


A high-contrast black and white photograph showing the lower legs and feet of a group of people standing on a paved surface. Long, dark shadows are cast across the ground, indicating bright sunlight. The shadows of the people in the foreground are particularly prominent, stretching towards the bottom left. The overall composition is abstract, focusing on the interplay of light and shadow.

SOCIAL JUSTICE BERMUDA

**THRONE SPEECH UPDATE:
FIRST HUNDRED DAYS**



AS OUR ELECTED LEADERS
IDENTIFY GOALS AND
INITIATIVES FOR THEIR NEXT
TERM, WE WOULD LIKE TO
HIGHLIGHT PRESSING SOCIAL
JUSTICE CONCERNS THAT WE
HOPE WILL BE SHORT-TERM
PRIORITIES FOR THIS
GOVERNMENT. THESE HAVE
BEEN TAKEN FROM
COMMITMENTS MADE BY THE
PROGRESSIVE LABOUR PARTY
IN THEIR RECENT PLATFORM,
AS WELL AS SUGGESTIONS
FROM OUR OWN PLATFORM.

**WE ASK: WHAT IS
ACHIEVABLE IN THEIR FIRST
HUNDRED DAYS?**

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The PLP committed to **"support the work of the Law Reform Commission to review and update Bermuda's Criminal Code and Summary Offences Act, removing outdated offences."** To that end, we call for:

- A review of the criminal code to identify low-level offences that could benefit from situational leniency for first time offenders ensuring that individuals are not receiving a criminal record for these offences but are instead punishable with a fine, probation or community service hours.
- Support the campaign by The Advocacy Movement to reform domestic abuse laws.

The PLP committed to **"introduce sexual exploitation laws including revenge porn protection laws."** Thus, we call for

- Introduction of legislation to protect against modern forms of sexual harassment and abuse via electronic means, including the introduction of 'revenge porn' legislation.

The PLP committed to **"increase support for probation services and expand treatment programmes for offenders with mental health, substance abuse or violence issues, and enhance provision of transitional living."** As such, the priorities:

- Hire additional mental health professionals for both the Department of Corrections and the Department of Court Services to facilitate treatment programmes designed for rehabilitation of offenders.
- Ensure that those incarcerated receive regular, mandatory, mental health assessments and have access to care and treatment plans by a mental health professional.
- Include mental health assessments as part of the requirements for release.
- Revise the mental health court requirements to allow for individuals who have not been previously diagnosed with a mental health condition to be assessed and potentially diagnosed before sentencing and incarceration.
- Initiate a thorough review of the services provided at both the Men and Women's Treatment Centres and assess ways to improve the rehabilitation experience and results.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE: CANNABIS REFORM

As a priority, **pass the newly-drafted Cannabis Legislation** with the following amendments:

Restorative Justice

- All non-violent cannabis-related convictions must be expunged and incarcerated persons released concurrently with the passing of the cannabis legislation
- No jail time for any future offenses associated with cannabis use/misuse that does not involve illegally supplying cannabis to minors or misrepresenting product contents
- People with previous non-violent cannabis related offences should be eligible for deferred licence fees for up to one year
- Revenue from cannabis taxation must be reinvested into the communities most impacted by the draconian prohibition of cannabis

Equitable Access

- Adjust the Personal Cultivation Licence fee, which currently excludes many of our country's lower income earners from participating in the legal growing scheme and restricts their options for accessing what in many cases, is their medicine and in all cases a more economical option for health.

Quality Control & Labelling to Ensure Informed and Responsible Consumption

- Require compound level testing to ensure that cannabis consumers are aware of the levels of cannabinoids and pesticides in cannabis plants and plant-based products.

EDUCATION

With regards to the PLP Platform item of **developing a more equitable education for all of Bermuda's children**, SJB would like to see the following actions points accomplished in the first 100 days:

- Publicly Accessible Updated Progress Report for Plan 2022 inclusive of commitments to: increasing funding for support services as phase 1 in ensuring wrap-around services in every school, including increasing the number of psychologists and counselors within the school system
- Addressing the issue of food security by implementing a take-home package meal program for students in need

With regards to the PLP Platform item of **meeting the needs of students with exceptionalities**, SJB would like to see the following actions points accomplished in the first 100 days:

- Officially change the wording of the Education Amendment Act section 25D in the following way: Change 'individual education plan' to 'individual learning plan', as individual education plan should refer only to those students who have been officially diagnosed with an exceptionality, while 'individualized learning plan' is for any student at risk of academic failure
- Officially and publicly prioritize & adopt the 2013 Inclusive and Special Education Discussion Paper as policy
- Produce a transparent publicly-accessible schedule of implementation, with relative dates and details for the each phase
- Publicly identify each priority of the policy that will be adopted, and which have already been implemented

HEALTHCARE + FOOD

We refer to the PLP Platform item regarding a **tree planting initiative**. Such an initiative should be amended to **focus solely on edible trees** in sites on both private and public land so as to be a meaningful contribution to the goal of food security for every Bermudian. To achieve this the following are first actions we call for in the next 100 days:

- Create an accessible list of locations on public park land which are best suited for planting the first wave of edible trees for public consumption.
- Start preparing the government Tulo Valley nursery for it to be an ongoing source of edible trees. It could also mean growing (and grafting where needed) a large collection of trees that are no maintenance and unlikely to be stolen such as loquat, cherry, paw paw and moringa.

With reference to the PLP Platform item regarding **increasing funding for mental health services**, this should include a campaign to reduce the stigma of receiving mental health support. To further this initiative, in the first 100 days government should take action in the following ways:

- Plan a public awareness campaign to reduce the stigma of mental health support, especially around racial trauma, sexism, homophobia and other historic oppression, with better access for everyone in the community including youth, those incarcerated and persons involved in the court system.
- Create a 'before and after' public survey to assess the communities' current feelings around mental health support to measure the effectiveness of the public campaign.

ECONOMIC EQUITY

We identify these priorities from the Social Justice Bermuda platform:

- Commence the process of demanding **food chain transparency**, requiring grocery stores/food wholesalers to submit financial information (especially relating to costs) to the Government to provide detail on how retail prices for food are set. This may require legislative changes
- **Revamp the customs duty system** to be more equitable, including reviewing the rates on essential motherhood and menstruation products and raw materials for makers and artists.
- Begin process of requiring all businesses to have **salary transparency** within their organisation and that all employees are paid an equal salary for equal work. Continue work and provide a progress update on the Wage Commission re: establishing a living/minimum wage.

From the PLP Platform, we view these as priorities:

- Investing in the **upkeep of Bermuda forts and historical attractions**.
- Grow the economy by providing **incentives for emigrated Bermudians to return home**.
- Create employment while reducing long-term costs by commencing the **installation of renewable energy facilities** on large government buildings, public schools, and at the National Sports Centre before the end of the year.
- Use the provisions of Section 6A of the Human Rights Act to ensure that new **economic development initiatives assist “disadvantaged persons or groups”**, specifically persons of African descent, women, and the differently abled.

**"It is my wish
that Bermuda
society would
become a model
society of racial
harmony through
individual
efforts as well as
through
collective
commitments of
all Bermudians
to uproot racism
from our Island
home."**

Dr. Eva Hodgson





OUR VALUES

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

We believe in a justice system that focuses on prevention, provides rehabilitation, does not criminalise drug use, and focuses on the humanity of each person. We believe in restorative justice. We believe cannabis reform should be reparational to make amends for the harm caused to Black people by punitive cannabis laws.



EDUCATION

We believe that every child in Bermuda deserves access to a high standard of education, garnering the tools and resources they need to succeed, and with knowledge of this island's incredible history. We believe that arts-based learning helps all types of learners engage more meaningfully with content, develops vital social skills, and provides essential personal expression. We believe every Bermudian should have the opportunity to pursue a full, affordable university education here at home.



HEALTHCARE + FOOD

We believe that healthcare is a right, and that every person should have access to the resources they need to stay well. We believe that access to healthy food is a right. We believe that food insecurity is an urgent issue. We believe that there should be zero food waste while people go hungry.



ECONOMIC EQUITY

We believe that Bermuda's regulatory frameworks must actively promote the diversification of business ownership and operation. We believe every Bermudian deserves to earn a livable wage, to be treated with dignity, and provided the tools and resources to find meaningful work. Those who are unable to work should be supported. We believe that the high cost of living in Bermuda needs to be examined and solutions found.

If our values and ideas
resonate with you, and you
are interested in getting
involved, please visit
socialjusticebda.com
to sign up for a team.
For ongoing updates,
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**Thank you to photographer Meredith Andrews
for capturing our beginning moments.
Follow her on Instagram @meredithphoto.**