First (1st) Sitting of the Sixteenth (16th) Meeting of the First Session of the Thirteenth (13th) Legislature

THE PARLIAMENT OF TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

14 JANUARY 2026

(Parliament)

Hon. Speaker

Speaker

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Parliament

PRAYER

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT AND PRAYER

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Good morning, Honourable Members. I now call this first sitting of the 16th meeting of the first session of the 13th Legislature of the Parliament of the Turk and Caicos Islands to order. Honourable Members, I now call on our Chaplain, Bishop Coleta Williams III, to pray for this Parliament.

OPENING PRAYER

Chaplain:

Proverbs chapter 3, verse 27. Do not withhold good from those whom it is due. And it is in your power to do it. Do not say to your neighbour, go and come again tomorrow, and I will give it, when you have it with you. This is a directive from King Solomon arguing for generosity, responsibility, and prompt action in helping others especially when it's within our power, emphasizing fulfilling obligation and providing for the needy, the disenfranchised, and the marginalized without delay rather than being stingy. It is a call to use your resources and ability to support your neighbors, constituents, and citizens, fulfilling our duty to them even if they are not friends. As highlighted by King Solomon in this text, generosity and compassion— be willing to give help. Support and kindness to those in need.

Responsibility. Recognize your obligation to help your fellow man, even if it's just a neighbor in need. Promptness. Don't delay or say come back tomorrow when you can help today. Fulfilling obligations. This includes paying your vows, keeping promises, and providing for those in need. Our takeaway from today, it's a call to be active and positive in our community using our abilities. to do good for others when the opportunities arise.

Let us pray. Father, in the name of your Son Jesus, as we gather in this hallowed place, this second session of this Parliament, and as we debate the Supplementary Appropriation 2025-2026 Bill We ask for the gift of your Holy Spirit to tabernacle with us, and we ask for your presence to forge a bond of unity among us as parliamentarians, so much so that we will know that there is more that unites us than that which divides us.

In this Parliament filled with diverse perspectives, and experience grant us the ability to understand each other and respect the value each voice brings to our debate. We pray that disregard and disrespect and anger finds no place in our midst as we debate and legislate. Cause our heart to remain open to the wealth of insight each member shares in our pursuit of legislative responsibility. Let unity guide us to solutions that honors both our objectivities and our prosperity, the safety of our beloved country and people.

Lord, we thank you for helping us as parliaments to always be ready to address challenges with a unified spirit. So Lord, thank you for the spirit of discernment and good judgment for our Speaker, the spirit of compassion and wisdom and creativity and vision for our Premier, that he may lead this country on a path that invests in our people.

Develop the country in a sustainable way so it can fulfill its potential and purpose. The spirit of wisdom and integrity of heart, and a heart for service for our Cabinet. The spirit of courage and wisdom and vision for the Leader of the Opposition. The spirit of cooperation for all members of this Parliament. so that they may legislate wisely, debate robustly, and scrutinize carefully.

The spirit of wisdom and gift of sound legal advice for our Attorney General. Strength and soundness of mind and good stewardship for our Clerk and all our parliamentarian staff. Bless this Parliament. Bless and protect our country. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory. We ask these blessings in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT AND PRAYER

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Please be seated. Honourable Premier.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE - DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Sorry, before we start, we have to do the Oath of Allegiance for the Deputy AG.

Deputy Attorney General:

I, Khalila Astwood-Tatem, swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King Charles III, his heirs and successors, according to law, so help me God.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Madam Clerk, for administering the Oath of Allegiance to the Attorney General Acting. I now call on the Honourable Premier.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 12 - SITTING BEYOND 6 PM

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you. Good morning, everyone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning to my colleagues in the House and both sides of the aisle. Good morning to those persons in the gallery who are here to assist with the proceedings of the day. Good morning to Madam Clerk and staff. Good morning to Turk and Caicos Islands and Turk and Caicos Islanders wherever you may be, at home or abroad. Mr. Speaker, I want to apologize for the late start, technical issues and getting our process established so that we can go through the day smoothly.

I am going to start by appealing to persons who are going to be contributing to the debate today to try to keep it tight because of the lateness of the start. I plan to set the example. So, Mr. Speaker, with that said, pursuant to Standing Order 130, I move that Standing Order 12 be suspended to allow this Honourable House to sit beyond the 6 PM hour.

Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Jamell Rayan Robinson:

Second.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable Members, motion moved by the Honourable Premier and seconded by the Honourable Deputy Premier, that this Honourable Parliament sits beyond the 6 PM hour. All in favour say aye. All to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Honourable Premier.

REARRANGEMENT OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 49, I wish to rearrange the business of this Honourable Parliament so that government business can have precedence over all the other business. In that regard, I move that item number 7, papers, be taken as item number 4. Item number 11, report from committees, to be taken as item number 5. And item number 12, first reading of bills, to be taken as item number 18. Item number 18 on the Order of the Day to be taken as item number 7.

Thank you.

PAPERS

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND TRANSITION TO PAPERS

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Premier. Honourable Members, I want to again welcome you here this morning for this meeting of Parliament. I also, according to the Premier, want to apologise for our late start this morning as we tried to resolve some of the technical issues that we had. I want to also welcome the persons who are here in the gallery, the strangers in the gallery this morning, and those persons that are listening via Radio Turk and Caicos and also via our SmartStream platforms.

I want to send out condolences to families that have lost loved ones since we last met. Particularly, I want to send out condolences to Carlos Williams' family, better known as Mr. C. We all know Mr. C, and he recently passed, and so I would like to, on behalf of Parliament, send out condolences to his family.

I will now return to the Order Paper, and as the Premier said, we have a full agenda today, so I would ask that members who are contributing to the bills to keep their contributions tight so that we could complete our agenda today. I'll now return to the order paper, and we are now at papers, and we are going to have the Estimates of the National Health Insurance Board Notes and Assumptions Financial Year 2025 2026, to be laid by the Honourable Premier and Minister for Finance, Investment and Trade. Honourable Premier.

LAYING OF NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE BOARD AND SPORTS COMMISSION ESTIMATES 2025-2026

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to lay on the table of this Honourable Parliament, in accordance with Standing Order 32 and Sections 115 and 116, of the Turk and Caicos Islands Constitution Order 2011, the Government of

the Turk and Caicos Islands Estimates of the National Health Insurance Board Notes and Assumptions Financial Year for the Financial Year 2025-2026. As well, Mr. Speaker, I also move that the Estimates of Sports Commission Notes and assumptions for the financial year 2025-2026 be laid on the table of this Honourable Parliament in accordance with Standing Order 32 and Section 115 and 116 of the Constitution, Order 2011.

LAYING OF ENVIRONMENT LOG

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Madam Clerk. Honourable Premier, you want to also lay the environment log? Government of the Turk and Caicos Islands approved environment logs for the period December 2025 to January 2026.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Let me do this first.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Okay, proceed, Honourable Premier.

REPORT FROM COMMITTEES

REFERRAL OF ESTIMATES TO APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Now, Mr. Speaker, I move that the above-mentioned Estimates 2025/2026 be referred to the Appropriations Committee to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 115.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable Members, we now have 2 papers that relate— that have to go to the Appropriations Commission, and so I will like to Pardon?

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

Laid by me before you can sign.

PAPERS

LAYING OF ENVIRONMENT LOG

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Okay, okay, conflicting information here, but okay. We'll have the Government of the Turk and Caicos Islands approve Environment Log for the period December 2025 to January 2026 to be laid by the Honourable Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to lay on the table of this Honourable House, in accordance with Standing Order 32 and Standing Order 51.6 of the Public Finance Management Regulations 2012, Government of the Turk and Caicos Islands approved virements log for periods December 2025 to January 2026.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF HOUSE FOR APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Madam Clerk. Thank you very much, Madam Clerk. Now that we have laid the estimates of the National Health Insurance Board and the estimates of the Sports Commission, I will now like to suspend this Honourable House and will call on the Appropriations Committee to meet thereafter suspension. This honourable Parliament is hereby suspended.

REPORT FROM COMMITTEES

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH, SPORTS, AND CULTURE

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

Good morning. I'd like to welcome you once again to this Appropriations Committee meeting. We now have appearing before us the Ministry of— Ed— um, sorry, the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports, and Culture. This Appropriations Committee resumes. Appearing before us now, we have the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Youth Education, Youth Sports, and Culture. I am Sharon Simons, Chairman of the Appropriations Committee. To my left.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Yes, good morning, PS. As you know, my name is Edwin Astwood, Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

Good morning, Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture. I'm Randy Howell, Member of Parliament for Blue Hills. To my right.

Co-op Member:

Good morning, sir, PS. My name is Walter Gardiner, co-op member to the Appropriations Committee.

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

I'd like to apologize for our other co-op member, Ms. Christiane Lewis, who's not here with us this morning. Honourable Leader of the Opposition, did you state your conflict?

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Yes, sorry, Madam Chair. Yes, Madam Chair, just for the record and to avoid all appearance of collusion or conflict, I will refrain from posing any direct questions to the PS of Education, as he is a sibling of mine.

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

Thank you very much, Honourable Leader of the Opposition. Now that we have finished our formal introduction, can you please introduce yourself for the persons that are listening to us via Radio Turk and Caicos and our social media platforms? And if you have any presentation, please go ahead with it. Thank you.

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE - SPORTS COMMISSION SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION 2025-2026

PS of Education, Youth, Sports, and Culture:

Thank you, Madam Chair, members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is James Astwood, the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports, and Culture. Let me bring apologies of absence for the Director of the Sports Commission, Mr. Jared Forbes. He's unable to be here this evening, but as the Permanent Secretary, I represent that body underneath the Ministry's remit. Today, as mentioned in our previous session, we are here to propose the increase of the sum $350,000 to the Sports Commission. The supplementary appropriation before you addresses 3 specific pressures encountered during the '25-'26 financial year. Each request responds to a clear problem and intended to protect public safety, preserve government assets, and sustain national programs.

Apologies for the voice, a little under the weather for the last couple of days. First, security services at the national sports facility—facilities and events. The Sports Commission operates government-owned facilities that are heavily utilized daily from 5:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., serving an average of about 800 users per day nationwide, including children, youth, and adults.

These facilities support both structured programs and informal recreational use and host a robust calendar of national events and community activities. Maintaining strong order, access control, and safeguarding is essential. Due to increased utilization, expanding program, and current national security climate, the allocated security budget has been exhausted. The supplementary appropriation of some $203,000 ensures continuous security coverage, protects users and staff, safeguards government assets, and prevents unacceptable risk exposure.

Second, Let's Move TCI mobile app. The Let's Move TCI campaign is now entering its 4th year and is a key pillar of the nation's response to noncommunicable diseases. To scale participation and measure impact effectively, the program now requires digital infrastructure. This request funds the development and first-year hosting of a national fitness and wellness effort at a cost of $22,000, enabling participation tracking, real-time data collection, and strong policy planning in support of long-term healthcare cost reduction.

And third, sports infrastructure equipment and facility enhancement. The final request of a total of $125,000 supports a one-time investment in critical equipment, including turf maintenance machines across multiple islands, modern scoreboards, and additional bleachers in selected facilities. These upgrades enhance athlete safety, facility functionality, and event quality while reducing long-term maintenance costs. In closing, Chair, these supplementary requests are targeted, time-bound, and practical.

They maintain safety and order, protect government assets, strengthen public health outcomes, and ensure continuity of national sports and recreational services. Thank you, Madam Chair.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION FOR SPORTS COMMISSION

PS of Education, Youth, Sports, and Culture:

Thank you, Madam Chair, members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is James Astwood, the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports, and Culture. I bring apologies for the absence of the Director of the Sports Commission, Mr. Jared Forbes. As Permanent Secretary, I represent the Sports Commission under the Ministry's remit.

Today, we propose an increase of $350,000 to the Sports Commission. The supplementary appropriation addresses

three specific pressures during the 2025-2026 financial year, each responding to a clear problem to protect public safety, preserve government assets, and sustain national programs. First, security services at national sports facilities and events: the Sports Commission operates government-owned facilities used daily by about 800 users, including children, youth, and adults. Due to increased utilization, expanded programming, and the national security climate, the allocated security budget has been exhausted.

The supplementary appropriation of $203,000 ensures continuous security coverage, protects users and staff, safeguards government assets, and prevents unacceptable risk exposure. Second, the Let's Move TCI mobile app: entering its fourth year, this campaign is a key pillar of the nation's response to noncommunicable diseases. To scale participation and measure impact, the program requires digital infrastructure. The request funds development and first-year hosting of a national fitness and wellness app at a cost of $22,000, enabling participation tracking, real-time data collection, and strong policy planning to support long-term healthcare cost reduction.

Third, sports infrastructure equipment and facility enhancement: a one-time investment of $125,000 supports critical equipment, including maintenance machines, modern scoreboards, and additional bleachers. These upgrades improve athlete safety, facility functionality, and event quality while reducing long-term maintenance costs. In closing, these supplementary requests are targeted, time-bound, and practical. They maintain safety and order, protect government assets, strengthen public health outcomes, and ensure continuity of national sports and recreational services. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

Thank you very much, P.S. Also, can you please forward a copy of that, if you haven't done so already, to the clerk for me, so that we may have it? For those listening via Radio Turk and Caicos and our social media platforms, if you weren't present yesterday when the PS and his team appeared before us, there were explanations given regarding the appropriations of these funds.

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

Yesterday, the director spoke about the funds allocated for turf maintenance for South Caicos, Grand Turk, and Providenciales fields. He also spoke about the scoreboards for the Gustavus Lightbourne complex and the sports complex in Grand Turk, as well as implementing more bleachers in both complexes. He addressed the urgent security services needed for all sports facilities under the Sports Commission. I reiterate for the public that we did question the Director of Sports regarding this appropriation.

This is a formality so we can have our report to lay on the table of Parliament. Thank you for appearing before us this morning, and get well soon.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Thank you, Madam Chair, members of the Appropriations Committee.

TRANSITION TO MINISTRY OF HEALTH PRESENTATION

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

We'll now have coming to appear before us the Ministry of Health.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES PRESENTATION

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

Good morning, Madam P.S. We now have appearing before us the Ministry of Health and Human Services.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Good morning.

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

Human Services. I am Sharon Simons, Chairman of the Appropriations Committee.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Good morning, Madam PS of Health. My name is Edwin Astwood, Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Randy Dexter Howell:

Good morning, PS Health and Human Services. My name is Randy Howell, Member of Parliament for Blue Hills.

Walter Gardner:

Good morning, Madam PS. My name is Walter Gardner, co-op member to the Appropriations Committee.

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

I would like to apologize for our other co-op member, Miss Christiane Lewis. She's not here with us this morning. Once again, welcome. You can go ahead and make your introductions for those listening via Radio Turk and Caicos and our social media platforms. If you have any presentation, please go ahead.

Thank you.

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION FOR NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE BOARD AND INTERHEALTH CANADA

Diseree Lewis:

Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to the Appropriations Committee for having me back to discuss the supplementary appropriation for the National Health Insurance Board. Following on from yesterday's meeting, the funding being appropriated is $11.4 million. In association with the member's question yesterday, the funds are being appropriated to the line items of overseas medical treatment under the National Health Insurance Board, the overseas medical treatment line under healthcare expenses, the overseas subsistence line under healthcare expenses, and the overseas travel line under healthcare expenses.

As indicated in our initial presentation, the funds relate to additional overseas referrals for the TAP program and some expenditure submitted by overseas providers that came in late. Hence the $11.4 million. In addition, there is an increase in payments to InterHealth Canada clinical services of approximately $2.4 million. This increase is due to a salary review. Since the opening of the hospital in 2010, this is the first salary increase for staff at the TCI hospitals. A review was done by InterHealth Canada, and we did a supplemental review of what was submitted. These are the amounts agreed upon for the salary increases for staff at the TCI hospitals.

Diseree Lewis:

The salary increases were retroactive to April 1st and have already been paid through the NHIP. Based on the project agreement, NHIP makes all clinical payments to InterHealth Canada, and all infrastructural payments are made directly from TCIG to InterHealth Canada. Hence, the increase in payments to InterHealth Canada by the NHIP. I am open to any additional questions from the committee this morning.

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

Thank you very much, Madam P.S., for that presentation. I see that it's not a written presentation.

Diseree Lewis:

No, Madam Chair, it's not. My apologies, I'll email the written presentation from yesterday to your team.

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

Please do so as soon as possible. For those listening via radio and social media, this is to update you that yesterday the PS appeared before us regarding the estimates and now we're here again. Yesterday we did ask questions.

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

Yes, Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Just one thing, Madam Chair. What didn't come up yesterday, I just want clarification on the salary increases for InterHealth Canada. How is that process done, considering any increase TCIG has to pay for? Is TCIG involved in the levels of increase given? What is TCIG's role in deciding the increase for InterHealth Canada staff, since TCIG pays that increase?

Diseree Lewis:

Thank you for the question. Through the Chair, InterHealth Canada hired a consultancy firm to carry out their salary review. TCIG received that report and vetted it to ensure it met our standards. After reviewing the report, TCIG also engaged our consultancy team working on the finances related to the project agreement to review the report submitted.

We also engaged the consultant who did the TCIG salary review and did a market comparison, including all health staff based on the recent TCIG review. A compromise was agreed upon, and we implemented the salary increases based on the last TCIG review and what was submitted by the hospital. This ensured value for money and adequate staff compensation. Additionally, there is a caveat in the agreement that TCIG will review the salary increase again after two years.

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

Yes, Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Just one quick follow-up. Did TCIG also pay the consultant hired for the salary review?

Diseree Lewis:

I would refrain from saying yes or no, but customarily, because it is a CLINCO expense, it could have been. I can confirm and revert to the clerk, Madam Chair.

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

Thank you very much, PS. Was this review done for any additional staff, or was it for the complement of 49 persons on human resources?

Diseree Lewis:

No additional staffing, Madam Chair.

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

Were all these positions filled? I see here Deputy Chief Executive Officer over 9 months. Were all these positions filled?

Diseree Lewis:

This is for the NHIP?

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

Yes.

Diseree Lewis:

We still have some vacancies within the NHIP that we're trying to fill. Recruitment has become a challenge despite the high salary attached to the positions.

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

Thank you very much, Madam P.S. I don't think we have any more questions for you. To remind those listening, if you weren't listening over the last two days, the Appropriations Committee meeting did have the PS of the Ministry of Health here who responded to questions regarding the $11.4 million.

We had exhausted that yesterday, so we don't need to rehash it this morning. Thank you for appearing before us. Continue to enjoy the rest of your day.

REPORT FROM COMMITTEES

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE - HEALTH MINISTRY QUESTIONS

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

Thank you very much, Madam P.S. I don't think we have any more questions for you. To remind those listening via Radio Talks and Caicos and social media, if you weren't listening over the last two days, the Appropriations Committee meeting had the PS of the Ministry of Health here who responded to questions regarding the $11.4 million, and we exhausted that yesterday, so we don't need to rehash it this morning.

Madam Piaz, thank you for appearing before us today. Enjoy the rest of your day. As I said yesterday, I hope you have a stress-free year, though I see the stress has already begun. Thank you very much.

Diseree Lewis:

It never stops, Madam Chair. Thank you very much.

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

Thank you. You have a good day.

Diseree Lewis:

Thank you.

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

I want to thank everyone for coming here this morning. This meeting of the Appropriations Committee is adjourned.

REPORT OF THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE SECOND SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATIONS ESTIMATE 25/26

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

Public service staffing and recruitment process. The committee is deeply concerned about staffing and recruitment challenges across the Turks and Caicos Islands public service, noting that a significant number of approved positions remain vacant and that productivity has declined. This situation is hindering the ability of ministries and departments to operate effectively and meet their key performance indicators. The Committee recommends that the government undertake a comprehensive review of the recruitment process to improve efficiency, timeliness, and outcomes.

The overall recommendations: the Committee recommends that a further issue of funds is authorized from the Consolidated Fund of a sum not exceeding $27,368,199.65 to be applied to the service of the financial year ending 31st of March, 2026. The committee recommends a further issue is authorized from the Development Fund of a sum not exceeding $861,250 to be applied to the service of the financial year ending 31st March, 2026. The committee acknowledges with deep gratitude and expresses thanks to the Parliament staff, the PS of Finance and her team, the media team, all other persons and officers appearing before the committee, and those involved in arranging the meeting.

Last but not least, I express my thanks to my committee members. Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Section 128 of the Turks and Caicos Islands Constitution Order 2011, I move that the report of the Appropriations Committee on the Second Supplementary Appropriations Estimate 25/26 be adopted. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Rachel Marshall Taylor:

Second.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

TRANSITION TO FIRST READING - SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION 2025/2026 BILL

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Chair of the Appropriations Committee, for your report on the Second Supplementary Appropriation Estimates 2025/2026. Honourable Members, I will now return to the Order Paper. We are now at the first reading of bills, and at the first reading of the Supplementary Appropriation 2025/2026 Bill 2026, to be moved by the Honourable Premier and Minister for Finance, Economic Development, Investment and Trade. Honourable Premier.

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATIONS 2025-2026 BILL - MOTION FOR THREE READINGS

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that pursuant to Standing Order 90.5, the Bill entitled Supplementary Appropriations 2025-2026, Bill No. 26, sorry, Bill 2026B, be allowed to go through all three readings within this meeting on the basis of our well-established convention relating to money bills. This was not done before we recessed because of the need to lay the appropriation report on the table.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Just doing this bit of housekeeping before I move on to the reading. I will have to ask for a seconder.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Mr. Speaker, I rise to second that in accordance with our well-established customs here.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable Members, motion moved by the Honourable Premier and seconded by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition that the Bill entitled Supplementary Appropriation 2025/2026, Bill 2026, go through all three readings during the sitting. All in favour say aye. All to the contrary, no. The ayes have it.

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATIONS 2025-2026 BILL - FIRST READING

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that pursuant to Standing Order 94, the Bill entitled Supplementary Appropriation 2025/2026, Bill 2026 be read a first time. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Jamell Rayan Robinson:

Second.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable Members, motion moved by the Honourable Premier and seconded by the Honourable Deputy Premier that the bill entitled Supplementary Appropriation 2025/2026, Bill 2026, be read for a first time. All in favour say aye. All to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

Clerk:

This act may be cited as the Supplementary Appropriations 2025-2026 Act 2026 and shall— This act may be cited as the Supplementary Appropriations 2025-2026 Act 2025 and comes into operation on the day of publication in the Gazette.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TRANSITION TO SECOND READING - AIRPORTS AUTHORITY AMENDMENT BILL 2025

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Madam Clerk. Honourable Members, I will now return to the Order Paper. We are at the Orders of the Day, Second Reading of Bills. We'll have the second reading of the Airports Authority Amendment Bill 2025. The Chair recognizes the Honourable Minister for PPID.

AIRPORTS AUTHORITY AMENDMENT BILL 2025 - MOTION TO DEFER

Hon. Arlington Alexander Musgrove:

Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Airports Authority Amendment Bill 2025 be deferred to the next sitting of Parliament. Do I have a seconder?

TRANSITION TO SECOND READING - SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION 2025/2026 BILL

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable members, motion moved by the Honourable Minister for PPID, seconded by the Honourable Minister for Education, that the bill entitled Airports Authority Amendment Bill 2025 be deferred until the next sitting of Parliament. All in favour say aye. All to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Honourable Members, I will now return to the Order Paper. We're still at the second reading of bills, and we'll have the second reading of the Supplementary Appropriation 2025/2026, Bill 2026. To be moved by the Honourable Premier.

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATIONS 2025-2026 BILL - SECOND READING

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the Supplementary Appropriation 2025-2026, Bill 2026, be read for a second time. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Otis Chuck Morris:

Second.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable Members, motion moved by the Honourable Premier and seconded by the Honourable Minister for Public Safety and Utilities, that the Bill entitled Supplementary Appropriation 2025/2026, Bill 2026, be read a second time. All in favour say aye. All to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Honourable Premier.

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATIONS 2025-2026 BILL - SECOND READING DEBATE

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the Financial Year 2025/2026 is before us to consider, and it is about how a responsible government governs in real time when circumstances evolve, pressures emerge, and obligations must be met. It is about truth in public finance, care for our people, and discipline in decision-making. The Supplementary Budget is not the result of fiscal indiscipline, nor the product of poor planning, and it is certainly not a departure from the sound financial management that this Government has consistently demonstrated.

Rather, it is the mark of a Government that adjusts responsibilities, acts transparently, and refuses to ignore reality. The Supplementary Appropriations Bill before the House authorizes an additional $27.37 million from the Consolidated Fund and $861,250 from the Development Fund to support the services of the financial year ending 31 March 2026. These adjustments increase total revenue from $553.5 million to $580.9 million.

Not $1 of new borrowing is required. The resulting deficit is fully financed from prior-year cash reserves. This is fiscal responsibility in action. As of November 2025, the Government recorded an operating surplus of $57 million. After capital spending, an overall net surplus of $42 million remained. Total Government cash balance exceeded $410 million, including strong Consolidated Fund reserves, a healthy Development Fund, and a growing National Wealth Fund. This is the financial foundation that allows us to respond decisively, without panic, borrowing, or compromising the future. The Supplementary Estimates respond to three unavoidable realities: emerging national needs that could not be deferred, legal and contractual obligations that must be honoured, and human needs that demand compassion, not delay.

When citizens require life-saving medical care, government does not hesitate. When teachers are needed in classrooms, government responds. When justice is delayed by under-resourced courts, government intervenes. When lawful claims

fall due, Government pays. That is responsible leadership. The most significant adjustment is the $11.4 million increase for the Treatment Abroad Programme. The Government will never apologise for funding healthcare.

Health is not a luxury; it is a right. On justice, security, and governance, the supplementary strengthens the judiciary to reduce delays and clear backlogs, funding claims against government, and responsibly reallocating funds where efficiencies have been achieved. On Education, Youth and Sports Protection, these Estimates address teacher shortages, special education needs, youth and sports development, and $1.8 million in social welfare support for our most vulnerable citizens.

This is targeted intervention, not blanket spending. Strategic land acquisition amounted to $8.2 million—about sovereignty, planning, and long-term development. Infrastructure maintenance across the islands ensures that growth is sustainable. The Development Fund increase supports carefully prioritised capital projects while preserving fiscal buffers. Members will note that this Supplementary does not simply add spending. It reduces, reallocates, and reprioritises across Ministries where programmes are underspending or timelines have shifted. This is not mismanagement; this is active stewardship of public funds.

The choice before the House is clear. Do we fund healthcare when it is needed, honour lawful obligations, protect the vulnerable, maintain infrastructure, and manage public finances honestly? Or do we pretend that circumstances never change? This Government chooses responsibility. These Supplementary Estimates reflect a Government that is careful, compassionate, and forward-looking. They protect lives, preserve stability, and strengthen institutions without reckless borrowing or fiscal excess.

As Premier and Minister of Finance, I commend these Supplementary Estimates to the Honourable House and invite all Members to engage in this debate with the seriousness and national interest it deserves. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Premier, for your presentation on the Supplementary Appropriations 2025/2026, Bill 2026. Honourable Members, the floor is now open for debate on this bill. Are there any contributions? The Chair recognizes the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Thank you very much, Honourable Speaker. Good afternoon to all those listening by radio or tuning in on the internet, to my colleagues here, and to those in the gallery. Before I make my contributions to the supplementary bill, I want to give condolences to the Williams family, the family of Mr. C here in Grand Turk, and to all bereaved families throughout the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Special good afternoon to the people of my constituency of Grand Turk South and Salt Cay, and the wider Turks and Caicos Islands. To start, I'd like to say that those who assist the Premier in writing that statement need to update their file on me. I'm not going to criticize the government or say it's reckless spending or poor management. I have no reason to say that.

There's a saying: you have to be the change you want to see. For years, we've said we must work together for the betterment of our people. The easiest thing for the Honourable Member and myself to do is criticize, but that does not help our country. We are all about making the lives of our people better.

There are many things we may disagree on or do differently, but we understand why government sometimes has to pull back or why projects are not moving. I will not criticize the minister for teachers not being in place, nor the department, because we know some things are out of our hands. If, by April, May, or June, things aren't adjusted, then we have reason to criticize, because we've identified the problem and offered solutions. If nothing is done, then we can say so.

Regarding teachers, no one in here or in the department has control over a teacher resigning the week school opens. I know this firsthand from my own experience. Recruitment is a problem in almost every department and ministry. This is not just a problem for this government, but has been ongoing.

We all need to be concerned about how Turks and Caicos Islands can recruit the staff needed. We don't want to be back here next year saying departments did without staff for the entire year. It's about trying to see how we can best serve our people. That is what the Honourable Member for the Bight, Juba Sound, Tower Drive, Long Bay Hills, Venetian Road is here to represent.

Mine is easy: Grand Turk South and Salt Cay.

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL DEBATE

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Thank you very much, Honourable Speaker. Good afternoon to all listening by radio, online, my colleagues here, and those in the gallery. Special good afternoon to my constituency of Grand Turk South and Salt Cay, and the wider Turks and Caicos Islands. Before I contribute to the supplementary bill, I want to give condolences to the Williams family, Mr. C's family in Grand Turk, and all bereaved families throughout the islands.

I also want to address the persons who assist the Premier in writing statements—please update your file on me. I am not here to criticize the government or accuse it of reckless spending or poor management. I want to see us work together for the betterment of our people.

It is easy to criticize, but that does not help our country. We are here to make the lives of our people better. There are things we may disagree on, but we understand why the

government sometimes has to pull back or delay projects. I will not criticize the minister or department for teachers not being in place, because some things are out of our hands.

If, after identifying problems and offering solutions, nothing is done by April, May, or June, then we have reason to criticize. Regarding teachers, no one can control resignations at the start of the school year. I have seen these issues firsthand. Recruitment challenges are not new—they affect every department and ministry.

We must all be concerned about why the Turks and Caicos Islands cannot recruit the staff we need. We do not want to return here next year and ask departments how they functioned without staff for a whole year. We need to address this now to serve our people. My colleague from The Bight, Juba Sound, Tower Drive, Long Bay Hills, and Venetian Road is also here to represent.

My area is Grand Turk South and Salt Cay.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Thank you, Honourable Deputy, for clarifying Grand Turk South and Salt Cay. We are here to serve our people and get what is best for them. There is no need to act against our own interests. If things do not change, we have the right to criticize, but today is about helping.

I made recommendations in committee this time, engaging in the process to help the government. This is my government too, even as a competitor. As a Turk and Caicos Islander, I want to help.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

My parents are aging here, my children are growing up here. We will have plenty of opportunities to disagree, but now is about serving our people. In committee, we made recommendations. We had to appropriate more funds for NHIP, but that is not the Minister of Health's fault. We know the situation and will not criticize the Ministry of Health or health professionals for that. If they do not try to fix it, then we will step in. I am concerned about the purchase and use of the new facility—will government use it right away? We will be watching that going forward. Staffing in the Ministry of Border Control and Immigration is also a concern, especially with the backlog in work permits and PRCs.

Even if temporary staff are brought in to clear the backlog, what will prevent it from happening again? We all know the challenges in customer service and document processing. If ministers do not adjust by the next budget, we will address it then. The Appropriations Committee made recommendations on these matters. Regarding the new building, we hope to see staffing, cooks, security, and maintenance addressed in the new year.

We were told the building is fit for purpose, but we did not see funding for maintenance or security features. This is not criticism, but highlighting gaps. For the juvenile home for males, we want to know about secure rooms and security measures, but no funding was seen for cameras or auxiliary services. These are concerns to be addressed.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

We are concerned about staffing in Immigration and Border Control and hope the Minister will address it to resolve the backlog. Many were happy to see increased street cleaning funding, but it is scattered across three or four ministries. Why not centralize it under Environmental Health? There are concerns about allocation and execution. For home care and welfare, an additional $1 million is being requested to supplement current funds, with a large waiting list for services.

What will the budget show in April? The $940,000 requested is just under $1 million, and the waiting list is large. Regarding religious affairs, there is funding for religious institutions, but where is the policy for disbursement? During my time as Minister of Sports, we required sporting bodies to show need and plans for funding. Will religious institutions have to show need or just apply? We hope for a clear policy. Today, we are here to help.

There will be time for criticism later, but now is about our people. If it is good for the people, I will support it. I have stated my issues and red flags. This morning we discussed the Ministry of Health and remuneration for health staff and InterHealth Canada. We learned that TCIG pays for the salary reviews and increases, not InterHealth. That is a concern, but for another day. These are the red flags I have seen in this supplementary. We want help to reach our people.

Not everyone is living their best lives, and we want contracts and roadworks to benefit our people. Medical bills are also a concern—there are 6 to 10 people whose bills total over $6 million a year. We will discuss disease prevention and primary healthcare during the budget. For now, I support this supplementary and want help to get to our people.

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET AND SOCIAL SERVICES CONCERNS

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

We are concerned about the level of staffing inside Immigration and Border Control and hope the Honourable Minister will address this backlog immediately. Many of us were pleased to see the amount of street cleaning in this budget, but it is scattered across three ministries: Environmental Health under the Ministry of Health, Home Affairs, and District Commissioners, among others. I wonder why street cleaning could not be consolidated under Environmental Health. Our concerns are not with the allocation but with the application and execution.

Another concern is the additional $1 million requested for

home care from the Welfare Department, with a large waiting list for persons needing home help and social support. The requested amount was reduced to $940,000, and I question why not the full $1 million was provided. Regarding religious affairs, while funds are available to help religious institutions, there is no clear policy on disbursement or application. During my tenure as Minister of Sports, we had a fund for sporting bodies with a clear policy on access; I suggest a similar approach for religious institutions.

We need a policy so any denomination knows how to access funds and what is required. We are here to help our people, and if it benefits the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands, I will support it, though I have highlighted my concerns. This morning we discussed the Ministry of Health and remuneration for health staff and the relationship with InterHealth Canada. While we appreciate the salary increases, it appears TCIG pays for the reviews and the increases, not InterHealth. This arrangement raises concerns, as TCIG seems to bear the costs for actions initiated by InterHealth.

These are red flags in this supplementary. We want help to reach our people, especially those not living their best lives. If contracts and medical bills can be addressed quickly, we want to see that. There are a few individuals whose medical bills total over $6 million annually, and we seek a breakdown of these costs.

We will discuss disease prevention and primary healthcare during the budget. Despite my concerns, I support this supplementary to help our people.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

The Honourable Member from the Bight and I want help to get to our people. We have identified our red flags, and if these issues are not addressed, we will return. For now, it is about the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands. I will support this supplementary bill going forward.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you, Honourable Member, for your contribution. Are there any further contributions? The Chair recognizes the Honourable Minister of Home Affairs.

MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS SECOND SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE 2025-26

Hon. Shaun David Malcolm:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to you, my colleagues, and all the people across the Turks and Caicos Islands. I extend condolences to all who are mourning, especially the family of Mr. Carlos Williams. I present the Ministry of Home Affairs, Religious Affairs, and Transportation's Second Supplementary Estimate for 2025-26. The Ministry seeks a supplementary adjustment of $2.37 million, raising our revised estimate from $15 million to $17.35 million. These are not new programs but targeted top-ups to protect services under pressure due to increased demand. For District Administration, we request $350,000 for street cleaning in North Caicos, South Caicos, Middle Caicos, and Salt Cay, ensuring clean, safe, and healthy communities. For the Home Health Program, we request $455,000 to support elderly, disabled, and special needs residents, ensuring uninterrupted care. We seek $945,000 for welfare benefits to address over 100 pending applications and clear a five-month backlog. An additional $150,000 is requested for the One-Time Assistance Program to support the working poor.

For faith and religious affairs, we request $75,000 for the Faith and Religious Affairs Unit, $50,000 for community donations, and $25,000 to develop a comprehensive religious affairs policy, ensuring transparency and partnership with faith-based organizations. In Citizenship and Naturalization, we propose converting a vacant supervisor post into two data processor positions, improving efficiency and saving costs. For Family and Children's Services, we request $260,000 for foster care services due to increased placements and immediate needs for essentials. These Supplementary Estimates reflect a Ministry that is listening and responding, focused on sustaining essential services and protecting the vulnerable.

I ask all Members for favourable consideration of these allocations. Thank you and good afternoon.

SECOND SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE 2025-26 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS AND TRANSPORTATION

Hon. Shaun David Malcolm:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to you, and good afternoon to my colleagues here in the House and those in the gallery. Mr. Speaker, I want to say good afternoon to all the people across these Turks and Caicos Islands, whom I am always proud to represent in this House from Gibs Key to West Caicos.

I want to register my profound condolences to all those across the Turks and Caicos Islands who are in mourning today, especially the Williams family of Grand Turk on the passing of Mr. Carlos Williams. Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to present the Ministry of Home Affairs, Religious Affairs and Transportation's Second Supplementary Estimate for the 2025-26 Financial Year. The Ministry is seeking a supplementary adjustment of $2.37 million, bringing our revised estimate from $15 million to $17.35 million.

These figures tell a clear story: the needs of our people have grown, demands for essential services have intensified, and this government is responding decisively, responsibly, and with compassion. Let me be clear, Mr. Speaker, these are not new programs. These are targeted, necessary top-ups to protect services already delivering for our people but under pressure due to increased demand. I will take you through each department briefly, starting with District Administration

and street cleaning. The ministry is requesting a combined allocation of $350,000 to support street cleaning services in North Caicos, South Caicos, Middle Caicos, and Salt Cay. These fundings ensure our communities remain clean, safe, and healthy.

In the face of weather-related impacts and increased service demands, street cleaning may not always make headlines, but it directly affects public health, tourism readiness, and everyday quality of life. This government understands that strong communities start with well-maintained environments. The heart of this supplementary lies in protecting our most vulnerable citizens. I am requesting $455,000 to sustain the Home Health Program, which supports elderly residents, persons with disabilities, bedridden individuals, and those with special needs who rely on daily in-home care.

Without this funding, services to existing clients would be at risk, and that is not a risk my government is prepared to take. We are also seeking $945,000 in supplementary funding for welfare benefits. Demand has increased, with over 100 applications currently pending. This funding will clear about five months of backlog, support new beneficiaries, and ensure uninterrupted assistance for those already receiving help.

We are requesting $150,000 to replenish the One-Time Assistance Program, which provides timely support to the working poor, helping families keep their lights on, put food on their tables, and manage unexpected hardship. These programs are about stability, dignity, and preventing crisis before it takes hold. For faith and religious affairs, the ministry is requesting $75,000 for the Faith and Religious Affairs Unit, $50,000 for community donations and programs, and $25,000 to complete the development of a comprehensive religious affairs policy. Faith-based organizations play a critical role in our country through outreach, social support, and nation-building.

This funding ensures transparency, consistency, and meaningful partnership between government and organized religious organizations. Turning to Citizenship and Naturalization, we are seeking approval to repurpose one vacant supervisor post into two data processor positions, resulting in a net increase of $36,118 this year, with savings in future years. It improves turnaround time, reduces bottlenecks, and strengthens record management without expanding the establishment. This is responsible governance.

One of the issues we are fixing is onboarding the input of documents within the ministry so that we can fully control the input and output of our people's documents. For the Department of Family and Children's Services, we are requesting an additional $260,000 to support foster care services. This responds to an increase in children entering care, higher emergency and complex placements, and the immediate need to provide essentials for children at their most vulnerable moments. This is about protecting the children of these islands, fulfilling our statutory duty, and honouring our moral responsibility. In closing, these Supplementary Estimates represent a Ministry that is listening and responding.

As Minister, I am acting. They are targeted, measured, and focused on sustaining essential services while protecting those who need government support the most. My Government remains committed to fiscal discipline, accountability, and effective service delivery. I respectfully ask all Members of this Parliament for favourable consideration of these supplementary allocations.

Thank you. Good afternoon.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Member, for your contribution. The Chair recognizes the Honourable Member for Leeward and Long Bay.

Hon. Akierra Mary Deanne Missick:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to you once again. Good afternoon to our colleagues in the gallery, from Permanent Secretary PPID, Finance, as well as our Parliamentary Draft Council, and anyone listening in via Radio Turks and Caicos livestream, Facebook, and all that jazz. I stand on behalf of the people of Leeward and Long Bay to extend my condolences to the family of Mr. Collis—Mr. C.

Williams. I had an opportunity to extend my condolences personally to his widow, Ms. Maureen, when I saw her on Monday, as I have been in Grand Turk for a few days for legal work and attending court. May the souls of the faithfully departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. This week, I tuned in to the Appropriations Committee for the last two days and want to commend Madam Chair and the committee members for their work getting through 16 departments over two and a half days, diving deep into the supplementary appropriation.

A chorus of themes emerged, especially challenges with recruitment. In 2023, a comprehensive pay and grading review was conducted, but even with significant increases, our remuneration packages are still not competitive enough to attract more talent into the public service. We heard from PPID and their Ministry with Planning about the difficulties in attracting not only Turks and Caicos Islanders but also competing with the region and international market. The cost of living and being in these islands means our packages are not as competitive.

It may be time to review and rightsize the public service, even though that can be a difficult conversation. We need to realistically look at whether all vacancies are actually needed and whether savings can be transferred to supplement salaries for current staff. Only Finance reported having the right complement of staff. As it relates to recruitment of teachers, I experienced as Minister of Education the late last-minute resignation of educators who wait for the August salary before resigning, leaving nothing for TCIG to claw back.

Perhaps we should consider 10-month contracts as a stopgap measure. I lend my full support to the requested increases by

the Ministry of Home Affairs. I was particularly moved by Director Ashley Adams' request and have lobbied on behalf of her department. The Department of Community Support and Engagement, DCSE, is the primary social safety net and should be realistically funded.

Social protection should not create a fear of dependency. Supporting 758 individuals and households in a population of 60,000 is less than 1%. If we cannot take care of 1% of our population who have fallen below the poverty line, all our development is not to be celebrated. A country is judged on how it treats its vulnerable, not its wealthy or able-bodied.

This mechanism is only available to Turks and Caicos Islanders and BOTC persons, so we should plug the gap and assist those who have fallen below the poverty line. There should not be a single person of heritage or indigenous Islander status falling through the cracks. The department is doing its best but needs greater support. I support the current allocation and future budgets, as the demand on this department is rising, especially from working households making applications for support. Food costs, rent, utility costs, and medical expenses are all rising, making it difficult for people to make ends meet.

DCSE is seeing an increase in applications from elderly persons on fixed incomes and individuals managing chronic illnesses and mental health challenges. These trends are not decreasing. DCSE advised that 209 applications are pending enrollment because funding is not available. If this supplementary is passed, those persons will benefit, but what about the next group who may need support? The requirements are onerous, and this is not a slush fund.

Current funding levels are not keeping pace with inflation, and the caseload is growing, especially in the foster care system.

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION AND SOCIAL SUPPORT MEASURES

Hon. Akierra Mary Deanne Missick:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to you once again. Good afternoon to our colleagues in the gallery, from Permanent Secretary PPID, Finance, as well as our Parliamentary Draft Council, and anyone listening in via Radio Turk and Caicos livestream, Facebook, and all that jazz. Mr. Speaker, I stand on behalf of the amazing people of Leeward and Long Bay to extend my condolences to the family of Mr. Collis— Mr. C.

Williams. I had an opportunity to extend my condolences personally to his widow, Ms. Maureen, when I saw her on Monday, as I've been in Grand Turk for a few days for my legal work and attending court here. And Mr. Speaker, may the souls of the faithfully departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity this week, probably because I was between Grand Turk and Provo and driving and had the radio on to actually tune in to the Appropriations Committee for the last 2 days.

And I want to commend Madam Chair and the committee members for the stellar work of getting through 16 different departments over a 2-day, 2-and-a-half-day period and really take an opportunity to dive deep into the supplementary appropriation that had a chorus of themes as a result of it. Some of those themes, Mr. Speaker, presented by just about every department, because this is where they're determining the savings is coming from, is the challenges with recruitment. And I know that in 2023 it was, we did conduct a comprehensive pay and grading review. And Mr. Speaker, it seems that even though there has been significant increases to different titles and different positions in the public service, that increase is still— or those increases are still seemingly not as competitive enough to attract more talent into the public service. We've seen, or we heard from PPID and their Ministry with Planning yesterday, I believe it was, on the difficulties in attracting not only just Turk and Caicos Islanders in that sort of industry, but just the general competitiveness of the region and the international market, as we like to call the North American market, where Turk and Caicos really historically may have been very competitive, but in reviewing, because of the cost of living and the cost of just being in these islands, that it doesn't seem that our remuneration packages are competitive anymore.

It may be time for us, and I'm quite happy as a member of the middle/backbench to say it may be time for a review of rightsizing the public service, because I know that's a dirty word in some areas, but it may be the need that we need to realistically look at whether or not all of the vacancies we claim we need are actually needed. And those that we genuinely do not need, can that actual savings be transferred over to supplement salaries for those that we currently have? It's a big task, and we only did it 2.5 years ago, but seeing that an entire financial year struggling to recruit in every single ministry except for Finance— I think Finance was the only one that said they had the right complement of staff.

And hearing that as a reason from most permanent secretaries over the last 2 days, this is probably something that needs to be looked at in that regard. As it relates to the recruitment of teachers, Mr. Leader of the Opposition, this was an experience that I had as Minister of Education— the late last-minute resignation of educators who tend to wait for that August salary. to hit their account and then the resignation letter is sent after. The difficulty there is because persons wait until they receive the August salary, there's nothing that TCIG can claw back.

So it may be prudent that we look at maybe not offering 12-month contracts, but maybe 10-month contracts and have a person enter into a new contract. That might be a stopgap measure in that regard that the Ministry of Education or the Department of Education can look into. Following on, Mr. Speaker, I want to lend my full support to the requested increases by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

I was particularly moved yesterday when I listened to the request made by Director Ashley Adams, and I, I actually messaged her and said, hey, I'm gonna, I'm gonna lobby on behalf of your department. And given that the minister just eloquently set out the reasons for that request, I want to bolster that support by encouraging in the upcoming financial year that the Department of Community Support and

Engagement, DCSE, which is the Turk and Caicos Islands' primary social safety net, realistically be funded with the allocations needed for them to conduct their work.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want the general public to appreciate that social protection is not leading and should not create a fear of dependency. I understand that it is easy for us who are employed, those who put our shoulder to the wheel, those who pull ourselves up by our bootstraps, to look at those who may have fallen by the wayside and say, well, Their actions are due to their own consequences. But in reality, Mr. Speaker, given that this department is supporting 758 individuals and households in a population of 60,000 people, means it's less than 1%. And so if we cannot take care of 1% of our population who have fallen below the poverty line, then all of this good development, infrastructure, best lives living at the top end is not to be celebrated.

A country is judged on how they treat their vulnerable and not their wealthy, well-adjusted, or able-bodied population. And so Given that this mechanism is only available to Turk and Caicos Islanders and BOTC persons, it is even more reason why we should be able to plug the gap and assist those that have fallen below the poverty line.

There should not be a single person of heritage Islander status, indigenous Islander status, that has fallen through the cracks. There is just not enough of us to allow anyone to fall through the crack. And the department is doing the best that they can, but they do need greater support. And I want to lobby from now, not only in supporting the current allocation in this budget, but the future budget to come in the next few weeks, because the demand on this department is Rising, Mr. Speaker, and it is rising from actual people who are working, working, Mr. Speaker, because food costs are rising, rent is rising, the banks ain't lending, so mortgages are almost impossible to get.

And if you can qualify for a mortgage, the 20% savings you may need as a down payment is definitely going to be a struggle. But we also have to acknowledge that utility costs are rising and medical expenses, as we will hear from— or we've heard from the committee and we'll hear further from the Minister of Health on why they need their increase in this budget, which we also support. But we were moved particularly, Honourable Minister, by Mrs. Adams' presentation and said we would use our limited time in the chamber to bolster that support. So what we have to understand, Mr. Speaker, is that DCSE is seeing an increase in working households making applications for support.

Those are people who are trying to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. Those are persons whose shoulders are to the wheel, but they're just finding it very difficult to make ends meet. We are seeing an increase at DCSE For elderly persons on fixed incomes, individuals managing chronic illnesses and mental health challenges. Mr. Speaker, these trends are not going to decrease as they have continuously increased.

We were advised by DCSE that 209 applications are pending, pending enrollment, meaning that the vetting has already taken place. But because the funding is not there to provide for these applications, they are pending. Now, if colleagues— which I believe colleagues in the chamber will agree to this supplementary and pass it today— those persons will be able to benefit. But what happens to the next 10, 15, or 20 that may find themselves in this position? We were advised by them that the requirements are extremely onerous. and that this isn't a slush fund.

And for that, I will take their word at it. But what we have to really understand, Mr. Speaker, is that the current funding levels are not keeping pace with inflation. The caseload is growing, and the complexity of need, as the minister just advised, especially in the foster care system— And again, Mr. Speaker, we said we lend all of our support to the requests made by the Ministry of Home Affairs, that the complexity of having to place children in, in emergency situations have also increased the cost to this ministry. But it is necessary, Mr. Speaker, because these social safety nets are not an indulgence.

They are instruments of national development, and this government has shown by bringing forth this agreement in their supplementary appropriation, that they are fiscally responsible to plug the holes in these safety nets. Because as I said, Mr. Speaker, our nation is only as strong as our most vulnerable persons, and our economy functions best when our people are housed, when they're fed, they're mentally well, and able to participate in our economy. So I understand where the concept that the there's a dependency risk if we provide social assistance.

No, Mr. Speaker, my position is that the real dependency risk is instability, because if we are unable to assist these households, we are just passing the bills on to the hospital, to the police, and unfortunately child welfare and the foster care system. And so it is in that regard, Mr. Speaker, I lend all of the support that I have to the request from Home Affairs.

Mr. Speaker, I also— because of course it's the amazing people of Leeward and Long Bay who I also get the amazing privilege to represent in this chamber— and so I would just highlight very quickly for them, and I know the Minister of PPID and the Minister of Health will definitely expand on this, but They ain't vote for you all two, they vote for me.

So I gotta tell them what the budget say because the two of them are district MPs as well. So Leeward and Long Bay, as we've been talking for the— since the beginning of this financial year and the passage of the budget, the capital project program of roads redevelopment and resurfacing in our area will see a name change in this budget to ensure that it is further streamlined to identify that our road network, along with the roads in Q-Town and Wheeland, will not fall part of the global road redevelopment program, but is now identified under the development of community roads, Leeward and Long Bay, Q-Town and Wheeland.

And we're looking at a figure of $1.1 million to kickstart the necessary roadworks in our community. We'll also see, Mr. Speaker, for Leeward and Long Bay, a general road redevelopment program along the entire Leeward Highway, which is part of Phase 2. And again, because we have to drive up the highway to get to the amazing constituency of Leeward and Long Bay, our constituents will benefit from that as well.

As you will hear in the Minister of Health's presentation and heard briefly from the Minister of Home Affairs, there is a lot of street cleaning division in this upcoming supplementary appropriation. And so we are looking forward to the passage of this bill for our necessary verge and street cleaning in Leeward and Long Bay to commence.

It is in that respect, Mr. Speaker, that we bid you a pleasant afternoon and lend our support to the supplementary appropriation under review today. Grateful.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Member, for your contribution. The Chair recognizes the Honourable Minister of Health.

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL - HEALTH SECTOR

Hon. Kyle Knowles:

Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to those persons in the gallery. Good afternoon to the wonderful constituents of Wheeland and West Caicos who have again afforded me this opportunity to serve them in this honourable Parliament. Mr. Speaker, a lot has been said, or a lot of information has come forth as it pertains to the Ministry of Health.

And while my presentation is relatively short, I thought it important to contribute because it's necessary to reiterate the importance of healthcare and the demand that it has on us here in the Turks and Caicos. Today, Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to an issue that touches every household in our nation: the rising cost of healthcare. This is not just a line item in our budget. It is a reality for families, for seniors, and for every person who depends on the healthcare system for care and dignity.

Healthcare costs are increasing globally, but we are not immune. Let me be clear: this Government is committed to ensuring that quality healthcare remains accessible and sustainable for all. That means we cannot simply spend more; we must spend smarter. Our approach is twofold. First, we are investing in preventative care. We can catch illnesses early, save lives and reduce costs.

That is why we are strengthening our primary care services and expanding health education across the islands. As the Leader of the Opposition noted, we will provide more information on forthcoming acquisitions and how those facilities will improve our primary healthcare system. Second, we are building capacity at home. Too often we've had to send patients abroad for treatment, which comes at a high cost.

By upgrading our facilities, expanding diagnostic services, and training our people, we will reduce that dependency and keep care closer to home. We are also mindful of the ageing population and the need for specialty services. Our plans for aged care facilities are improved, and the community health programmes are already in motion. These investments are not just about today; they are about securing the future of healthcare for generations to come.

Honourable members, rising costs are a challenge, but also an opportunity to innovate, strengthen our system, and put prevention and efficiency at the heart of healthcare delivery. As a side note, I want to clarify for the Leader of the Opposition that in the 2025-2026 budget process, provisions were made in the contingency fund for the salary increase for the staff of the IHC.

This salary increase was long overdue and was well received, made retroactive from April 1st, 2025. Achieving this milestone brought calm to many who were concerned about whether this would actually come to fruition. Mr. Speaker, in this House, I ask continuously for your support and my colleagues' support to stand with me as we take bold steps to ensure that every Turks and Caicos Islander has access to affordable, high-quality care. Together, we can build a system that works.

As Minister of Health and Human Services, I rise to support this Supplementary Appropriation, which impacts the Ministry of Health and Human Services and is required to address unavoidable financial pressures, protect public health, and sustain essential services during the financial year. This Supplementary Budget is not about overspending. It's about responding responsibly to realities that cannot be fully foreseen at the time of the original estimates. One of our most critical items in the Supplementary Budget relates to the Treatment Abroad Program, which provides life-saving overseas care when treatment is not available locally.

The additional funding is required because high-value, complex medical cases emerged after the budget was approved, prior periods of claims were submitted after the closure of the budget cycle, and several patients required urgent and extended treatment abroad beyond our original projections. These are not just discretionary costs; they are legal, contractual, and moral obligations of the government. When a citizen is fighting for his or her life, we cannot tell them to wait because their illness did not fit neatly in a spreadsheet. At the same time, the Government is strengthening case approval processes, contract management and financial controls under the Health Sector Reform Programme so that the programme remains sustainable, transparent and accountable.

Another major area in the Supplementary is the National Street Cleaning Program, debris removal and maintenance of the Family Islands dump sites. Let me be clear: solid waste management is a public health intervention. When waste is not properly collected and disposed of, we see mosquitoes, rodent breeding, water contamination, fire hazards, increased dengue and other diseases. The Family Islands are particularly vulnerable because of the limited landfill facilities and higher logistic costs. This supplementary funding ensures that streets and drains remain clean, illegal dumping is removed, dump sites remain safe and operational, and environmental health standards are enforced. This work fully aligns with the Health Sector Reform and Environmental

Health Strengthening Agenda.

Protecting the Health System. These requests, alongside the complement funding for emergency medical services, primary healthcare, medicines and laboratory services, disease surveillance, environmental health, mental health and aged care, all together ensure that our health system remains functional, safe and responsive. In conclusion, the Supplementary Budget reflects responsible governance in real time.

Patients continue to receive life-saving treatment. Communities are protected from environmental health risks. Public funds are spent where the need is greatest. Health sector reform continues to strengthen accountability. I again stand here in support of the Supplementary Budget. I would like to thank my colleagues and everyone who was able to come and present on behalf of the Ministry of Health.

Coming before the Appropriations and having to answer some of the hard questions is not always easy. Sometimes the rationale or justification provided may not be understood in the moment, but as we get closer to our annual budget, we will provide greater detail to help provide greater understanding and appreciation for what we are trying to achieve in the Ministry of Health and Human Services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL - EDUCATION SECTOR

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Member, for your contribution. The Chair recognizes the Honourable Minister for Education.

Hon. Rachel Marshall Taylor:

Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon to all those persons listening via RTC or streaming live on Facebook. As we stand at the dawn of a new year, reminded by scripture that God grants us new mercies every morning, I rise today with gratitude, resolve, and hope. First, let me extend greetings to this Honourable House and to the entire Turks and Caicos Islands.

May 2026 be a year of good health, renewed strength, opportunity, and prosperity for every island, every family, and every child. I offer special greetings to the people of Electoral District 9, my home, my community, and my constituency. To the families, teachers, and students, thank you for your trust, resilience, and partnership. I wish you a happy, healthy, safe, and prosperous new year.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the matter before us, the supplementary appropriation bill. The Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture seeks approval for critical manpower and operational adjustments required to ensure the effective and uninterrupted functioning of the ministry. The proposed supplementary appropriations will increase the ministry's overall allocation from $64,417,000 to $64,538,522, representing a net increase of $121,361. The increases in appropriations are distributed as follows: primary education, $76,606; education administration, $21,525; and the Sports Commission, $350,000.

To partially offset these costs, reductions were made in the following accounts: H.J. Robinson High School salaries and allowances, $141,049, due to a lag in recruitment of three graduate teachers up to the end of September. There were persons who declined offers and late resignations at the end of August.

Out of the three, one is in place, the business administration teacher, and the remaining two, industrial arts and modern languages, are now being onboarded. We are just awaiting Maddie Gold. At A. Louise Garland Thomas High School in Providenciales, salary and allowances, $185,722, again due to a lag in recruitment for two graduate teachers up to the end of September.

There were persons who declined offers and late resignation, particularly for mathematics and visual arts. We need to look at what we can do to bridge the gap in terms of teachers resigning at the last minute, which puts us in jeopardy. That being said, the majority of our schools had a full complement of teachers for this academic year. Based on the committee's recommendations, we are currently using Caribbean Jobs for regional recruitment and TeacherWay for international recruitment.

This academic year, we only used Caribbean Jobs as TeacherWay is reviewing their portal. We encourage teachers to apply to do their medical in country. Sometimes when they realize the medical requirements, some refrain from applying, causing delays. We also encourage the PSC board to meet more frequently to prioritize teachers.

I thank the medical department for assisting us with the various medicals. The vice principal post at Mary Robinson on Salt Cay, valued at $66,610, is currently not filled as the school is closed due to the absence of school-age children, but should the need arise, we will reallocate such funding. Let me outline the key posts and initiatives necessitating these supplementary provisions.

We are now able to onboard a music teacher for Primary Zone 1 at Eliza Simons Primary in Grand Turk. Currently, Eliza Simons Primary shares a music teacher with Ona Glinton Primary School, providing limited instructional time. This restricts formal music education to grades 1 to 6, with kindergarten students receiving no structured music instruction. With the onboarding of this additional teacher, our kindergarten classes can now receive music classes.

SECOND SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION 2025-2026 BILL - EDUCATION MINISTRY ALLOCATIONS

Hon. Rachel Marshall Taylor:

Mr. Speaker, the lower primary teacher for Primary Zone 1, Eliza Simons, will address the need for an additional lower primary teacher due to increased student enrollment this year. While a temporary teacher is currently in place, the absence of a permanent appointment places the school at risk of overcrowded classrooms, reduced individualized attention, and compromised learning outcomes during foundational years. We are also making efforts to address challenges with special needs education by providing a special needs teacher for Ona Glinton Primary School. Existing staffing levels are insufficient to meet required support standards, placing the ministry at risk of non-compliance with recommended teacher-student ratios.

The information technology teacher for Zone 2, North Caicos and Middle Caicos, will also be onboarded. North Caicos and Middle Caicos have been requesting a music teacher so they do not have to share with the high school. This additional music teacher will accommodate students at the primary schools on North and Middle Caicos. We are also addressing challenges with truancy officers by regrading the post from grade 4 to grade 5. Truancy officers play a pivotal role in promoting student attendance, supporting at-risk families, and enforcing the education ordinance. I also want to mention the increase in subvention for the Sports Commission.

The supplementary allocation addresses several critical operational and developmental needs, including $40,000 for turf field maintenance equipment for Grand Turk, South Caicos, and Providenciales, $55,000 for scoreboards for Grand Turk Sports Complex and Gustavus Lightbourne Sports Complex, $30,000 for additional bleachers at the new Grand Turk Sports Complex, $203,000 for increased security costs due to more sporting activities, and $20,000 for the Let's Move TCI mobile application. These investments represent targeted improvements that will strengthen national sports infrastructure, improve user experience, and support the Commission's mandate to deliver safe, high-quality facilities for athletes and the wider community.

Hon. Rachel Marshall Taylor:

Mr. Speaker, education is not an optional investment. It is the infrastructure of our nation's future. The line items within this bill requesting additional funding for teachers, classroom support staff, school administrators, and specialized personnel are not merely justified; they are urgent, necessary, and critical to the survival and success of our education system. Let this new year mark not only a change in the calendar but a renewal of our national priorities.

Let it be said that this House began 2026 by strengthening the system that shapes the minds that will build our nation. I therefore stand in full support of this bill. Due to time, I will not address all the other cost implications across various ministries, but they will have a great impact on the people of Electoral District 9 in relation to social service support, health, and other increases. Before I take my seat, I wish to bid condolences to the family of the late Conrad Forbes, a former principal of A.

Louise Garland Thomas High School, who left the institution a few months ago due to illness. He made a valuable contribution to education in the Turks and Caicos Islands. As Minister for Education, on behalf of the ministry and department, we bid condolences to the entire family. May God continue to guide this House, bless our people, and protect our students and educators throughout this year.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SECOND SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION 2025-2026 BILL - CHAIR TRANSITION

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Member. The Chair recognizes the Honourable Minister for PPID.

SECOND SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION 2025-2026 BILL - GENERAL SUPPORT AND CONDOLENCES

Hon. Arlington Alexander Musgrove:

Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, my colleagues in this Honourable Parliament, the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands, and the people in the gallery, especially my PS and the PS of Finance who has been instrumental in this supplementary. I want to send out condolences to my cousin, Mr. C, a Twin Island man from Bottle Creek, North Caicos, Lower Windsor.

They are grieving his loss. This weekend we'll be putting to rest Mrs. Tessa Smith, who was 103 years old. I know her family would be encouraged by a phone call if they cannot attend the funeral. Also, Mr. Johnny Swan, a good friend of mine, passed away a few weeks ago.

I remember him telling me when I was Minister for Immigration, and I tell the new Minister of Immigration, Mr. Johnny Swan always said you must get a gunboat. He insisted every time he saw me. The late Mr. Bill Parker, a Prophecy Church man from Blue Hills, also passed away. I pass condolences to his family.

On a lighter note, I want to congratulate Mr. Michael Sanders, the son of my colleague, who is a speaker at the third Gill outfit at university. I want to congratulate him. Mr. Speaker, I rise to lend my support to the Second Supplementary Appropriation 2025-2026 Bill.

SECOND SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION 2025-2026 BILL - DEBATE

Hon. Arlington Alexander Musgrove:

Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, my colleagues

in this Honourable Parliament, the people of the Turk and Caicos Islands, people in the gallery, especially the PS, my PS, and of course the PS of Finance who has been instrumental in this supplementary. I cannot continue without saying a special afternoon to the good people of Middle and North Caicos. I want to send out condolences to my cousin, Mr. C, a Twin Island man from Bottle Creek, North Caicos, Lower Windsor.

They are grieving his loss as well. This weekend we'll be putting to rest Mrs. Tessa Smith, who was 103 years old. I know her family would be encouraged, if only a phone call, if they cannot attend the funeral. Also, Mr. Johnny Swan, a good friend of mine, passed away a few weeks ago.

I remember him telling me when I was then Minister for Immigration, and I tell the new Minister of Immigration, Mr. Johnny Swan always said you must get a gunboat, and he insisted every time he saw me. Of course, the late Mr. Bill Parker, a Prophecy Church man from Blue Hills, passed away. I pass condolences on to his family. On a lighter note, I want to congratulate Mr. Michael Sanders, the son of my colleague.

He's a speaker at the third Gill outfit, at the university, and he's a guest speaker. I congratulate him. Mr. Speaker, I rise to lend my support to the Second Supplementary Appropriation 2025-2026 Bill. The supplementary is a targeted response to emerging needs. It is necessary to accelerate our national development agenda while maintaining fiscal discipline. This supplementary is not a blank check. It is a reflection of a responsive government, both to the Ministry of Physical Planning and Infrastructure Development as well as the broader benefits to the continued good work of our government. $813,025 in savings has been identified on our recurrent estimate, being reappropriated as a result of delay in recruitment at the end of September 2025.

We continue to struggle in recruiting, whether within our islands or from overseas, and I'm glad the member from Long Bay said something we will try to explore going forward. A further $390,420 under the code 60 055-3100, Department of Physical Planning Development, civil servant salaries, and an additional $422,575 under 60081, also civil servant salaries under the Project Management Department. I want to assure the public this reappropriation will not adversely impact ongoing recruitment.

A number of interviews have already begun for remaining posts and are at various stages of completion. The adjustment before the House under my ministry will positively impact road rehabilitation and upgrade, as well as essential tactical services needed across these islands. Specifically on the Ministry Capital Project, the budget for a project labeled Roads All Island, originally planned across three budget cycles, has been reduced by $4,538,830 to create a new project, Secondary Roads. This allows Industrial Drive, Cooperjack Road, Hospital Road, Oak Avenue, and Lower Byrd Road to receive refurbishing works within this fiscal year.

The scope for these roads does not require consultancy. The remaining funds under PN5846 will be used to conduct consultancy studies, as required under the PFM, for projects of a combined value of more than 10% of annual recurring revenue. This is a three-year project initially budgeted at $50 million. Once all consulting studies are completed, construction work will commence in fiscal year 2026-2027.

Those works are to the Leeward Highway redevelopment and other secondary roads. The adjustments are not new or unplanned, but reflect the practical realities of delivering infrastructure in the current environment. Due to additional funding needed for road and electrification development, the causeway between Middle and North Caicos—always aware of the damages to the causeway since the hurricane, the roadway that links those two islands—the decision has been taken to reduce funding in other areas to facilitate this project, as well as completion of refurbishing of the Gustavus Lightbourne Complex. The original budget for the Spine Road was $500,000, and the supplementary will increase that amount by $900,000 for a total of $1.4 million, while the additional $500,000 to the original budget of $1.2 million for the Gustavus Lightbourne Complex will now be a total of $1.7 million.

The following projects require a name change. Community Roads, which was Leeward and Long Bay, Q-Town and Wheeland, is now changed to Community Roads Providentially. That gives us some leeway on where we want to put the roads in Providentiales. Before, when you itemize and are specific, if certain places are not ready, we cannot move the funds around.

This name change allows us to move these monies and get the member from Long Bay Roads done as well. The past year has represented some unanticipated costs across the ministries, but this government always seeks to practice fiscal stewardship and transparency. That is why we are here today, to update costing and appropriate the necessary funding to ensure clear performance milestones and alignment to the medium-term budgetary framework so that all additional resources are deployed where they will yield the greatest public value.

I support the supplementary, recognizing that a well-planned, well-funded, and well-executed project is the best way to deliver the tangible improvements our citizens expect and deserve. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much. Honourable Member for your contribution. The Chair recognizes the Honourable 7th All Island Member for her contribution.

Hon. Josephine Olivia Conolly:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to give my contribution to the Supplementary Appropriation Ordinance. If you will indulge me, I was unable to attend the first meeting of the House in 2026 due to illness, and I'm still not 100%, and I missed the opportunity to wish all the citizens of the Turk and Caicos Islands a happy and prosperous New Year. So

I want to say Happy New Year to you and your family, Mr. Speaker, to all of my colleagues here in Parliament, and to all my people I represent here in the Turk and Caicos Islands. I also want to align myself with my colleagues in sending condolences to the family of Conrad Forbes, to the family of Deacon Carlos Williams, my Salt Cay family, Flexi Tolbert, and also to Bishop Parker.

May their souls rest in peace and rise in glory. I also want to thank the Appropriations Committee for a job well done, and thank the PS of Finance and her team for making this happen today. Returning to the supplementary, I will be brief because some of my questions were answered. I would like to highlight some of the concerns and questions I have in respect of the bill.

The budget booklet indicates additional expenditure of $27 million, which is itemized in the budget booklet attachments. The biggest single item is the additional $11 million allocated to the Treatment Abroad Program. This brings the total expected expenditure for the year to $56 million. I would like to thank the Minister of Health for answering most of my questions, and he addressed some of the issues pertaining to the treatment abroad.

But I do have some other questions, and I will be submitting those questions for the next Parliament during Question Time. I also note that $350,000 of additional support, bringing the total to $1 million, for increasing the airline subsidy for the Providenciales to North Caicos route. The routes are critical in maintaining accessibility to North Caicos, particularly for residents. I am sure that these residents of North Caicos and the residents of Salt Cay feel it is critical to maintain accessibility to Salt Cay also.

The booklet shows a number of decreases in budget allocation, which reduces the additional request for funds to $27 million. These reductions are not actually reductions in expenditure; they are, as noted numerous times in the budget booklet, due to a lag in recruitment. So this is merely a timing issue.

I also thank the minister for updating us on the roads. Traffic problems in Providenciales are just out of hand, and I'm hoping we can solve this as soon as we can. Thank you, Mr. Minister, for the update. Finally, although $27 million is being discussed as additional expenditure, the net effect on our deficit is only $10 million.

The reason is we have included $17 million of additional revenue. I appreciate that we are here to discuss the appropriations, but an additional $17 million in revenue, which seems to be a one-off receipt, was not budgeted and does not repeat in future years. It is described in the budget booklet as share transfer duty, on page 3.136.

I would like for the Minister to please give us some further information on what share transfer duty means. That is all I have, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much for your time.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Member, for your contribution. The Chair recognizes the Honourable Minister of Public Safety and Utilities.

Hon. Otis Chuck Morris:

Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, Honourable Members. Good afternoon to the wider Turk and Caicos Islands and those listening via social media and Radio Turk and Caicos. I'd like to bring condolence to the family of Mr. Carlos Williams, which I am a part of also, on his passing over the weekend.

My sympathies go out to the rest of the family. I rise today to give my support on the Supplementary Appropriations Bill 2025-26. This bill comes before us at a time when our nation faces pressing and unforeseen economic adjustments, social needs, and urgent national priorities that could not have been fully anticipated during the passage of the main Appropriations Act. A supplementary appropriation is not a sign of poor planning, but a responsible instrument of governance, allowing the country to respond prudently to reality.

Scripture reminds us of the importance of wise planning while also recognizing the limits of human foresight. Proverbs 16:9 tells us, a man's heart devises his way, but the Lord directs his steps. Honourable members, despite our best projections, circumstances change. It is our duty to adjust our steps responsibly, ensuring that public resources are directed where they are most needed and that no critical sector of our nation is left unsupported.

This bill calls upon us to exercise stewardship, for we are custodians, not owners, of the public funds. Also, in Luke chapter 16, verse 10, He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much. We must therefore scrutinize these supplementary appropriations with diligence, ensuring that every allocation is justified, transparent, and aligned with the greater public good.

Funds approved in this House must translate into real impact in the lives of our citizens, improved services, protected livelihoods, and strengthened national resilience. Furthermore, this House must ensure that equity and justice remain at the heart of our decisions. We are reminded that to do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice. As we consider the additional expenditures, let us ensure that they address genuine needs, protect the vulnerable, and promote fairness across all sectors of our country. Finally, I urge this House to approach this bill with a spirit of unity and responsibility.

National development transcends political lines, and the weight of our decisions today will be felt by future generations. As in Ecclesiastes 7:12, for wisdom is a defense, and money is a defense, but the excellence of knowledge is that wisdom gives life to them that have it. Let wisdom guide our approval, oversight, and implementation of this supplementary appropriation bill so that it may truly serve the national interest and honor the trust placed in us by the people.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you, and I give my full support to this bill.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATIONS BILL 2025-26 - SECOND READING

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Member, for your contribution. Are there any further contributions? The Chair recognizes the Honourable Minister for Information Technology and Energy.

Hon. Erwin Jay Saunders:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members of the House, strangers in the gallery, and anyone tuning in via radio and streaming media, my fellow Turks and Caicos Islanders, good afternoon. I rise today in support of the Supplementary Appropriations 2025-2026 Bill 2026, and specifically to address the supplementary allocations for the Ministry of Innovation, Technology and Energy, which would be a net increase of $934,767. Before I get started, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to extend my condolences to all those who have lost loved ones, including the family and loved ones of Mr. C.

Williams. I also acknowledge the Methodist Church, celebrating their 214th Annual Conference of the Bahamas and TCI Circuit here in Grand Turk. I had the pleasure to visit them during the lunch period. Turning my attention to the supplementary budget, these allocations are designed, particularly relating to my Ministry, to strengthen delivery, accelerate modernization, and protect the continuity of public services that our people now expect as standard.

These Supplementary Appropriations are not nice-to-haves. They are practical tools of a serious government used to align resources with the realities on the ground, to respond to urgent operational needs, and to accelerate priority programs that deliver measurable outcomes. In the case of my ministry, this supplementary is about keeping government services running and improving, strengthening resilience and public confidence, and building a future-ready Turks and Caicos Islands. We'll be doing it digitally, institutionally, and economically.

To give a little background, I would like to speak about delivering digital government that works for our citizens. Our Government's agenda is clear: make services simpler, faster, and safer, while reducing friction for residents and businesses. We are moving from paper and queues to clicks and secure digital services that work end-to-end. During this financial year, my Ministry continued expanding the Online Services Portal, and we are now adding e-payments to it. The QuickPay government app, which will enable secure, convenient payments for government residents from anywhere, is currently in beta testing.

A number of persons utilizing it have already paid over $300,000 through the payment app. The marketing campaign around this QuickPay app will kick off this month, and we will go live with it in early February. You will be able to pay all of your government receipts by the Payment App, except for HR, TTE, and telecommunications tax. We have digitized a number of frontline services that the public can already feel.

For example, we've digitized the migrant health certificate portal, which now processes payments and certificates entirely online, and we've already processed 29,000 applications and 1.2 million online payments. The Department of Agriculture shifted from manual workflows to an integrated digital process and has processed over 3,000 import applications since going live early last year. The Planning Department is digitizing and is now in final testing for full go-live early this year.

When people can apply, pay, and track online, we're not just modernizing government, we are also restoring time back to citizens and businesses. As I have said in this Honourable House before, the future of TCIG services is click, not queue. I am going to speak quickly to cybersecurity resilience and modernization with guardrails. As we digitize government, we must harden our defences.

This is not a luxury, it is a necessity. My Ministry has activated a preliminary TCIG Cybersecurity and Transformation Plan, and more than 1,000 civil servants have completed awareness training. This is why the supplementary allocations matter. Cybersecurity is not a one-time purchase; it's a continuing improvement in people, process, tools, and resilience.

Transformation does not happen because we buy software; it happens because we build capability. Through the World Bank and Coursera partnership, the Vancouver Latin American Caribbean Digital Skills for the Future program has already produced real results. Between September and November, the program recorded 4,400 learning hours, over 517 active participants, and 355 courses completed in key areas including project management, business data science, and professional skills. The World Bank gave us a target of 60%, and we achieved 71%.

This is how you build a future-ready public service. You invest in the people who deliver. Let me touch on the National ID. The National ID Program is the cornerstone of our digital public infrastructure. We are establishing the governance, policy, and institutional foundation to deliver three core systems: civil registry, national population register, and identity management. Cabinet has approved the technical working group. The Policy Subcommittee is active, and approvals for the Technical Advisory Committee have been granted pending specialist resourcing.

We are now engaging the World Bank for advisory support in data protection, interoperability, cybersecurity, and program oversight. We are pushing towards an early 2027 delivery window. This program is about trust, security, service access, and modern identity for a modern economy. Touching on energy and utilities, my Ministry remains focused on building a modern, transparent, investor-ready energy sector that reduces reliance on fossil fuels and, most importantly, reduces the cost of living for consumers.

We have made progress on the following: an independent consultant's report on the Renewable Energy Resource Bill has been submitted following consultations, and we are incorporating revisions with the intention of bringing the legislation to Parliament in a few months. My Ministry, through the EUD, has installed over 300 kilowatts of solar power capacity across multiple government schools. Through the Resilient Sustainable Energy Marine Biodiversity Project, my Ministry is helping to deploy solar systems at public health facilities and installing solar streetlights throughout the islands at a value of $1.4 million.

In the Supplementary Appropriations, there is a decrease of $20,000 for the Energy and Utilities Department relating to funding for the independent inquiry connected to the Fortis Pelican TCI rate increase application. We are saving government and public money, but I will speak more to that at a later time. In terms of RTC, our national broadcaster is a vital public service, and under my Ministry's remit, RTC has taken meaningful steps to modernize, diversify, and expand. We have expanded news coverage across Grand Turk, South Caicos, and Salt Cay with the hiring of a new journalist, introduced new programming, strengthened digital presence, rebuilt the website, and studio programming equipment has been procured and is being configured.

We are migrating from purely a radio broadcaster to a full multimedia broadcaster, and the equipment is in the studio and starting to build out, expecting completion by midsummer. This is nation-building work. We're building information, education, public trust, and cultural visibility. Turning to the specific supplementary adjustments for my Ministry, for CGIS, Customer and Government Information Services, there's an increase of $50,000 to support funding for printing equipment and materials at the Grand Turk and Providenciales Office.

CGIS supports the publication and production functions that keep government operating, informed, and compliant. When CGIS is properly equipped, every ministry and statutory body benefits. There is also a decrease of $20,000 for the Energy Utilities Department, as stated, reflecting a decreased tie to the independent inquiry line item, as it is no longer required. The Department of Innovation, Communications and e-Government—what people normally call DETI—has an increase of $654,767 for new data centre equipment for Grand Turk and Providenciales.

Following the cyber incident in 2024, we are building back stronger. This allocation supports continuity of the Government's operations and improves redundancy, so that critical services remain available and the Government's digital backbone becomes more robust and resilient. There is also an increase of $250,000 in professional and consultancy services to facilitate micro-projects and specialist support for my ministries. Transformation requires specialist input and cybersecurity expertise, system integration, enterprise architecture, service design, procurement support, and programme delivery capability. This allocation helps us move at pace, and to do so responsibly.

These allocations are strategic investments that accelerate delivery in four priority areas: national ID and digital public infrastructure; digital government services and e-payments; cybersecurity and resilience; energy, information services, and broadcasting modernization. They are enablers of economic growth, drivers of efficiency, and guardrails of trust. If there is one thing the public expects from modern government, it is this: when they engage with us, it must be simple, fast, and secure. In closing, Winston Churchill once said, to improve is to change.

To be perfect is to change often. This Supplementary Appropriation reflects exactly that principle, making the adjustments required to deliver better services faster and more securely. The Supplementary Appropriations ensure that the Ministry of Innovation, Technology and Energy can continue delivering results responsibly and at pace, so that Turks and Caicos Islands can become not just a consumer of modern systems, but a builder of them.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATIONS 2025-2026 BILL 2026 - DEBATE

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Member, for your contribution. Are there any further contributions? The Chair recognizes the Honourable Member for the Bight.

Hon. Kimbule A. Skippings:

Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Before I begin, let me give condolences to all of the Grieve families across the islands. Honourable Member, you can continue. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this bill mainly because I see ED6 is finally benefiting. Finally, ED6 is benefiting from this, so I have no choice but to support it.

Let me begin by expressing my sincere thanks to the Honourable Minister of PPID for recognizing the needs of Electoral District 6 and ensuring that our community was included in the supplementary budget for roadworks. Minister, on behalf of the people of ED6, I want to say thank you for listening, thank you for responding, and thank you for taking action.

For far too long, many of our residents have had to deal with roads that are in poor condition, roads that affect daily travel, access to homes, businesses, schools, and even emergency services. These road improvements are not just about asphalt, it is about infrastructure, and it is about the safety, dignity, and quality of life for our people. This investment signals progress and shows that ED6 matters. It shows that our concerns are being taken seriously and that our community is not being left behind.

I look forward to working closely with the Minister and the Ministry as these projects move forward, and we will continue

to advocate strongly to ensure that this work is done properly, fairly, and in a way that benefits the people who live there. Once again, thank you for including ED6 in the Supplementary Budget.

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATIONS 2025-2026 BILL 2026 - COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Member, for your contribution. Are there any further contributions? There being no further contributions, I will call on the Honourable Premier to commit the Bill to the Committee of Supply. Thank you.

REFERRAL OF BILL TO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that pursuant to Standing Order 109, the bill be referred to the Committee of Supply.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Pursuant to Standing Order 107, Mr. Speaker, that the bill, along with its estimates of revenue and expenditure, be referred to the Committee of Supply.

SUSPENSION FOR COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Hon. Gordon Burton:

You are correct, Honourable Premier. The bill is already committed. Honourable Members, the bill has been committed already, and so therefore I will suspend this Honourable House and call on the Honourable Deputy Speaker to preside in the Committee of Supply. This Honourable House is hereby suspended.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND TIMELINESS OF GOVERNMENT PROJECTS

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

The Honourable Member and I can come here and say the government didn't do this project or that project, but it doesn't benefit any of us as Turks and Caicos Islanders. We want to see these projects get done, and I know it was an issue even when I was still trying to get these projects moved in a timely manner. So I'm wondering, what can be done?

Do you have any plan to get those project managers on stream?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Minister for PPID.

Hon. Arlington Alexander Musgrove:

Madam Chair, through you to the Leader of the Opposition. Honourable Member, I will look out for your constituency, if only for the good parents you have. Yes, we do have a problem in recruiting project managers. The Deputy Governor's Office has broadened the advertising to more places, and it is a problem.

We're working on a tender for a framework agreement. Hopefully we can tap into the resources we have in Providenciales with the big companies.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Honourable Minister. Are there any further contributions? Madam Chair, the Chair recognizes the member for South Caicos.

ROAD PROJECT FUNDING PRIORITIES

Hon. Tamell Seymour:

Just one follow-up question on the same road in question for the minister. Was this road discontinued for funding purposes or because there are more important roads at this time?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Minister of PPID.

Hon. Arlington Alexander Musgrove:

Madam Chair, through you to the member from South Caicos, we moved that money because at the time we were trying to do some survey works on the road to raise it up. There are a lot of low-lying areas where water comes over, so we are doing survey and technical works to build that road up.

The funding was $1 million, it may go up to about $1.2 million, but I can assure the member that the road will be in the May budget and will commence before November or December this year.

Hon. Tamell Seymour:

Madam Chair?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Go ahead with your question, please, sir.

Hon. Tamell Seymour:

What I'd like to ask for the ministry at this time is there's a spot on this road that is becoming a nuisance to the driving public. Could the ministry cut that little piece out and try to remedy that section so the public can enjoy a smoother ride?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Honourable Member for South Caicos. Honourable Minister.

Hon. Arlington Alexander Musgrove:

Madam Chair, through you to the Member for South Caicos, yes, we will look at that. I am familiar with that piece of road. We do periodic grading there, probably once every year or two. I will look into that and see if we can get some remedial works done.

Thank you, Honourable Member.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY - HEAD OF EXPENDITURE 61

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Are there any further contributions? There being no further contributions, the question is that the amount of $35,182,331.37 be agreed to. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

Clerk:

Head of Expenditure 61, Ministry of Tourism, Agriculture, Fisheries, Heritage, and Environment. $25,775,493.34.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Minister of Tourism.

Hon. Zhavargo Jolly:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the sum of $25,775,493.34 now stand part of the schedule. Can I have a second?

Hon. Kyle Knowles:

Second.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Motion has been moved by the Minister of Tourism, seconded by the Minister of Health, that the amount of $25,775,493.34 stands part of the schedule. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions? There being no further contributions, the question is that the amount of $25,773,493.34 stands part of the schedule. All in favour? Aye.

Those to the contrary? No. The ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY - HEAD OF EXPENDITURE 62

Clerk:

Head of expenditure 62, Ministry of Health and Human Services, $124,985,966.65. That is all in bills.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Minister of Health.

Hon. Kyle Knowles:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the sum of $124,985,966.65 stands part of the schedule. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Motion has been moved by the Honourable Minister of Health and seconded by the Minister of PPID that the amount of $124,985,966.65 stands part of the schedule. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions?

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Yes, ma'am.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

HEALTHCARE STAFF SALARY COMPARISONS

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'll start with what we did this morning with Inter Health Canada. Can the minister say whether in comparison a doctor, nurse, lab staff, and mental health staff make the same, more, or less than those in TCIG and primary healthcare? In comparison, same doctor, JGP, same kind of nurse, same kind of medical technologists, et cetera.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Kyle Knowles:

Thank you for the question, Leader of Opposition. Unfortunately, I would have to provide you with that information at a later date, as I do not have that detailed scope today.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY - NHIP CONTINGENCY WARRANT

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Honourable Minister of Health. I believe you may have a motion as well. Page 4, the long sheet.

Hon. Kyle Knowles:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to move a motion for the retirement of the contingency warrant to address the salary review and increase for the staff of NHIP in the amount of $2.4 million and the hospital. The revised amount is $59,310,690. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Second. The motion has been moved by the Honourable Minister of Health, seconded by the Minister of Innovation, that the amount of $2.4 million be increased from C code 62072 36104 for the retirement of the contingency warrant to address the salary review and increase for the staff of TCI hospitals. All in favor, aye.

Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions?

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

One more.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Leader of the Opposition, go ahead with your question.

NHIP SALARY GRADE REVIEW SURVEY

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Can the Honourable Minister say if he was able to ascertain whether or not TCIG had to pay for the salary grade review survey?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Minister of Health.

Hon. Kyle Knowles:

Thank you. Through the Chair, thank you again for the question. I would have to provide you that information at a later date as I do not have it before us now.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Honourable Minister of Health. Honourable Leader of the Opposition, you have a follow-up question?

PROJECTIONS FOR TREATMENT ABROAD EXPENDITURE

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

The last one for me is on the treatment abroad. We asked a lot about that in committee, but we're wondering what are the projections for the treatment abroad figure in this financial year going forward? They don't have to be exact, but what are we

looking at for treatment abroad, since we came back for two supplementaries to top that up?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Minister of Health.

Hon. Kyle Knowles:

Thank you again, through the Chair. As you know, the cost of healthcare is fluid, and while you would want to have a ballpark figure, we do agree that medical care costs will increase. At this point, we're not able to give you a figure, but we will continue to manage the costs against the volumes, understanding where we are as a nation.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Honourable Minister. Are there any further questions? The Chair recognizes the Member for South Caicos.

SOUTH CAICOS DUMP SITE CLEANUP

Hon. Tamell Seymour:

Madam Chair, through you, my question to the Ministry is about the ongoing nuisance with the public dump site in South Caicos. I saw where there's some money allotted to dump site. Is the dump site in South Caicos a priority, and if it is, when are we going to see some movement in terms of cleanup to make it safe for the community?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Minister of Health.

Hon. Kyle Knowles:

Thank you again. Through the Chair, thank you, Member, for that question. The budget details spoke to the increase or additional funds, and in my contribution, I mentioned that the Family Islands were in great need of assistance in dealing with these matters. We have started the advertisement for two street cleaners, and funding is in the budget for a dump attendant.

Shortly after this process, once funds are available, you will see works beginning at the dump site in South Caicos. There are also legal matters around the dump that we're prioritizing. We hope that before the annual budget, you'll see great traction in that area.

Hon. Tamell Seymour:

Madam Chair, through you.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Member, South Caicos, go ahead.

Hon. Tamell Seymour:

Honourable Minister, thank you for your response. I believe there's an urgent need to remedy the situation at the public dump. I know the legal matters surrounding the property. However, if you're using someone's property, you should keep it clean. The flies, dogs, rodents, and the community lives close to the dump. I would beg the ministry to engage someone before the money reaches, because these things take time. I've been waiting on a parking lot for eight months, so I would oblige you to engage someone urgently.

Hon. Kyle Knowles:

Through the Chair, thank you. There's no need to beg. We do prioritize all of the Family Island dumps, understanding the significant health implications. You can rest assured that if the works haven't already started, they will soon. While the machinery might be small, we understand the risk to public health and safety when these facilities aren't properly kept. The additional funds will help us move quickly to remedy these problems.

Hon. Tamell Seymour:

Through the chair, is it possible I make another recommendation that we change out the environmental officer while we're at it, please?

Hon. Kyle Knowles:

Thank you, member. Your point is duly noted.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY - HEALTH STAFFING AND ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY

Hon. Tamell Seymour:

Thank you. I have another follow-up now that we're off the dump. The increase of staff—does that include Sir Cakes Clinic staff as well for the 40?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

The Honourable Minister of Health, before you respond, I'm going to caution the member from South Caicos about your comment regarding the staff member in South Caicos Environmental Health.

Hon. Kyle Knowles:

Through the Chair, there's currently a post being advertised for the medical records officer. The medical records officer would also assist with a lot of the administrative work as well. So I don't know if you were talking more on the administrative side or the clinical side, but from the administrative side, we do see a need to enhance capacity, which we are doing.

As you know, with healthcare, there's always a need for additional medical support, especially with the growth happening in South Caicos, to ensure adequate manpower. All of these things are currently in progress, and it's just a matter of the interview process to properly identify and place staff.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Honourable Minister of Health. Are there any further contributions? There being no contributions, the question is that the amount of $124,985,966.65 stands part of the schedule. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY - HEAD 63 PARLIAMENT

Clerk:

Head of Expenditure 63, Parliament. $5,060,904.14

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Acting Attorney General.

Deputy Attorney General:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the sum of $5,060,904.14 stand as part of the schedule. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Kyle Knowles:

Second.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Motion has been moved by the Honourable Acting Attorney General and seconded by the Minister of Education that the amount of $5,060,904.14 stands part of the schedule. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions? There being no further contributions—

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Sorry, madam.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

The chair recognizes the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Yes, in discussions today, it was brought up: what are we looking at for the celebrations coming up for the 5th year? We also thought that we probably should have got some things moving from even the supplementary. So if we don't have anything in this one, even before the new financial year, that we can get some things paid early.

So if not in this supplementary, maybe the next one, if there's any, that we look at some monies for Parliament for that.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

And thank you very much, Honourable Member from South Caicos and Member from the Bight for those discussions.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Honourable Leader of the Opposition. Honourable Acting AG.

Deputy Attorney General:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, that recommendation can certainly be taken forward at the policy level.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you. Are there any further contributions? There being no contributions, the question is that the amount of $5,060,904.14 stands part of the schedule. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY - HEAD 64 OFFICE OF THE PREMIER AND PUBLIC POLICY

Clerk:

Head of Expenditure 64. Office of the Premier and Public Policy, $7,418,788.03.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thanks. Madam Chair, I move that the sum of $7,418,788.03 stands part of the schedule. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Minister of Home Affairs, that the amount of $7,418,788.03 stands part of the schedule. All in favour? Aye. Those to the contrary? No. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions?

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Sorry, sorry.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Yes, Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY - HEAD 64 OFFICE OF THE PREMIER AND PUBLIC POLICY - SPECIAL ADVISORS

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Thank you very much. I was trying to find my reference point, Madam Chair, on 3.08-8 inside the budget book. We see the Office of the Premier and Public Policy, Strategic Policy and Planning, $500,000 for the cost of special advisors from January 26th for 3 months. So that is an additional $500,000 to make the total amount $750,000 to pay 3 advisors for 3 months?

Just for clarification for that one, Honourable Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

The additional funding relates to the Code of Conduct in Public Office, which allows the government to hire special advisors. Currently, the cost of such advisors is to be absorbed by the political party in office, not by the public purse. This is unusual in Commonwealth jurisdictions, and I have been communicating with the Integrity Commission, which has greenlighted the ability to hire special advisers paid from the public purse. This provision allows the government to employ special advisers, who are not public servants and cannot issue directives to public servants.

The $500,000 is to allow special advisors to be taken on, mostly relating to policy decisions in specialty areas. For example, payment could relate to my office or the Ministry of Health, such as for ongoing negotiations or transitioning the hospital. The provision covers these situations, and it is new because we've just been able to get it greenlighted. The process isn't completed yet, but a budget is needed in any case.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

For the Chair.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Honourable Premier. The Chair recognizes the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Thank you, Madam Chair. During the constitutional talks, I fully supported and lobbied for elected governments to have the ability to bring on special advisors. Every government throughout the Caribbean has that. Only in Turks and Caicos was it said that political parties need to pay for themselves if they want that, which was unfair.

The Premier answered the second question well. Even though it's placed here, for instance, the Ministry of Health can bring

on a special advisor to deal with NHIP for a period, and that will be funded here, but that person will work with the Ministry of Health. I hope that during discussions with these special advisors, former politicians are not barred. If I leave government and am no longer a politician, any party should be able to bring me in as an advisor concerning sports or health, or if any government wants to bring you on as someone in finance.

Former politicians and former PSs are very much suited to be special advisors who have been there, done that, and seen it all.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

These are political strategy, policy-type advisors, so you are not hired as a public servant. From a good government point of view, you still have to follow the code of conduct and meet certain criteria, but apart from that, once you have the requisite skill, you shouldn't be barred because you had a previous life in politics.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY - HEAD 64 OFFICE OF THE PREMIER AND PUBLIC POLICY

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Honourable Premier. Are there any further questions or contributions? There being no further contributions, the question is the amount of $7,418,788.03 stands part of the schedule. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no. Ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY - HEAD 65 NATIONAL SECURITY SECRETARIAT

Clerk:

Head of Expenditure 65, National Security Secretariat, $12,537,155.03.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Acting AG.

Deputy Attorney General:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the sum of $12,537,155.03 stands part of the schedule. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Erwin Jay Saunders:

Second.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Motion has been moved by the Honourable Acting Attorney General and seconded by the Minister of Innovation that the amount of $12,537,155.03 stands part of the schedule. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions? There being no further contributions, the question is that the amount of $12,537,155.03 stands part of the schedule. All in favor, aye.

Those to the contrary, no. Ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY - HEAD 66 MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND UTILITIES

Clerk:

Head of Expenditure 66, Ministry of Public Safety and Utilities. $17,089,910.82.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Minister of Public Safety. Madam Chair, I move that $17,089,910.82 forms part of the schedule. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Erwin Jay Saunders:

Second.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Motion has been moved by the Minister of Public Safety and seconded by the Minister of Innovation, that the amount of $17,089,910.82 stands part of the schedule. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no. Ayes have it. Are there any contributions?

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Yes.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Chair recognizes the Leader of the Opposition.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY - HEAD 66 MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND UTILITIES - RATE REVIEW

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Thank you very much. Can the Honourable Minister say, the rate review now with Pelican Resign monies being taken away from doing that? What is going on with the rate review? Is that progressing? Has it finished?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

The Deputy Chair recognizes the Minister of Public Safety. Through the Chair, to answer the member's question, that is a question that should be directed to the Minister of Innovation, Technology and Energy. He's dealing with that section. Thank you, Honourable Minister. Are there any further contributions? There being no contributions, the question is that the amount of $17,089,910.82 stands part of the schedule. All in favour, aye. Those to the contrary, no.

The ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY - HEAD 67 NATIONAL LAND SECRETARIAT

Clerk:

Head of Expenditure 67, National Land Secretariat, $5,910,785.88.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Madam Chair, I move that the sum of $5,910,785.88 stands part of the schedule. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

The motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Minister of Public Safety, that the amount of $5,910,785.88 stands part of the schedule. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

The ayes have it. Are there any contributions? There being no contributions, the question is that the amount of $5,910,785.88 stands part of the schedule. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY - HEAD 68 NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE

Clerk:

Head of expenditure 68, National Audit Office, $2,323,858.70.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Acting Attorney General.

Deputy Attorney General:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the sum of $2,323,858.70 stands part of the schedule. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Second. Motion has been moved by the Honourable Acting Attorney General, seconded by the Minister of Innovation. That the amount of $2,323,858.70 stands part of the schedule. All in favor? Those to the contrary? No. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions? There being no contributions, the question is that the amount of $2,323,858.70 stands part of the schedule. All in favor, aye.

Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY - HEAD 69 MINISTRY OF INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY AND ENERGY

Clerk:

Head of expenditure 69, Ministry of Innovation, Technology and Energy, $9,301,056.21.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Minister of Innovation.

Hon. Erwin Jay Saunders:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the sum of $9,301,056.21 now form part of the schedule. Do I have a seconder?

MOTION TO INCLUDE $9,301,056.21 IN THE SCHEDULE

Hon. Shaun David Malcolm:

Second.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Motion has been moved by the Honourable Minister of Innovation, seconded by the Minister of Home Affairs, that the amount of $9,301,056.21 stands part of the schedule. All in favour, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions?

Hon. Erwin Jay Saunders:

Yes, Madam. Chair, I have a contribution.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Chair recognizes the Minister of Innovation.

MOTION TO REALLOCATE $250,000 FROM MICRO PROJECTS TO POLICY PLANNING AND ADMIN SUPPORT

Hon. Erwin Jay Saunders:

It's a net zero contribution. The reason why I'm saying this is because I got the message from the PS, but it hasn't been run by Finance. But it's a motion to move $250,000 from micro projects currently under 6909304305 to policy planning and admin support. That's 69-173-34305. Like I said, it has a net zero effect. It's moving it from micro projects to moving it to policy planning and administration support.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Which page do you want? No, wait, no.

WITHDRAWAL OF MOTION TO REALLOCATE $250,000

Hon. Erwin Jay Saunders:

Okay, okay, okay. I withdraw that, sorry.

MOTION TO INCLUDE $9,301,056.21 IN THE SCHEDULE

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you. Are there any contributions? Yes, Chair recognizes the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

PELICAN/FORTIS RATE REVIEW FUNDS

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Yes, I'll wait on the minister, until he finished taking his, briefings. Just concerning the Pelican previous Fortis rate review, I'm seeing $20,000 is being taken from that. Is that completed, ongoing, or deferred? Or other.

Hon. Erwin Jay Saunders:

Thank you. As I said during my speech, it's no longer needed, but the application is actually Pelican's application, Fortis's application, in the sense that they applied for it. And so they would have to be managing about how that's moving forward. But as of today, I know that it's no longer needed. But we would have to wait for them, because it's their application, to decide what happens with it.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Yes, just a follow-up, Madam Chair, just clarification. So for the benefit of the general public, currently there's no rate review taking place. It depends on whether or not Pelican wants to pursue that avenue?

Hon. Erwin Jay Saunders:

What I could say about it is that it's Pelican's decision. Right now, we removed it because it's no longer necessary. That's money that we had put aside. But like I said, it's Pelican's decision whether it's finished or whether it's ongoing. I would wait to see that Pelican make that decision, make any public announcement around it, depending on the direction where they want to go. But at this point in time, we feel that it's no longer necessary. If it becomes necessary in the future, then we'll try to put it back. But currently, it's no longer necessary.

MOTION TO INCLUDE $9,301,056.21 IN THE SCHEDULE

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Honourable Minister. Are there any further contributions from anyone? Any contributions? Are there any further contributions? There being no contributions, the question is the amount of $9,301,056.21, since part of the schedule. All in favor? Aye. Those to the contrary?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

SCHEDULE TOTALS ANNOUNCEMENT

Clerk:

Total expenditure, $5 million.

PROCEEDINGS ON APPROPRIATION SCHEDULE

Hon. Erwin Jay Saunders:

Someone swiped my book, but okay.

Hon. Tamell Seymour:

You want my book?

Hon. Erwin Jay Saunders:

No, I'll read it. It's the same motion.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Sorry. So the Chair recognizes the Minister of Innovation.

MOTION TO REALLOCATE $250,000 FROM MICRO PROJECTS TO POLICY PLANNING AND ADMIN SUPPORT

Hon. Erwin Jay Saunders:

So this will be a motion to me moving this amount to the schedule, so I want to make an adjustment to that. Having $9,301,056.21 as part of the schedule, I'd like to make one motion to that. It says to move the sum of $250,000 from micro projects, currently under 6909334305, to policy planning and administrative support, which is 6917334305. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Okay, so the motion has been moved by the Honourable Minister of Innovation and seconded by the Honourable Minister of Home Affairs that the amount of $250,000 under policy planning and administrative support be increased. So the final number will be $9,551,056.21. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Any contributions?

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Yes.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Chair recognizes the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

IMPACT OF REALLOCATION ON RTC AND STUDIO UPGRADES

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Thank you very much, Honourable Minister. Since you're taking money from micro projects, how does that impact what you said about RTC and the studios and the upgrades to the studios and the videos and everything? How does that impact TC?

Hon. Erwin Jay Saunders:

I don't usually say this, but good question. It doesn't impact us. As I said before, this gives us more flexibility. We've got the equipment. I've actually seen it with my eyes. We've got all the cameras and everything in there. This will allow us to bring in the consultancy to help us transition from pure radio into TV broadcasting. The expectation is that we will have news 5 days a week from RTC, and we expect to have that by midsummer.

The equipment is in now. We just need to break down the old studio and rebuild it. That's the easy part. We've got all the equipment and everything that we need to do that. This will help us pay for the consultancy to get it all set up.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Just a follow-up, Madam Chair.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

The Leader of the Opposition?

RTC STAFFING INCREASE

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Yes. So will we see the increase in staff coming forward in the next financial year?

Hon. Erwin Jay Saunders:

The short answer is yes, but it may not be permanent staff, it may be consultants depending on the situation. Every increase in staff at the government affects the total number of staff, so some people we may have to bring on as consultants because there's a cap on the number of staff that government can have.

But yes, you will see it, either as permanent staff if we have room, or as consultants if not.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Honourable Minister.

CLARIFICATION ON $250,000 REALLOCATION - ALREADY INCLUDED IN ESTIMATES

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

Thank you, Madam Chair. With the assistance of the Budget Director, we have been looking at the figures, and we seek to help the Honourable Minister for Innovation, Technology and Energy. The figure of $250,000, if you turn to your estimates, page 3.142, you would see that that figure is already captured in the estimates such that the total operating costs shown in S093 of $904,766.70 already includes that figure.

So there's no need to make the change that was being proposed. It's already captured.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

So, so the figure remains at $9,301,000?

Hon. Sharon A. Simons:

Yes, Madam Chair.

MOTION TO INCLUDE $9,301,056.21 IN THE SCHEDULE

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Correct. Are there any further contributions? There being no contributions, the question is that the amount of $9,301,056.21 stands part of the schedule. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

SCHEDULE TOTALS ANNOUNCEMENT

Clerk:

Total expenditure, $580,887,154.31.

MOTION TO INCLUDE $580,887,154.31 IN THE SCHEDULE

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Madam Chair, I move that the sum of $580,887,154.31 stands part of the schedule. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Erwin Jay Saunders:

Second.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier and seconded by the Honourable Minister of Innovation that the amount of $580,887,154.31 stands part of the schedule. All in favour, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions? There being no contributions, the question is, at the amount of $580,887,154.31 stands part of the schedule. All in favor, aye.

Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT FUND TOTAL

Clerk:

Schedule 2, supplementary appropriation 2025-2026, head of expenditure 14, total development fund $49,791,161.24.

MOTION TO INCLUDE $49,791,161.24 IN THE SCHEDULE

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Madam Chair, I move that the sum of $49,791,161.24 stands part of the schedule. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Erwin Jay Saunders:

Second.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

PROCEEDING TO BILL CLAUSES - SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION 2025/2026 BILL 2026

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Innovation, that the amount of $49,791,161.24 stands part of the schedule. All in favour, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it, Madam Clerk. Honourable members, we are now going to pay attention to the clauses of the bill. Madam Clerk.

CLAUSE 1 - SHORT TITLE AND COMMENCEMENT

Clerk:

Clause 1, short title and commencement.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Premier. Motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Minister of Innovation, that Clause 1 stands part of the bill. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no. Ayes have it. Any contributions? Chair recognizes the Honourable Acting Attorney General.

AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 1 - CHANGE YEAR TO 2026

Deputy Attorney General:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I move that the year number 2025, where it appears in the second line after the word Act, be deleted and replaced with 2026, such that it reads Act 2026. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Motion has been moved by the Honourable Acting Attorney General, seconded by the Minister of Education, that in Clause 1, the year 2025 be removed and replaced with 2026. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no. Ayes have it. Are there any contributions? There being no contributions, the question is that Clause 1 stands part of the bill. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no. Ayes have it.

Madam Clerk.

CLAUSE 2 - FURTHER ISSUE OF FUNDS FROM CONSOLIDATED FUND

Clerk:

Clause 2, further issue of funds from consolidated fund variation and reallocation, as authorized.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Premier. Motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Education, that Clause 2 stands part of the bill. All in favour? Aye. Those to the contrary? No. Ayes have it. Are there any contributions? There being no contributions, the question is that Clause 2 stands part of the bill. All in favour? Aye. Those to the contrary, no. Thank you.

The ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

CLAUSE 3 - FURTHER ISSUE OF FUNDS FROM DEVELOPMENT FUND

Clerk:

Clause 3, further issue of funds from development fund authorized.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Premier. Motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Home Affairs, that Clause 3 stands part of the bill. All in favour, aye. Those to the contrary, no.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Ayes have it. Are there any contributions? There being no contributions, the question is that Clause 3 stands part of the bill. All in favour, aye. Those to the contrary, no. Ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

CLAUSE 4 - SUPPORTING SCHEDULES FORM PART OF ACT

Clerk:

Clause 4, Section 5 of supporting schedules to the Estimates of Revenues and Expenditures forms part of Act.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

I move that Clause 4 stands part of the bill. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Shaun David Malcolm:

Second.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Home Affairs, that Clause 4 stands part of the bill. All in favor? Aye. Those to the contrary? Ayes have it. Are there any contributions? There being no further contributions, the question is that Clause 4 stands part of the bill.

All in favor? Aye. Those to the contrary? No. The ayes have it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, honorable members. We are now going to suspend this House until the Speaker arrives to the chair. This committee is hereby now suspended.

HOUSE RESUMES SITTING

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable members, this honourable House now resumes its sitting. Pray be seated.

COMMITTEE REPORTS COMPLETION OF SCRUTINY ON SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION BILL

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Honourable Speaker, the committee has completed its scrutiny on the Supplementary Appropriations 2025-2026, Bill 2026. We have gone through with amendments and now turn this proceedings over to you.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

PROCEEDING TO THIRD READING - SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION 2025/2026 BILL 2026

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Members. I want to thank the Honourable Deputy Speaker for presiding in the Committee of Supply and overseeing the passage of the Supplementary Appropriation 2025/2026, Bill 2026. Honourable Members, we are still on Orders of the Day, and we are now at the 3rd reading of bills. And we'll have the 3rd reading of the Supplementary Appropriation 2025/2026 Bill 2026, to be moved by the Honourable Premier.

THIRD READING MOTION - SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION 2025/2026 BILL 2026

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Bill entitled the Supplementary Appropriation 2025-2026, Bill 2026, be read a 3rd time. Do I have a seconder?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION 2025-2026

BILL - THIRD READING MOTION

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable Members, motion moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Education, that the bill entitled Supplementary Appropriation 2025/2026, Bill 2026, be now read a third time. All in favor say aye. All to the contrary, no.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

The ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

Clerk:

This act may be cited as the Supplementary Appropriation 2025-2026 Act 2026 and comes into operation on the day of publication in the Gazette.

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION 2025-2026 BILL - PASSAGE MOTION

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Madam Clerk. Honourable Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that pursuant to Standing Order 99, the bill entitled the Supplementary Appropriation 2025/2026, Bill 2026, do now pass. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Jamell Rayan Robinson:

Second.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable Members, motion moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Honourable Deputy Premier, that the bill entitled Supplementary Appropriation 2025/2026, Bill 2026, do now pass. All in favour say aye. All to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Honourable Members, the Bill entitled Supplementary Appropriation 2025/2026, Bill 2026, do now pass. Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

CONDOLENCES AND ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've come to the end of the business for the day. The Honourable Member for Kingston and the Islands. I would just like to thank the members for their cooperation in us getting this very important bill passed so that we can implement these changes to the benefit of our people.

Mr. Speaker, if you beg me a minute's indulgence on behalf of those members who haven't had an opportunity to speak, I would like to extend condolences to the family, all of those persons who have passed, but in particular, I would like to send condolences to the family of Carlos Williams, Mr. C.

I have a personal, long-term, both familial and professional relationship with Mr. C, we served together as police officers in the Royal Turk and Caicos Islands Police Force and have been close family, friend, and cousin. And I had the privilege to have visited him in the last couple of weeks. I just want to let his wife Maureen and the children know that we are aligned with their grief and extend deepest sympathy on his passing. And we, as a Parliament, as a country, appreciate the contributions he's made to the country and wish them the very best in this, their hour of bereavement.

And those persons who— I'm sure there are other people who I don't remember or haven't heard of, but the same thing goes for them. With that said, Mr. Speaker, this House stands adjourned sine die.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable Members, this Honourable House now stands adjourned sine die.