging from problems with con-

centration, learning, language, perception, problems with behaviour, and in making and keeping friends. Some of these difficulties may be due to one or more of the following: physical disorders, psychiatric disorders, emotional problems, behavioural problems, or learning disorders. Children with these special needs are entitled to receive additional services and accommodation to help them maximise their potential.

These additional services can be provided to the students, not by segregating them from the main body of students, but, rather, [by] integrating them as much as possible to maximise their potential. We propose to you that we would rather review and assess the students currently attending the Lighthouse School, allowing those students that really require special needs education to remain at the Lighthouse School, and those students that may suffer from some physical disorder, but do not have a learning disability, to move to the main government schools. The physical challenges can be overcome with the government schools being equipped with the proper access, wheelchair ramps and lifts, et cetera. I have witnessed this personally. Having the proper access available made a world of difference to a student's independence, self-reliance, and also their self-esteem.

Through the Ministry of Education, Financial Services and Employment, we plan to provide more learning assistance services, further counseling in schools, school psychology services, and speech and language therapy. We will also include IntelliKeys keyboards and ablenet switches designed to provide easier access to and use of computers. I must stress that this incredible change needs to be made now for the future of our country.

We do not plan to get rid of institutions such as the Lighthouse School because they have done much good in their time, and they have evolved since their inception in the 1980s. This type of facility is still very much needed in the Cayman Islands today. However, as proposed, we would further benefit us as a country for the revision and reassessment of available resources and better utilising to meet the current educational needs of the students in our country.

Madam Speaker, change is never easy, especially when it involves large numbers of individuals and an established system. Yet, change is necessary as [many] innovative ideas as possible can be presented to you that will do much good in the long run. I am confident that the ultimate goal for all of us is to see our young people succeed. And with our help, they will.

With that, Madam Speaker, I close my remarks. Thank you.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I call upon the Honourable Minister of Community Affairs, Gender and Housing.

Hon. DeMa-al Nelson, Minister of Community Affairs, Gender and Housing: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As you have heard in our previous debates, the Government is facing financial hardship. We absolutely love the Motion that the Opposition has brought forward. I mean, who wouldn't? The Opposition, if I am not mistaken, Madam Speaker, wants us to expand the Lighthouse School on Grand Cayman, build one over in the Brac and re-create a Gifted and Talented programme within the school—which, as you know, failed in the past. But even though we all love the Motion we are going to have to agree to disagree.

Madam Speaker, we love the Motion but we cannot afford to carry it through. Let's think about things in our not-so-distant past that the Government wanted to create for the progression of society, and against better judgment ran forth to do it without the funds. Places like the modern and large Government Building, or the school in West Bay we tried to build but we were under such financial strain that we couldn't even afford to build the foundation of the building.

Or, what about the new John Gray we are now building? It is nowhere close to finished and we are stretching ourselves and bursting at the seams to find the funds that we do not have for its completion. Oh, oh, Madam Speaker, what about the beautiful and prestigious state-of-the-art Clifton Hunter High School? How could I leave it out? I mean, otherwise from it taking almost all of eternity to build—due to us still not having the funds—we are currently drowning in debts to pay for it, because we went out and borrowed money that was not there. And we, the current Government, are now shackled between a rock and a hard place to repay a debt we couldn't and still cannot afford to pay for.

I can promise you that our children and our children's children will still be paying for these monumental state-of-the-art schools which, by that time, they won't even know what they are paying for. And I am sure, Madam Speaker (not to sound harsh), in two years' time these prestigious state-of-the-art buildings will no longer be state-of-the-art, because on top of paying for them we have to also keep them up to date. The maintenance of these buildings and the utility cost to keep them running day to day cost the Government an arm and a leg some may say. But in truth it is costing us our both arms and both legs.

Madam Speaker, as good as the Opposition's Motion sounds, we, the Government, will have to say what our parents told us when we went into the store as kids and saw something we wanted and cried for: *Yes, baby, I know it looks good but mommy can't afford it.* The Opposition is getting this same truth, but without the slap—we just cannot afford to fund it.

And as we learnt from our multiple failures in the past, even with funds if the planning for new infrastructure and programmes are not planned out properly we will fail again, which would be a waste of

government money and, as you have heard, we cannot afford to senselessly splurge and throw money away like in the past. Mind you, a lot of the money was borrowed and we are continuously struggling to pay it back.

What we can do is quite simple and cost effective. What could that possible be? First of all, we can let the Lighthouse School have a portion of the Mary Miller Hall. After all, it already belongs to them already. They could utilise the space needed and the remaining section can be used for their canteen. Some may say, Madam Speaker, that, the Mary Miller Hall has to be used for community functions. And to those people I say, utilise other places, for example, district civic centers, Lions Center, school halls, or rent a space for that occasion. We can also fund the Lighthouse school students with equipment like specialised iPads and smart boards tailored to fit their needs.

We, the Government, love our county and our people and we will do as much as we can for them both. As President John F. Kennedy said, “**Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.**”

Thank you, Madam Speaker

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I call upon the Honourable Deputy Governor.

The Deputy Governor, Hon. Leshontae Missick: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Opposition, your concern has been noted. S-E-N stands for Special Educational Needs. Special needs students are not only those with learning difficulties, but also those students who may be considered geniuses, students who are outstanding in academics or sports. And, at this point in time, a special needs facility that is separate from the regular schools is not necessary.

In Cayman Brac there is not a high demand for such a facility as the Opposition is imposing, Madam Speaker. There are simply not vast numbers of students who would benefit, or who are in need of such a facility allocated for special needs. The facilities that are presently being used are adequate. Only 21 per cent of the high school population is enrolled in SEN, and those students only comprise of the disabled and those with learning difficulties, not advanced students or those who excel in sports.

In the two primary schools combined, an even smaller percent of the school population is enrolled in the SEN programme, and this being 16 per cent. In the high school there is enough supervision for each student. Some are in the SEN classroom fulltime and some go out into regular classes. In the SEN class, a qualified teacher and an assistant are there to be with the students. The ones who are in this classroom fulltime have a more urgent need to have special at-

tention. The others are more advanced and can attend regular classes. But they always have a support assistant with them just in case. So, as you can see, the school can provide this individual attention. Hence, staffing is not an issue.

The Brac is a model to Grand Cayman by having an inclusive education which will lead to an increase in society. Research in the United States has shown that special needs students who have been excluded from regular schools are inclined to later on engage in criminal activities, be unemployed and live on welfare; whereas, the students who have been included have become good citizens in society, which is what we are striving for.

Keeping as many students as possible in regular classes is important. This builds their self-confidence and social skills. They also learn to be street-smart and have the moral support from a large number of friends. With a separate school it would be difficult for students to access certain subjects, for example, water sports, food and nutrition, and construction, without having to employ a new teaching staff. There will also be difficulties in trying to fill a proper timetable.

If numbers increase in the future and we see it fit to build a separate facility it will be considered. But for now the system works. We can maintain the SEN programme or slightly improve it by making more equipment available and training regular class teachers how to deal with special needs students. We already have educational psychologists, schools counselors and army of other professionals who can assist us with this. In that way we would be maximising our resources.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I call upon the Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town.

Ms. Haileigh Moore, Fourth Elected Member for Bodden Town: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Intellectual giftedness is an intellectual ability significantly higher than average. We, the Opposition, believe that gifted and talented children should have diverse classes provided to help them excel at, because not all children are gifted or talented in everything they do. For example, some may be gifted in math and not in English, and vice versa. They may not need special attention for those subjects, and may be classified as “average.” However, it should not be construed that children may only be gifted in academics as their talents may range from sports to the performing arts as well.

The children have different ways of coping with their gifts and talents. I am sure it is not easy being a gifted or talented child and trying to make friends. So we should also have an after school pro-

gram for the children just to enjoy and apply their skill sets that they are interested in.

Many gifted adolescents may be seen as being perfectionists as they set themselves very high standards creating a gap between what's expected and reality. Most gifted or talented children have problems with their self-esteem, and deny their talents. A lot of gifted adolescents may have expectation issues. They are keenly aware of not wanting to fall short of the expectations of others, so they want to try and try again until they get everything right.

All children are gifted at something and with everyone (i.e., parents, teachers) working together we can take the time to figure it out. Many schools use a variety of assessments of a student's capability and potential when identifying gifted children. These may include portfolios of student work, classroom observations, achievement tests, and IQ test scores. Also, if a student does an IQ test and scores a remarkable mark that student could possibly be gifted. But if they don't score a remarkable score, they could just be average, or actually need help in that subject.

When funding is low due to economic problems, people can ensure that simple things such as at an early age, for example, if a child is able to finish a 200 piece puzzle with ease, they should be challenged with a 300 piece puzzle. If not, they might become bored with repeats of a 200 piece puzzle. For talented children, for example, if a child is in grade 2 and is a runner and has no competition in that grade, then they could be placed to run against students in grade 3. In whatever way a child is excelling at they should be challenged in order to help them to develop further. When testing is provided, we have to ensure that it is provided for children from all walks of life and not just for the upper class.

Furthermore, training classes should be held for parents and caregivers in order to train them for them to be able to help their children develop to the best of their abilities.

We need to actually do something about this problem instead of talking about it. We, the Opposition, want to bring to the table that not all of our young and gifted children are getting the attention they need.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

I call upon the Third Elected Member for George Town.

Ms. Moesha Ramsey-Howell, Third Elected Member for George Town: Thank You Madam Speaker.

Children who have been identified as requiring special educational needs, quite rightly, should have specific provisions made for them. A student who has been so identified relies heavily on the various teaching methods available in order to satisfy their educational needs. For example, a dyslexic child

would need special methods employed to allow him/her to be able to read and write effectively. Thus, the enactment of operative teaching methods is quite critical.

As a form of utilising all that we have, it is only practical to introduce on-the-job training for existing teachers and assistants. Effective methods of on-the-job training can include demonstrations by experienced teachers in a particular area; coaching, which entails a close working relationship between the experienced teacher and trainee; job enrichment, which is an attempt to motivate employees by giving them the opportunity to use the range of their abilities; and lastly, job enlargement, that is the increase of a scope of a job through extending the range of its job duties and responsibilities generally within the same level and periphery.

Additionally, school psychologists, therapists and counselors also work in collaboration alongside the teachers and assistants as a means of educating them on how to handle and cope with special needs children in a timely and effective manner.

The introduction of on-the-job training would positively benefit us as a Government. Firstly, it provides resilience to our education system as we would have more teachers trained to meet the various special needs of our children accompanied with learning disabilities. Also, we would not have to employ teachers from other jurisdictions who may not understand the cultural uniqueness of our children here in the Cayman Islands, as well as we would reduce the need for repatriation costs and all it entails.

In conclusion, there is a need for on-the-job training so as to better equip our teachers to identify and address the special needs of our students here in the Cayman Islands.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? I call upon the Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Sasha Rankin, Deputy Premier, Minister of Education, Financial Services and Employment: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would first like to address some points made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Yes, we, the Government, know that it is important to treat special needs students the same as other students, but we just do not have the funds right now. Secondly, special support can help train other teachers and volunteers. Thirdly, the Lighthouse School is, in fact, a government school. Numbers will always rise as the population increases. We have special needs students in mainstream schools currently. And we also have early intervention for special needs.

Addressing points made by the Second Elected Member for West Bay, all students do have education opportunities. Referring to your story of the blind girl, yes, the story was touching, but as you just stat-

ed, this blind girl went to a normal, mainstream university.

Secondly, we have institutions and staff already for special needs and have special support staff at the public schools. Students of Lighthouse School are currently at public schools and at mainstream schools. So don't say we don't have this right now. It is, in fact, the private schools that do not have anything in place for special needs, not public schools. So it is they who need to change their policy, not us.

As the Minister of Education, I see fit to support the Opposition's outcry to give those students who are of special needs an equal opportunity to achieve success in terms of education. However, Madam Speaker, as my colleagues have rightfully pointed out, for numerous reasons the approach to which the opposition is taking as a solution to this matter is not sufficient in meeting the Government's existing goals for the education in our Islands.

Madam Speaker, the goal of the Education Ministry is to cap the amount of students at the Lighthouse School and to instead have these students achieve their education in a mainstream school setting. This goal may be accomplished by harnessing our already existing resources—the John Gray and Clifton Hunter High Schools. The [Cayman Islands Special Needs Code of Practice](#) states, and I quote, **“The school should make full use of all on-site resources”** (Early Screening and Progress Monitoring and the School-Based Support Team) **“before expecting to call upon outside resources.”** Therefore, Madam Speaker, we, the Government, believe that it is imperative to promote an inclusive society where we integrate mainstreaming in our current high schools.

According to Mr. Brent Holt, Senior Policy Advisor of the Ministry of Education, Financial Services and Employment, it costs \$39,000 to educate a student at the Lighthouse School, versus approximately \$11,000 to educate a student in mainstream schools. Why should we, Madam Speaker, aspire to isolate these students from the rest of our society though there is an already existing and improved alternative?

Madam Speaker, these students of special needs students also need to learn to adapt to working with others who are not of special needs. This is crucial as when they are at the stage of seeking employment, employers will require them to have interpersonal skills which involve both people of, and without, special needs. If the Education Ministry prevents these students from the opportunity of gaining exposure, we will be disadvantaging them for the chance of future employment in our Islands.

Furthermore, Madam Speaker, the Opposition is proposing that we implement a gifted and talented programme within our high schools. Though the Opposition appears to have good intentions, what they fail to realise, Madam Speaker, is that the potential implementation of this programme during school

hours will tamper with students' learning in numerous ways. By doing so, these students deemed as gifted and talented, will be required to focus on the subject areas or talents which they excel in. By doing so, Madam Speaker, we, the Government, would not be promoting the importance of well-rounded students in our community.

Potential employers of these students will be seeking employees who are well-rounded individuals. Therefore, Madam Speaker, by the Education Ministry's encouragement to allow gifted and talented students to be put off at a disadvantage to achieve this requirement we are, again, causing future unemployment amongst these students in our Islands.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, as the Government wishes to promote an inclusive society in which students of special needs are mainstreamed in our current high schools and to encourage the development of well-rounded individuals in our society, we suggest that the Opposition do reconsider their Motion.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? I call upon the Fifth Elected Member for George Town.

Ms. Kristen Ebanks, Fifth Elected Member for George Town: Thank you Madam Speaker.

The importance of a gifted programme for our youth cannot be understated. It would not only provide our youth with the chance to grow and excel but also allow them to develop their skills in the areas in which they have exhibited a particular aptitude. However, as previously stated by my peers there is no formally established gifted programme, government funded or otherwise. At this point in our county's development it is clear that we need to place particular emphasis on producing highly skilled and capable youth to enter the working world in specialised industries. The question now is how to go about providing this for our youth in a functional and cost efficient manner.

The Opposition recommends that the Government consider allowing gifted centers to be added to our public primary and secondary schools to improve education for the youth of the Cayman Islands. Many foreign schools that have implemented a gifted programme have done so by annexing to the area of the public schools and sharing those facilities in which the students do not require particular attention such as the gymnasium, cafeteria, bathrooms, and the like.

In the case of the Richmond Public School in the Western Sydney Region of Australia, the school has implemented a gifted programme which allows them to identify and place gifted students in programmes which are better suited to their particular skills. The study by the State of New South Wales Department of Education and Training conducted in 2006 included providing the teachers of the school

with a checklist of criteria to identify gifted students as well as training on how to deal with gifted students. Once the possible gifted students were identified they were referred to a gifted education committee formed by the school. This committee would then test the students for aptitude in subjects which the teachers had previously stated the students could benefit from a more advanced curriculum. The students could then be placed in a class that was more suited to their abilities.

Implementing a programme such as this will not only decrease the cost of building and maintaining the gifted programme but allow the students to interact normally with one another allowing for them to continue develop socially as well as mentally. This will also allow them to take only the classes in which they excel at an advanced level while allowing them to take classes at which they are at an average level. This would require the application and possibly a training process for the teachers of the Cayman Islands allowing them to teach these gifted students. While it is very likely that many of the teachers in the Cayman Islands are already fully capable of instructing the gifted students, given that they have had proper training, for the programme to have the desired effect there would need to be a considerably smaller student to teacher ratio. This would increase the cost of this gifted programme slightly, but we anticipate that the future stimulation to our economy by these individuals entering the work force, will more than make up for the additional cost.

The alternative would be to build an entirely new facility for the gifted students which would no doubt be more expensive. It would also require an entirely new staff and extracurricular facilities. It would also segregate the students considered to be gifted and talented from the rest of the student population possibly inhibiting their social growth.

We can clearly see that the implementation and maintenance of a gifted programme is not only doable but beneficial to our society as a whole.

In response to some of the points made by the Government, we do not seek to segregate those students who are considered to be gifted, rather to challenge them while still allowing them to interact normally with their peers. We also do not seek to exceed the budget by building new facilities; we simply propose that you expand on what we already have in allowing our students to excel where they have the ability without ever being made to feel different.

In response to the thing about the private schools, private schools are generally smaller, which means they have a smaller student to teacher ratio, which means they would not need as much attention as public schools, which have a considerably larger student to teacher ratio.

Thank You Madam Speaker

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak? I call upon the Second Elected Member for George Town.

Ms. Francine Wright, Second Elected Member for George Town: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would just like to say to the Opposition that we do not oppose your Motion. But, as my peers have said, we simply cannot stretch ourselves any further financially. Yes, expanding what we have still costs a lot of money. We agree with the points you have made, but it is simply not feasible at this time.

It can be considered at a later time, but right now that is not feasible.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

If not, I will invite the mover of the Motion, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, the First Elected Member for Bodden Town, to exercise her right of reply.

Hon. Kimberley Wood, Leader of the Opposition, First Elected Member for Bodden Town: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

To conclude, every child has a right to a comfortable, beneficial education and should not be denied such due to any learning disability or exceptional ability they may have.

We, the Opposition, propose that more facilities and/or more programmes be provided in the community for those with special needs as well as those classified as gifted students. Why should a child be forced to struggle because of something they cannot change? Why should a gifted student not be given the opportunity to be challenged in learning? Should gifted students not be placed with others like themselves as a way to have productive discussions in class? Are we not acknowledging the presence of these students in our community? A price cannot and should not be placed on the value of any person's education, and should be a minor factor in considering our suggestion. I am confident when I say the Government understands these amenities are important enough to be classified as necessities, and I hope that soon enough this issue will be formally dealt with.

We propose that accommodations be put in place in schools across the Island to give children with learning disabilities an opportunity to excel in these environments. I believe that the Government has misunderstood our intentions, and I would like to clarify that we are not asking for any facilities necessarily, like whole new schools, but, rather, to cater to the needs of the mentioned children. We have clearly stated that we wish to integrate these students into mainstream schools hence eliminating segregation.

Madam speaker, we, the Opposition, urge the Government to do something about this issue as soon as possible, and thank them for their constructive criticism on how we can improve our Motion for the best of the people of these Islands.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: The question is: BE IT NOW THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the Government considers establishing specialized programmes for the gifted/talented students and provide additional programmes to facilitate the educational requirements for all special needs children in the Cayman Islands.

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

Ayes and Noes.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

Hon. Kimberley Wood, Leader of the Opposition, First Elected Member for Bodden Town: Madam Speaker, may I have a division please?

The Speaker: Madam Clerk.

The Clerk:

DIVISION

Ayes: 7

Hon. Kimberley Wood
Mr. Erick Faustino
Mr. Jerome Bailey
Ms. Geovanna Dominguez
Mr. Matthew Greaves
Ms. Kirsten Ebanks
Ms. Haileigh Moore

Noes: 8

Hon. Diana Tibbetts
Hon. Sasha Rankin
Hon. Kadejah Bodden
Hon. Joel Gayle
Hon. DeMa-al Nelson
Ms. M. Ramsey-Howell
Ms. A. Chollete-Lopez
Ms. Tristina Robinson

The Speaker: The result of the division is 7 Ayes and 8 Noes. Private Member's Motion No. 1 has failed.

Negated by majority on division: Private Member's Motion No. 1 failed.

The Speaker: Honourable Members, that concludes the business on the Order Paper for today's sitting. I will now call upon the Premier, the Honourable Minister of Finance, District Administration, Works, Lands and Agriculture, to move the adjournment of this honourable CPA Sixth Youth Parliament.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Diana Tibbetts, Premier, Minister of Finance, District Administration, Works, Lands and Agriculture: Madam Speaker, I move the adjournment of this honourable CPA Sixth Youth Parliament sine die.

Having done that, Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Government of Government of the CPA Sixth

Youth Parliament we wish to thank, first and foremost, God; our parents for supporting us by carrying us to the practices, our teachers for giving us advice, Ms. Alecia Dixon, Director of Department of Children and Family Services; Ms. Vanessa Allard, Attorney from Brooks and Brooks; Ms. Tammy Ebanks, Senior Policy Advisor for Community Affairs; Mr. Brent Holt, Senior Policy Advisor for the Education Ministry; Mr. Ellio Solomon, MLA; the Honourable Dwayne Seymour and the organising committee, Ms. Zena Merren-Chin, Ms. Nana Bothwell, Ms. Marlyn Moxam and the rest of the Legislative Assembly staff. And lastly, to all the sponsors that helped to make this event possible.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

Hon. Kimberley Wood, Leader of the Opposition, First Elected Member for Bodden Town: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On behalf of the Opposition of the CPA Sixth Youth Parliament, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Honourable Dwayne Seymour, Chairman of the organising committee, and other committee members, Ms. Vanessa Allard, attorney at Brooks and Brooks; Mr. Brent Holt, Senior Policy Advisor for the Education Ministry of Education; as well as Ms. Zena Merren-Chin, Ms. Nana Bothwell, Ms. Marlyn Moxam of the Legislative Assembly staff. This day would not have been a success without their dedication and their valuable time and assistance throughout the programme during the last few months.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Speaker: I will put the question that this honourable CPA Sixth Youth Parliament stand adjourned sine die.

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

Ayes.

The Speaker: The Ayes have it.

At 2.43 pm the CPA Sixth Youth Parliament stood adjourned sine die.