

Public Evaluation

FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2014



WHY PUBLIC EVALUATIONS?

The People's Campaign will seek to assess the Government & the Opposition through public evaluations. Public evaluation will allow the People's Campaign to assess how effective those who sit in the House of Parliament are in addressing the issues raised by the People. In the Month of December, we reviewed Ministerial statements, statements from the Opposition, articles in the media and public reports. We reviewed them with an aim to produce a summary of our elected officials' activities. This process will be used by the People's Campaign to keep the people of Bermuda conscious to the decisions that are being made and how they are aligned with the People's expectations.

New Work Permit Policy

On December 31st, the Minister of Home Affairs Michael Fahy announced that a new **Work Permit Policy** will come into effect on March 1st 2015. The People's Campaign expressed concerns in our **October 2014 - Public Evaluation Newsletter** regarding the original **Work Permit Policy** proposal. While we are pleased to see that changes were made and that the plans to implement a Bermuda Employment Visa (BEV) have been scrapped, the People's Campaign still have many concerns with the **New Business Work Permit (NBWP)** including:

- New exempt companies will receive automatic approval for NBWPs if applied for within the first 6 months of a company formation
- Approved companies will NOT be required to advertise these posts or seek qualified Bermudians first
- The policy states that there is no maximum number of NBWPs that a company can be issued
- Employers can employ NBWPs in any job category except for entry-level positions, closed or restricted categories
- NBWPs will be issued for a period of up to 5 years
- At the end of the NBWP term, employers can apply for a Standard Work Permit

While the People's Campaign recognizes the need to attract new companies to our shores, we have the following concerns:-

- Without requiring companies to advertise these jobs, qualified Bermudians are, in effect, being blocked from employment opportunities for up to 5 years
- This new policy has the potential of limiting Bermudians to entry level positions as posts immediately above entry level positions could be filled by persons holding NBWPs thus obstructing the line of advancement
- The policy does not define entry level positions which potentially could lead to abuses of the system
- Emphasis must be on both the enforcement and implementation of immigration policies that ensure the employment of qualified Bermudians

The People's Campaign is pleased to see the proposal includes training programmes for Bermudians but believes that it is the Government's responsibility to ensure that qualified Bermudians have access to employment opportunities. This responsibility is particularly important given our unprecedented unemployment rate. The People's Campaign urge the Government to re-think this policy.

Casino Gaming Act 2014

[The Casino Gaming Act 2014 \[link\]](#) was passed by the Senate on December 7th. The 117-page Act, which took nearly 2 years to pen and is based, to large part, on Singapore's gaming legislation and:

- Requires the formation of a Bermuda Casino Gaming Commission whose purpose is to “maintain and administer systems for the licensing, supervision and control of casinos”
- Limits the number of gaming permits to three,
- Outlines regulations related to gaming by residents,

The People's Campaign is disappointed that the OBA failed to keep the promise it made to the voters that gaming will be decided by way of a referendum. Standards of good governance require that elected officials, where appropriate, keep promises made to voters especially those promises that are made to garnish support during an election.

The reasons given by Government for legalizing gaming without conducting a referendum is that gaming will bring much needed jobs to Bermudians. To ensure this, the People's Campaign requests that all gaming permits and tax concessions for casinos be contingent on a minimum level of Bermudian employment. It is worthwhile noting that both the developers of the Morgan's Point and the Desarrollos Group have already stated their interest in obtaining a gaming permit.

America's Cup Bill

The [America's Cup \[link\]](#) legislation was introduced in the House on December 12th. It will allow:-

- the America's Cup Event Authority [ACEA] to import up to 80 motor vehicles up to limousine size,
- each team entered in the America's Cup to import up to 5 trucks (all sizes i.e. intermediate, HA, HC, tractor trailer and boat trailer)
- import duties and licensing fees to be waived

The People's Campaign congratulates the Government for its successful bid to acquire the America's Cup but has the following concerns:-

1. *the Government has committed to paying up to \$77m for the America's Cup which is reportedly 3 times what San Francisco paid last year*
2. *the OBA has failed to explain how they derived at their estimation of \$250m in projected America's Cup revenues. Last year, San Francisco estimated to have received \$300m in additional revenue from the America's Cup, markedly below original estimates that were pegged at \$900m. The Government of San Francisco ultimately reported a loss from the America's Cup of approximately \$3 million*
3. *to maximize the opportunities that will come from the America's Cup, the OBA needs to clearly communicate the strategic plan for the America's Cup to the people*
4. *the People's Campaign believes that allowing the American Cup teams to import trucks for this event will prevent our local trucking companies from benefitting from business opportunities. Independent truckers have experience a severe downturn in their sector as their primary clients – construction firms, retail companies & importers – have seen a slump in business. Granting these truckers access to economic opportunities is what good governance is about. In addition, It is unfair for our Government to require local truckers to pay import duties, permit fees and licensing fees while giving America's Cup teams exemptions from these taxes.*
5. *Bermuda Environmental and Sustainability Taskforce [BEST] has pointed out the longer-term economic, environmental and social implications [\[link to BEST statement\]](#)*

IN THE NEWS

BTUC: Airport Redevelopment

Good Governance

December 6th, 2014

The Bermuda Trade Union Congress (BTUC) issued a list of nine questions to the Government pertaining to the recently announced plans to redevelop the airport.

The People's Campaign supports the BTUC's call for transparency and collaboration as both are cornerstones to good governance.

Police to Investigate House of Assembly Incident

Good Governance

December 6th, 2014

The Bermuda Police Service will conduct an investigation following allegations of threatening behavior in the House of Assembly which reportedly involved members from both parties.

The People's Campaign repeats its call that those who have been elected to serve the people of Bermuda conduct themselves in a manner that is reflective of the responsibility bestowed on them by the people. This marks the second time that police have been called due to the misbehavior of our elected officials. These actions are impeding effective governing and cannot be ignored, condoned or repeated. The People's Campaign not only demands better but also repeats its request for parliamentary reform to ensure that the people have the means to hold their representatives accountable for unparliamentary conduct.

PLP Host Town Hall Meetings

Good Governance

December 11th, 2014

PLP conducted public meetings on the proposed airport project (December 2nd) and the

Gaming Bill (December 11th).

The People's Campaign supports the use of public meetings as a method to exchange information and to get public feedback. We encourage both parties to engage the voter particularly on issues similar to these that have wide-sweeping implications.

Desarrollos to Develop Resort

Jobs

December 12th, 2014

Minister of Tourism & Transport, Shawn Crockwell, announced that Desarrollos will develop a \$120m resort on the former Club Med site. Phase 1 will include 122 rooms plus eight residences while phase 2 will include four large estate villas and 24 golf villas. Construction is to start mid-2015 and take 16 months.

The People's Campaign encourages the Government to directly link any hotel concessions for this project to jobs and training for Bermudians.

Speaker of the House Issues a Warning

Good Governance

December 12th, 2014

The Speaker of the House warned MPs regarding inappropriate behavior in the House of Assembly.

The People's Campaign implores the Speaker of the House to fully enforce parliamentary rules regarding the conduct of MPs. The Speaker must take a strong stance against behavior that is in violation of either the Standing Orders of the Ministerial Code of Conduct. The Speaker has a vital role to play to ensure that the people's best interests are protected.

Minister Pamplin-Gordon: Wharf's \$6m Overrun

Good Governance

December. 12th, 2014

Minister of Public Works, Patricia Gordon-Pamplin, disclosed that the costs for improvements to the Heritage Wharf are now estimated to be 24%, or \$6m, over budget. The original budget was set at \$22.4m but estimates now peg costs at \$28.8m.

As the prudent management of the people's finances is one of Government's key responsibilities, the People's Campaign implores that the Government make every effort to deliver projects on budget and on time.

Minister Fahy: Selling Status

Good Governance

December. 22nd, 2014

It was revealed on the [Government's travel webpage](#) that Minister Fahy attended a London summit on Commercial Immigration in October.

The People's Campaign demands that the Government be fully transparent on their intentions regarding the selling of status and/or or residency rights. Not informing the electorate until two months after the fact about Minister's Fahy's attendance at this summit is in violation of the standards set for a transparent Government. Not only is this a highly contentious issue, it also has major global travel and security implications and, as such, it is imperative that the government engage the public.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Links to Ministerial Statements:

St. George's Development Site - S. Crockwell - December 12, 2014
Selection of Energy Policy - G. Gibbons - December 12, 2014
America's Cup Bill - G. Gibbons - December 12, 2014
Finance Minister's Visit to UK - E.T. Richards - December 05, 2014
Morgan's Point Limited - E.T. Richards - December 05, 2014
America's Cup Bid Journey - M. Dunkley - December 05, 2014
America's Cup Bermuda 2017 - G. Gibbons - December 05, 2014

Consumer Price Index (CPI) - Consumers paid 2.6 % more in October 2014 than they did a year ago for the basket of goods and services included in the CPI. The level of inflation increased 0.2% from the 2.4% measured in September 2014. The Health & Personal Care sector remained the largest contributor to the increase with an annual increase measured 7.4%. [[Link to CPI Report](#)]

Retail Sales Index (RSI) - Retail sales in October 2014 were 4.4% higher than the \$82.2 million recorded in October 2013, and after adjusting for the annual retail sales rate of inflation — 2.2% in October — the volume of retail sales increased by 2.0%. 5 out of the 7 retail sectors recorded increased sales. [[Link to RSI report](#)]

Quarterly Bulletin of Statistics - Air arrivals during the first quarter of 2014 slipped 1.1 per cent when compared to the same quarter of 2013. The Island hosted 30,949 visitors during the first three months of the year, down from 31,300 visitors during 2013. Visitors from the United Kingdom contracted 22.1 per cent. Air arrivals from the United States, Bermuda's strongest tourist market, dipped 1.7 per cent while visitors from Canada remained relatively unchanged, declining 0.1 per cent. In contrast, arrivals from all other countries increased by 715 visitors. [[Link to Qtrly Bulletin of Statistics](#)]

Ministerial Travel - [[Link to Government webpage detailing Ministers' travel costs](#)]

THE PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN MANIFESTO

EQUALITY

- Every Bermudian should have the opportunity for post secondary education and should not be prevented from attaining education due to lack of funding.
- The Government must implement an equitable taxation system that would structure taxation based upon levels of total income and the value of assets and holdings.
- Quality healthcare must be accessible and affordable to all.
- All Bermudians must have equal treatment under the law: the criminal justice system and the civil legal system must be accessible irrespective of financial well-being and must be administered at all levels in a manner that truly demonstrates that justice is blind.

JOBS

- Every person should be entitled to a livable wage in proportion to the cost of living. That is to say, a wage that permits its citizens to meet primary needs of food, shelter, clothing, healthcare and from a primary source of employment.
- Full employment for Bermudians must be a national priority.
- The Government must hold all employers accountable so that all workers will be respected and afforded the same standards and working conditions.
- All workers must have the right to join Unions or form associations to defend their rights.

JUSTICE

- The Government must implement a program specifically designed to provide true economic opportunities for persons who historically have been prevented access.
- The Government must establish regulatory constraints over the market to ensure that the business community share the sacrifices and participate in practices that serve the common good recognizing that the economy must serve the people and not the other way around.
- Equal rights must be the same for ALL citizens in Bermuda, as such age cannot be a barrier for access to services, capital, and employment.
- The Government does not own public property but holds it in trust on behalf of the people and therefore should exercise proper stewardship that protects the assets of the people against privatization.

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