First (1st) Sitting of the Second (2nd) Meeting of the Second Session of the Thirteenth (13th) Legislature

THE PARLIAMENT OF TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

23 SEPTEMBER 2026

(Parliament)

Hon. Speaker

Speaker

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PRAYER

OPENING OF THE SITTING

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Good morning, Honourable Members. I now call this first sitting of the second meeting of the second session of the 13th Legislature of the Parliament of the Turks and Caicos Islands. To be held on Wednesday, 23rd September, 2026, at the Hon. N.J.S. Francis Building, Pond Street, Grand Turk, to order. Hon. Members, I now call on our Chaplain, Bishop Coleta Williams III, to pray for this Assembly.

PRAYER

Chaplain:

Habakkuk chapter 2, verse 2 to verse 3. Then the Lord answered me and said, write the vision, make it plain on tablets, that he may run who read it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end of it It will speak and it will not lie. Do it tarry? Wait for it.

It will surely come. It will not tarry. Write the vision, make it plain. These timeless words from Habakkuk 2:2 serve as a foundational blueprint for effective governance. leadership and public service. For government leaders, clarity is not just a communication strategy, it is a sacred responsibility to the people you serve. Leadership in government comes with immense noise, conflicting opinions, systematic complications. In the midst of these challenges, it is easy for a leader's original purpose to become clouded. God's instruction to Habakkuk provides 3 core mandates for today's public servants.

One, document it with purpose. Write the vision. True vision must be anchored in something lasting. For a government leader, this means defining a clear, righteous direction for community, city, and country. It requires moving past temporary political fix. To establish long-term goals that promote justice, welfare, and prosperity. 2, simplify the message. Make it plain.

A vision that no one understands cannot be implemented. Great leaders strip away all the necessary complexities. When policy, law, or community initiative is made plain, it builds public trust, invites collaboration, and ensures transparency. Number 3, inspire direct action. They that may run who read it. The ultimate goal of a clear vision is mobilization. When citizens and government workers can easily grasp the objective, they are empowered to move forward quickly and effectively to achieve it. Government leaders require immense patience As the scripture notes, division is for an appointed time.

True systematic change often takes longer than an election cycle. Leaders are called to stand firm, maintain integrity, and trust the process, knowing that clear and just vision Will eventually come to pass. Let us pray. Gracious God, source of all wisdom and light, I come to you today asking for a clear and inspired vision for our leaders, the ability to see beyond the challenges of today into the promise of tomorrow.

Grant them the vision to look past selfish ambition, replacing fear and hesitation with bold faith and kingdom courage. Help them to listen deeply, make real connection with their people, and communicate shared purpose with plainness. And truth. When the path is unclear, be their compass. When opposition arise, be their strength. Keep their hearts humble, integrity steadfast, and action rooted in service rather than power. May the work of their hands and the direction of their leadership bring hope, healing, lasting fruit to our country. So, Lord, is this Parliament convened to do the business of this people?

Bless our Speaker with the spirit of discernment and clarity as he presides today. Grant to our Premier clear vision, bold faith. Grant to our Leader of the Opposition wisdom and insight And all members of this Parliament, watchful eyes as they debate and legislate. Sound mind and good legal counsel for our Attorney General.

Strength and good stewardship for our Clerk. Bless this Parliament. Bless this country. It is in the name of Jehovah Elohim we pray. And the Parliament say— Amen.

OPENING OF THE SITTING

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Pray be seated. Honourable Premier.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS AND REARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Good morning. Morning, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, colleagues. Good morning to our technical support people in the gallery and other strangers. Good morning. To those listening to this Parliament by radio and other means, good morning Turks and Caicos Islanders wherever you are at home and abroad. And thanks, our Chaplain, for that inspiring short A reminder about why we are here and why it is so important that we have clear vision.

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 130, I move that Standing Order No. 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, 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.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Pursuant to Standing Order 130, I move that Standing Order 44 be suspended to allow Government business to have precedence. Do I have a seconder? I don't need a seconder for that, no. Okay, and then, Mr. Speaker, may I continue to rearrange the order of the Order Paper. Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 49— pursuant to Standing Order 49, I wish to rearrange the business of this Honourable Parliament so that Government business can have precedence over all other business.

In that regard, Mr. Speaker, I move that Item No. 11, First Reading of Bills, be taken as Item No. 4. And item number 17, Orders of the Day, be taken as item number 5.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

IMMIGRATION BILL 2026 - FIRST READING

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Premier. I want to say welcome again to all the Honourable Members who are with us this morning. I also want to welcome the strangers in the gallery that are with us. I want to welcome persons who are listening via Radio Turks and Caicos and also via our social media platforms.

I want to go on record to send out condolences to the family and friends who have lost loved ones since we last met. And I also want to send out congratulatory remarks to persons who are celebrating more pleasant times in their lives. Honourable Members, I will now return to the Order Paper, and we have messages from Her Excellency The Governor. There are none. The First Reading of Bills. And we will now have the First Reading of the Immigration Bill 2026, to be moved by the Honourable Deputy Premier and Minister for Immigration and Border Services.

Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Jamell Rayan Robinson:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, colleagues. Strangers in the gallery. Mr. Speaker, this is a big day. What I hold in my hand— for the camera to see it good— what I hold in my hand is the Immigration Bill 2026. It's a long work in progress, Mr. Speaker. A lot of persons would have contributed to this, and of course when we have the debate, we'll go into further detail. But presently, before I move to— but I'll just say a couple things quickly.

One, I'd like to thank my team who is here with me today for this first reading of this very, very consequential bill, Mr. Speaker. We're going to be moving a lot of things around for the good of the people of this country, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to thank them and all their hard work and their dedication that they've put into this bill over the last several years, because I am picking up the baton and Driving home this relay for the goal, Mr. Speaker? And secondly, the Leader of the Opposition always says if there is something that the government proposes that is good for the people of this country, he will support it.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Yes, sir.

Hon. Jamell Rayan Robinson:

So my challenge to him over these next 3 weeks, take this bill and the accompanying regulations, which we will share with you before the time we debate this, And go through it with a fine-tooth comb and then come back to the people of this country and tell them about all the good that this bill possesses.

And then, in the slight chance that there's improvements that you would want to recommend, please share that with us. So I'm looking forward to hear your response. Next week. So with

that, Mr. Speaker, I move that pursuant to Standing Order 94, the bill entitled Immigration Bill 2026 be read a first time.

Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable members, motion moved by the Honourable Deputy Premier and seconded by the Honourable Minister of PPID, that the bill entitled Immigration Bill 2026 be now read a first time. All in favor say aye. All to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

Clerk:

This act may be cited as the Immigration Act 2026 and shall come into operation on such day as the Governor may appoint by notice published in the Gazette. Different dates may be appointed to bring the Act into operation for different provisions and different purposes.

APOLOGY FOR LATE START

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Madam Clerk. Honourable Members, apologies, but something that I meant to say during my announcement is that I want to apologise for our late start. We had a number of issues this morning that we had to resolve prior to beginning Parliament, and so in the interest that we get it right, we had to delay Parliament this morning.

So I want to give my apologies to the members, to the strangers in the gallery, and to all persons who are listening this morning.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

There were a number of events this morning.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MORTGAGE CORPORATION AMENDMENT BILL 2026 - SECOND READING

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Yes, there were a number of events this morning. Honourable Members, we are now— I'll return to the Order Paper, and we are now at Orders of the Day. We are at the Second Reading of Bills. And we will have the second reading of the Mortgage Corporation Amendment Bill 2026, to be moved by the Honourable Premier and Minister for Finance, Economic Development, Investment and Trade.

Honourable Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, the bill— I move that the bill entitled the Mortgage Corporation Amendment Bill 2026 be now read for a second time. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Arlington Alexander Musgrove:

Second.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable Members, motion moved by the Honourable Premier and seconded by the Honourable Minister for PPID. That the bill entitled Mortgage Corporation Amendment Bill 2026 be now read a second time. All in favour say aye. All to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Hon. Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Mortgage Corporation Bill 2026 was recently passed, but it is necessary to make some amendments so that it is fully aligned with the practice as it relates to statutory bodies. And so I rise today to present the Mortgage Corporation Bill 2026. This Bill seeks to make a number of targeted amendments to the Mortgage Corporation Act of 2026. These amendments are intended to strengthen the governance framework of the Mortgage Corporation, improve alignment between the Corporation and the Government, and to provide greater clarity within the legislation. Mr. Speaker, the establishment of the Mortgage Corporation represents an important step in strengthening access to mortgage financing And supporting the Government's broader housing objectives. The principal Act was passed by this Honourable House on the 1st of June, 2026, and received assent on the 5th of June, 2026.

With that enactment, the Mortgage Corporation was formally established in law. The next step is therefore to put in place the governance and institutional arrangements necessary for the Corporation to begin operating effectively. The bill, therefore, before this House today is part of that implementation process. Mr. Speaker, the amendments before the House are targeted rather than comprehensive, as I said earlier. They do not seek to reopen the policy decisions to establish the Mortgage Corporation. That decision was made through the original legislation Following policy development, consultation, Cabinet consideration, and parliamentary debate. Instead, Mr. Speaker, this Bill seeks to make specific amendments arising from implementation considerations and a further review of the legislation.

The principal amendment concerns the composition of the Board of Directors. And in an effort to make sure that the corporation is strongly arm's length, the composition of the board. Left off positions for ex officio membership. But this bill proposes to amend Section 13 of the Act to provide for a board consisting of no fewer than 7 and no more than 9 members.

The board will comprise a chairperson, a deputy chairperson, 5 other persons, the permanent secretary responsible for finance, or a nominee serving ex officio, and the Attorney General or a nominee serving ex officio. The proposed ex officio members would attend board meetings but would not have voting rights. Just so that Members remember when the bill was passed, it provided for 7 members, but it did not provide for ex officio members, and ex officio members are important on these boards in order to provide technical support and advice.

The distinction is important, Mr. Speaker. The government is seeking to establish a direct institutional connection between the Corporation and the key areas of government expertise and responsibility, while at the same time preserving the Corporation's ability to operate with appropriate independence. Mr. Speaker, why are these 2 positions being proposed? The Mortgage Corporation will operate within a framework that has important financial, legal regulatory and public policy implications. The Permanent Secretary responsible for finance brings direct knowledge of public financial management, government policy, fiscal considerations and the wider financial framework within which the Corporation will operate.

That includes knowledge of the Public Finance Management Act. Mr. Speaker, the Attorney General or nominee provides access to legal and legislative expertise and supports the Board in navigating its statutory responsibilities and obligations. This purpose is therefore not to place the Corporation under day-to-day government direction; rather, the purpose is to create an effective institutional bridge between the corporation and the government.

Mr. Speaker, this is particularly important for a statutory corporation whose mandate has both a commercial and a public interest dimension. The corporation must be able to pursue its statutory objectives while remaining properly connected to the broader policy, legal, and public financial management environment in which it operates. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, the Government recognises the importance of maintaining appropriate arm's-length governance. This is why the Bill expressly provides that these ex officio members will have no right to vote.

Their Role is therefore one of participation, advice, institutional linkage and oversight, rather than control of the Board's decisions. This approach seeks to strike an appropriate balance between government accountability and institutional independence. Mr. Speaker, the Bill also makes targeted amendments to Sections 14 and 19 to clarify references to the relevant regulatory authority. The legislation currently refers to the Commission in provisions concerning matters such as the assessment of Board members. The amendment makes clear that the reference is to the Financial Services Commission.

This is a relatively straightforward drafting amendment, but it is important. Mr. Speaker, the Marcus Corporation will operate within a regulated financial environment And the legislation should be clear as to the identity of the regulatory authority responsible for the relevant statutory functions. Clarity in legislation reduces the risk of ambiguity and supports consistent implementation. Mr. Speaker, the Bill also addresses several matters of legislative alignment and drafting.

Section 110 and 111 of the principal Act are amended to correct and clarify the marginal notes, and Section 110 will be identified by the marginal note Oath of Secrecy, while Section 111 will be identified by the marginal note Confidentiality. Turn to the implementation of the bill. Mr. Speaker, while the Mortgage Corporation Act is now in force, the government's focus must increasingly turn toward implementation. That means putting in place the board, developing the institutional capacity of the corporation, establishing its operating systems, and ensuring that the corporation is positioned to carry out its statutory mandate.

The amendments contained in this Bill support that transition. They provide greater clarity concerning the Board's composition, strengthen institutional links with government, clarify the Role of the Financial Services Commission within relevant provisions, correct legislative references, and establish the statutory oath of secrecy. These are practical measures intended to support a sound start to the Corporation's operations. Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, the Mortgage Corporation represents an important component of the Government's broader efforts to expand access to homeownership and mortgage financing for TC Islanders.

The legislation established the corporation— establishing the corporation has already passed this Honourable House and received assent. The bill before us today does not seek to replace that framework. It seeks to refine it. It seeks to ensure that the governance structure is appropriately connected to government while maintaining the necessary arm's-length character of the Corporation.

It seeks to provide greater legislative clarity. It seeks to strengthen confidentiality and governance arrangements, and it seeks to address practical matters identified during the transition from legislation to implementation. Mr. Speaker, good legislation must provide a strong foundation, but good governance also requires the willingness to review that framework as institutions develop and circumstances change. Just a final FYI before I sit, the Board of Directors of the institution by and large have been nominated and referred to the Financial Services Commission, and the process of vetting those applications or those appointments are underway at the moment.

And as soon as those are finalized, then the board could start its work. With that said, Mr. Speaker, I therefore commend the Mortgage Corporation Amendment Bill 2026 to this Honourable House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Premier, for your presentation on the Mortgage Corporation Amendment Bill 2026. Honourable Members, the floor is now open for debate on this bill. Are there any contributions? Are there any contributions? The Chair recognizes the Honourable Leader of the Opposition for his contribution.

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Yes, thank you very much, Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me just start by saying a pleasant good day to all those throughout the length and breadth of the Turks and Caicos Islands, all those listening by radio, all those listening by the social media platforms, Mr. Speaker.

And also want to associate myself with the words of condolences to all the bereaved families of the Turks and Caicos Islands. I don't have the full list here, so I won't go into the list. At this time, Mr. Speaker, but just know that our thoughts and prayers are with those who we do know, and if there are any others, we certainly will be reaching out to them, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that we are here today as we celebrate our 50 years, Mr. Speaker, and we are all privileged to be here representing the people. And happy about all the activities that has taken place and that will be taking place throughout our islands. But, Mr. Speaker, much more will be said on that at a later time.

But I rise to make my contributions to the Mortgage Cooperation Amendment Bill 2026. Mr. Speaker, it is always good That when things are flawed and you bring it back to correct it, Mr. Speaker. However, Mr. Speaker, I can say that some of these changes that we see here was raised in committee.

We raised these things, some of these same things in committee, and it wasn't addressed then, and we couldn't— wouldn't have to be here if, some of the recommendations that came from members in the committee were adhered to. At that time, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, while it is good that we are finally getting over this hump, Mr. Speaker, it is disappointing that, it's taken so long for us to reach this point.

Mr. Speaker, we have been talking about getting our people into homes for years now, Mr. Speaker. Certainly during my time here back on this side as opposition, We have been discussing this, the need for homes, the need for the mortgage corporation. This has been moving around, around for a number of years, Mr. Speaker. So the disappointing part, even though we are here today, is that it has taken too long and a lot of our people are being left behind, Mr. Speaker.

That is the problem that I see here, and I'm hoping that we can get on with the work, Mr. Speaker. So we have to get on with getting our people into houses. We have to get on with getting the implementation right away, moving over all the stumbling blocks out of the way so that the members, the board members, the staff— get the staff, everything— everybody can start doing their work.

Because I know so much of our people are hurting. So much of our young people are struggling to get loans, financing for first-time homeownership. They want to buy houses. Everyday houses here in the Turks and Caicos are going farther and farther beyond the reach of an average Turks and Caicos Islander who makes about $3,000 to $5,000 a month. Most of the homes are becoming out of the reach for them to afford it. So, Mr. Speaker, it is with urgency that we have to act on this mortgage cooperation.

It is with urgency You know that I will tell the directors, those who are in place, to please get on with the work. Any stumbling blocks, bring it to the House of Assembly. Let's bring it to the Parliament. Let's get this moving, Mr. Speaker. Let's get this moving for our people. We've seen fires happen. We've seen fires and people being displaced. How will those people rebuild? Mr. Speaker, can they afford to go to the banks, the commercial institutions, get the loans, Mr. Speaker? Mr. Speaker, we need to get on with the work.

I am disappointed that we haven't gotten anyone into a home. No one has gotten a loan from this. No one is on their way as yet from the time this has been around, Mr. Speaker. That is the disappointing part. And, Mr. Speaker, some things I want to know also.

Will this mortgage corporation be appearing before the Public Accounts Committee? Will they be coming to the Appropriations Committee, Mr. Speaker? Are they mandated to come? Because we know in the past we had some corporations who thought that they were too big to show up and give an account for the people's money, Mr. Speaker. So I'm hoping that that is clearly defined, that yes, You have to, you are mandated.

If you receive any public funds, you are mandated to come and first in the appropriations to tell the people how you intend to spend it, and next to the Public Accounts Committee to say how you have spent it. Give an account for the people's money afterwards. So I'm hoping that we see them twice, to ask for it, how they will, and how they have.

And the public accounts, Mr. Speaker. So I'm hoping that that is clearly defined. And yes, these amendments are here. They are needed to specifically say who is on the board, what is meant by the commission— means Financial Services Commission. These things are important, but all these were highlighted before, Mr. Speaker. We shouldn't be here at September 2026.

Mr. Speaker, now just trying to move on, and I want to know what is the ETA? Can anybody tell me what is the expected time of arrival for this to be fully implemented? Are we looking at 1 month, 6 months, 1 year? What are we looking at so we can manage our people's expectations?

Many of our people are hoping and waiting for this to be in place. But we as parliamentarians have to be able to manage our people's expectations. Yes, we finished with this bill today, but will it be in place by the end of the year? Will it be in place by the next financial year, beginning of the 2027-28 budget? Mr. Speaker, our people need to know that. Mr. Speaker, so if any clarity can be given on what timelines are we looking at For the implementation, for eventually receiving the first batch

of applications, Mr. Speaker.

That is when I'm going to be in here knocking and celebrating this bill, when I see that the first batch of applications have been received and that the first batch of financing have gone out to our people. That is what I'm waiting to see. So yes, this is good.

We have— this have to be checked off before we reach that point. But it's been too long, Mr. Speaker. Too many of our people have fallen behind, Mr. Speaker. Too many of our people cannot access financing, and too many of our people had hoped that this would have been in place a long time ago.

But as most will say, well, better late than never. Yes, Mr. Speaker, but who are left behind in this being so late? How many families have been left behind with this taking so long to reach this point and having to come back after we finished with it in April— in June, sorry— and having to come back now again, Mr. Speaker, which puts it farther down, Mr. Speaker.

Our people are waiting on this. Let's get with the work. Give our people some timelines. Give them some information on what is going on, Mr. Speaker, and when they can expect To be able to send in their applications. That's what our people really want to know. When will we be able to send in our applications for financing, for a mortgage, to purchase a home, or to build whatever? When will we be able to do that, Mr. Speaker? That is the thing that is important to our people. And I hope by passing this now, there's no need to come back. There's no need to come back and do any more amendments, that this will be the final step and we can now Move on and get our people into the homes which they so deserve.

With that, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. Thank you all the members. I see, Pastor is here. Thank you very much. You have a lot of work ahead of you, and I wish you the best. I wish you and your team the best, and I will be rooting you, cheering for you, that you can get this done and that there will be no stumbling blocks in your way. That you can duty carry out your mandate without any interference or deviations to the plan, so you can be the best you can be for our people.

And we are hoping to see you here in the Public Accounts Committee, Appropriations Committee, smiling, talking big things about how well you have done for the people, our people of the Turks and Caicos Islands, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. Look forward to seeing you in future times here inside the House. Mr. Speaker, with that, I thank you, and I heard my phone ringing, so I'll just quickly run out to take a call.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Leader of the Opposition, for your contribution. The Chair recognizes the Honourable Minister for Home Affairs. Can you put your mic on for me, please?

Hon. Akierra Mary Deanne Missick:

Will do, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, control room, for— they got there before me. Mr. Speaker, good morning to you. Mr. Speaker, morning— afternoon now, actually. Mr. Speaker, so good afternoon to you. Good afternoon to our team from the Parliament, strangers in the gallery, the Mortgage Corporation, Lead, that's also in the gallery, Pastor Dennis Swan. I almost called you by your nickname, Pastor Swan, but since we're in a formal setting, I will remain professional in that regard. Good morning to colleagues of the chamber, and of course, Mr. Speaker, pleasant morning to— well, afternoon to the amazing people of Leeward and Long Bay. Mr. Speaker, I had no intention to speak to the bill because it is So straightforward a 4-year-old can understand it.

But of course, the Leader of the Opposition in one breath wants to support it and then chastise the government for the time it's taken us to get here, and then stir the pot some more and elicit a little more confusion. So I just want to put facts in order, Mr. Speaker.

A statutory body, which the Mortgage Corporation is a creature of statute, that utilizes public funds is always obligated to have the requisite reporting mechanisms as any other statutory body in these islands. They're no different than TCICC, no different than TCIAA in the way that they have been created. How they're funded may differ, but the creation of them still requires them to be reporting on their Funding that they receive from the public purse, whether it's through the Public Accounts Committee, the Excess Expenditure Committee, or the Appropriations Committee. We also confirm, Mr. Speaker, that the Mortgage Corporation funding is secured and is ceded.

And so when the Mortgage Corporation is finally stood up, it will have the funding necessary and would not need to come back to the chamber for another round of funding in their initial phase of their work. What we're doing today, Mr. Speaker, is trying to ensure that as a statutory body, that there are persons that make up this body who are well-versed and trained in the Turks and Caicos Islands government public financial management legislation. The person or persons who are well trained in that legislation, Mr. Speaker, of course, is Permanent Secretary of Finance and the Attorney General, Honorable Attorney General, or their designate. So the bill today is trying to ensure that, A, we expand the board makeup for the mortgage fund, but ensure that 2 senior public officers who are well-versed in public financial management rules of these islands has an opportunity to share that skill and information with the board, help guide them on their decision-making so that they don't fall afoul of the legislation that governs public expenditure.

That's what we're here doing, Mr. Speaker. We are not dragging our feet, as would have been indicated. Yes, this— the original bill that stood up the corporation passed a few weeks ago in June. In July, as the vetting process had commenced— and the vetting process is not quick because the Financial Services Commission has a step-by-step process that they do for persons who sit on financial-based

institutions— and again, that is in Normal corporate governance and in line with international practice and procedures when it comes to financial institutions.

So if one of the private banks decided to change their leaders in their designation, that notice would have to go to the Financial Services Commission as well for vetting to determine that that person that they have now selected is fit and proper to conduct the work of the institution.

This is another mechanism of ensuring that public funds are not only being utilized in the way in which they have been appropriate— appropriated for its use, but that we know who are running these types of institutions, that their hands are clean in every way, shape, or form, and build on the credibility of these institutions. The inclusion of the oath of secrecy is a good measure, Mr. Speaker, because again, this is a statutory body, but it will have personal biographical information and details from potential applicants, and we want to ensure that persons know that the information they are supplying to the institution would be treated in the same confidential manner pursuant to the Confidential Information Ordinance or Act, that the banks and other financial institutions also have to provide that level of protection and confidential framework for that information.

And so the oath of secrecy to hold that information confidential by board members is appropriate and appropriately captured here in the bill and helps to neatly ensure that this institution can withstand the test of time. I know it's easy for others opposite to say it's about time, people are suffering, people have been waiting, but are we forgetting that this is another institution that this administration has developed, built, put in place, and funded. Mr. Speaker, this isn't something we met on a table and picked up and ran with it like the Deputy Premier said. We're not finishing the baton race. This was conceptualized.

It was consulted above and beyond. It was pressure tested. Legislation was drafted. It was redrafted. It was tested again, and we are here in this chamber finalizing to perfect it. But it should not be lost on us either as members of this chamber that legislation is constantly supposed to be reviewed after it is introduced, and that's what we call post-legislative scrutiny. And I'll speak more on that in the ministerial statement later today, Mr. Speaker, because An act is not static. It is living and breathing.

And as amendments need to be made to perfect legislation, to improve the implementation of legislation, it is our obligation to come back to this chamber and do that work. Mr. Speaker, I was in the chamber when we passed this legislation, and I do not see in my notes where the recommendation for the name of commission to include financial services was made in the committee. So, Mr. Speaker, I sometimes— the Leader of the Opposition, in my humblest opinion, Mr. Speaker, wants to stir the pot politically and is unnecessary in certain instances.

That did not happen. It did not happen. Run the tapes back, because if that recommendation was made, it is so reasonable and sensible, Mr. Speaker, that even the drafters would have said, wait a minute, yes, oh gosh, because there's the Integrity Commission, there's the FSC, the Financial Services Commission, let us define commission in the legislation.

They wouldn't just sit back and be like, oh well, we'll just let them trudge along and they'll figure it out eventually. They don't operate like that. These are professionals. And they work hard, and they got to put up with a lot of our back and forth and emails and changing things at the last minute.

And they're here in the chamber today as they were then. They will always advise the administration on how to perfect the legislation in this chamber. So, Mr. Leader of the Opposition, again, you're not here to hear the response to your comments, but in some instances play politics outside the chamber.

It's not necessary to mislead the people from this sacred hall, Mr. Speaker. And last but not least, as it relates to the amendments before us, the Premier has advised that the vetting is already underway for the board members of the FSC, as I touched on. And so we are anticipating that on completion of that work, because there's no benefit and of us pushing and pressuring them to not complete their due diligence in a manner in which they must do so, we will then be able to advise that the board is in place and that recruitment— because you can have a board, but it's an entire institution, so then we have to recruit staff.

So this is a work in progress, but we are a lot further ahead today. Than we have been in a long time. But this was this administration's promise to the people of these islands, that we will create an institution that will be available for you to seek financing from, to enter your home, renovate your home, and upgrade your shelter that you may have presently. But I don't want persons to be misled. This is an institution that will loan money, and in order for the institution to function, you got to pay the money back when you borrow it, Mr. Speaker.

This is not a write-off institution. This is not a gift. So if you are positioning yourself to be in a position to borrow, please ensure you know that in order for the next generation or the people 3 years or 5 years from now who now need to seek funding from the organization.

You got to pay the money back so that the money could keep circulating. You got to pay the interest as well so that the others can then have an opportunity to also tap in. And so it is in that regard, Mr. Speaker, I don't want it to leave this chamber as glossy as the Leader of the Opposition tried to make it sound, that this is the saving grace.

It is another option, probably the best option in my view, for Turks and Caicos Islanders to benefit from funding opportunities for homeownership. And I'm pleased to lend support not only to these amendments but to the actual drafting of the bill when it was done and the building up of this institution. But we're not going to just write checks willy-nilly. There will be policies, there will be procedures in place, and And you will need to qualify.

So let us use this time while the institution is being stood up properly to position ourselves to be able to tap into the funding when the time comes and the institution is stood up properly and ready to open its doors and accept applications. With that

said, Mr. Speaker, good afternoon.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Member, for Thank you for your contribution. Are there any further contributions? Are there any further contributions? Are there any further contributions? There being no further contributions, I'll call on the Honourable Premier to wrap up and to commit the bill to the committee.

MORTGAGE CORPORATION AMENDMENT BILL 2026 - COMMITTEE STAGE

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yeah, Mr. Speaker, I move pursuant to Standing Order 99 that the bill entitled the Mortgage Corporation Amendment, Bill 2026, Mr. Speaker, I move that the bill entitled the Mortgage Corporation Amendment Bill 2026 be referred to a Committee of the Whole. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable Members, the motion moved by the Honourable Premier and seconded by the Honourable Minister for Innovation, Technology and Energy That the Bill entitled Mortgage Corporation Amendment Bill 2026 be now referred to a Committee of the Whole House. All in favour say aye. All to the contrary, no. The ayes have it.

Honourable Members, I will now suspend this Honourable House, and I will call on the Honourable Deputy Speaker to chair the Committee of the Whole House. This Honourable Parliament is hereby suspended.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Members, we are now in the Committee of the Whole with considerations to the Mortgage Corporation Amendment Bill 2026. Madam Clerk.

Clerk:

Clause 1, short title and commencement.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Hon. Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Madam Chair, I move that Clause 1 now stands part of the bill. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Akierra Mary Deanne Missick:

Second.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you. Motion has been moved by the Hon. Premier and seconded by the Hon. Minister for Home Affairs that Clause 1 stands part of the bill. All in favour, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions? Any contributions to Clause 1?

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Madam Chair, you have a copy of the notice? Have it? Okay. So the markups— okay, we're not there yet.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Okay, members, I believe it's been circulated already. Yeah, everyone has a copy?

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Yeah, great.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Are there any contributions to Clause 1? Any contributions? Are there any contributions? There being no contributions, the question is that Clause 1 stands part of the bill. All in favour? Aye. Those to the contrary? No. The ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

Clerk:

Clause 2 interpretation.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Madam Chair, I move that Clause 2 stands part of the bill. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Minister of Education, that Clause 2 stands part of the bill. All in favour? Aye. Those to the contrary? No. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions to Clause 2? Are there any contributions? 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. The ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

Clerk:

Clause 3, Section 13 amended.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Madam Chair, I move that Clause 3 stands part of the bill. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Minister of Education, that Clause 3 stands part of the bill. All in favour? Aye. Those to the contrary? No. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions to Clause 3? Any contributions? Any contributions? The Chair recognizes the Member for The Bight.

Hon. Kimbule A. Skippings:

Good morning. Why must the Permanent Secretary of Finance and the Attorney General or their nominees attend every board meeting if they cannot vote?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Hon. Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thanks for the question, Honourable Member. They are there to provide expert advice to the board. It is not— this is not a— we're not cutting new ground here. This is a situation that exists on most or many of the statutory body boards. Some boards, I believe, they are able to vote on, but this is particularly important because of the nature of the institution. It's really— it's a financial institution that has to be arms-length of the government. While the government has an obligation to ensure that it operates, that the directors have the appropriate advice, particularly as it relates to, say for example, the Public Finance Management Act, which— The Permanent Secretary of Finance or a nominee from the Ministry of Finance, who is the custodian, more or less, of that Act, would be in the best position to advise the Board on— to ensure that they don't find themselves in breach of the Act, and there may be other legislation as well that they could potentially become foul of.

And that's the reason again why the Attorney General or her ex officio— an ex officio member identified by her sits on the board to ensure that they have— they can have the benefit of that advice.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Hon. Premier. Do you have a follow-up question? No? Are there any further contributions? Any contributions?

Hon. Randy Dexter Howell:

I have an intervention.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

The Chair recognizes the Member for Blue Hills.

Hon. Randy Dexter Howell:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the bill does say that the board may consist of no fewer than, no more than 7 and 9. My question is this, and this is 3 questions in one. Is it that the Board may operate with vacancies? Can one or both of those

ex officio positions remain unfilled, or is 9 effectively the intended full composition of the Board?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Hon. Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

So the Board does not— if you look at the composition of the Board, 7 members are the members that are non ex officio. So the Board could operate in the absence of the non-officio members. As it stands at the moment, the law provides for a 7-person board without the ex officio members. This ex officio addition is purely to provide advice, as I said. So that is why the law is saying It can operate on a 7-member— the Board can be 7 or 9 members, but it can't be less than 7 and it can't be more than 9.

Does that answer the question, Honourable Member?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Honourable Premier. Chair recognizes the Member for Blue Hills.

Hon. Randy Dexter Howell:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, I believe I understand the Premier on that one, but the follow-up is this: the bill also provides, or it says, that the Permanent Secretary of Finance and the Attorney General, or their nominee, shall attend all meetings. And it makes me to wonder whether provisions are made involving conflict of interest, privileged legal matters, or situations where the board needs to deliberate independently on a matter involving government itself? What do we do then?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

So, Honourable Member, the persons, the ex officio members, are providing advice based— and not opinion— and that advice has to be based on the law. It can't be based on their opinion, and therefore there's no— they can't advise anything that's based— because they're not advising on opinion, the doctrine of Conflict, in my view, and the AG can speak to this, doesn't apply here, but they also have the right, if they wish to, any other board member, to exclude themselves from any decision in which they An accusation could be made of conflict.

I don't know if I am explaining that correctly, but that is the way I understand it to be.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Hon. Premier. The Chair recognizes the Attorney General.

Hon. Rhondalee M. Braithwaite-Knowles, OBE, KC:

I am grateful, Madam Chair, and to the Hon. Member for his question. Madam Chair, in addition to what the Honourable Premier has indicated, there is also the fact that this same clause does not permit the ex officio members to vote. And so in very similar manner to what occurs here in the Parliament where there is a conflict or perceived conflict of interest Although the Honourable Member may be able to participate in the debate or in the discussion of the matter, the Honourable Member would withdraw for the vote.

In this case, that issue doesn't arise, as the Premier has said, because they are there— those persons are there to provide their expertise, but they are not participating in the decision-making. So in terms of the conflict arising, In the decision that may be taken about a matter that concerns the government.

They are not a part of the decision-making. They are, in fact, facilitating the discussion, an informed discussion, but not the decision. The decision remains within the purview of the Board, and so as framed, that matter, that the issue that you have raised, Honourable Member, is able to be mitigated.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Honourable Attorney General. Are there any further contributions to Clause 3? Are there any contributions? Any contributions? There being no further contributions to Clause 3, the question is that Clause 3 stands part of the bill. All in favour, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Madam Clerk. Clause 4, Section 14, amended.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you, Madam.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Hon. Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I move that Clause 14— sorry, Clause 4 stands part of the bill. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Rachel Marshall Taylor:

Second.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Motion has been moved by the Honorable Premier and seconded by the Minister of Education, that Clause 4 stands part of the bill. All in favour? Aye. Those to the contrary? No. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions to Clause 4? Any contributions? Are there any contributions? There being no contributions, the question is that Clause 4 stands part of the bill.

All in favour? Aye. Those to the contrary? No. The ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

Clerk:

Clause 5, Section 19 amended. Honorable Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Madam Chair, I move that Clause 5 stands part of the bill. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Rachel Marshall Taylor:

Second.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Motion has been moved by the Honorable Premier and seconded by the Minister of Education that Clause 5 stands part of the bill. All in favor? Aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions to Clause 5? Are there any contributions? Any contributions? There being no contributions to Clause 5, the question is that Clause 5 stands part of the bill. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it.

Madam Clerk.

Clerk:

Clause 6. Section 110 amended.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Premier. Motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Education, that Clause 6 stands part of the bill. All in favour? Aye. Those to the contrary? No. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions to Clause 6? Are there any contributions? The Chair recognizes the Member for The Bight.

Hon. Kimbule A. Skippings:

Good afternoon again. Does the oath of secrecy protect legitimate confidential information without preventing whistleblowing, parliamentary scrutiny, or disclosure of wrongdoing?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Sorry, Honourable Member, we haven't reached that section yet—

Hon. Kimbule A. Skippings:

Section 6.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Okay, sorry, go ahead with your question.

Hon. Kimbule A. Skippings:

Does the oath of secrecy protect legitimate confidential information without preventing whistleblowing, parliamentary scrutiny, or disclosure of wrongdoing?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Hon. Premier.

Hon. Kimbule A. Skippings:

Does the oath of secrecy protect legitimate confidential information without preventing whistleblowing, parliamentary scrutiny, or disclosure of wrongdoing?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Could you ask the question again, but ask it a little bit slower?

Hon. Kimbule A. Skippings:

All right. Does the oath of secrecy protect legitimate confidential information without preventing whistleblowing, parliamentary scrutiny, or disclosure of wrongdoing?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Hon. Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

I'm going to have to defer that to the AG.

Hon. Kyle Knowles:

Microphone, sir.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

I'm going to have to defer that to the AG. I don't know that we have whistleblowing legislation, for one, and I believe it does put an onus on directors and functionaries within the board to ensure that confidential information is not disseminated. On the issue of parliamentary privilege or scrutiny? I think in a situation like this, if this is more a matter for the court to decide if there has been a breach of secrecy rather than the Parliament. Do you want to speak to that?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Hon. Premier. The Chair recognizes the Hon. Attorney General.

Hon. Rhondalee M. Braithwaite-Knowles, OBE, KC:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Yes, Madam Chair, that wouldn't— those matters that the Honourable Member would have raised in his question would not be exempt as a result of this, or unavailable remedies as a result of the oath of secrecy. The oath of secrecy does what the Honourable Premier says it does at the beginning when he introduced the bill, and that is it ensures the confidentiality of the information that is before the board and ensures that members understand that that information should not be disclosed without due authority. So where there is parliamentary oversight, which powers derive from the Constitution.

Then those— that's the primary legislation. The primary law is the Constitution, and no Act can override the powers that derive from the Constitution. So parliamentary oversight comes from there in terms of an oversight committee being able to call on any person to appear before it to give— to assist the committee.

Then secondly, in terms of any whistleblower provision that may exist, for example, the whistleblower provisions that exist in the Integrity Commission Act, those provisions again have primacy in terms of no one can say that they have an oath of— taken an oath of secrecy, or they have confidentiality provisions in their respective pieces of legislation, and so they cannot assist, or they're breaching that in terms of whistleblower, because the whistleblower provisions provide protections for that person where there is wrongdoing, where the person is acting in good faith.

And I forget the other— there were 3 areas that the Honourable Member— so though— so for the disclosure of wrongdoing, because under Depending on the type of wrongdoing, this is a public body, and so it is possible for persons within this body to commit offenses of corruption and so on, and again, those provisions that are in the Integrity Commission legislation would apply to this public body in the way that it applies to all public bodies, and so it would not prevent a person from disclosing any wrongdoing or prevent any person in one of those bodies from being able to obtain the relevant information following the correct processes, which processes sometimes lead through a court for an order.

But, but no, this is not— this is really to shield the clients and the organization and maintain the integrity of that organization and Not to— not to shield wrongdoing or prevent parliamentary oversight. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you for that explanation, Honorable Attorney General. Do you have a follow-up? No? Are there any further contributions to Clause 6? Are there any contributions? We'll open it up for amendment. Are there any further contributions to 6? Any contributions? Are there any contributions? There being no contributions, the question is that Clause 6 stands part of the bill. All in favour, aye.

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

Hon. Rhondalee M. Braithwaite-Knowles, OBE, KC:

Madam Chair?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Chair recognizes the Honourable Attorney General.

Hon. Rhondalee M. Braithwaite-Knowles, OBE, KC:

Yes, Madam Chair, I just wanted to draw your attention to the motion to amend which would call for clauses 6 and 7 to be renumbered. And also for a new clause— 2 new clauses to be inserted. So I don't— having concluded with 6, I don't know if you are inclined to deal with that, those amendments, so that there is a need to insert new clauses 6 and 7 based on the motion, the notice of motion to amend.

So there is, in the notice of motion to amend is A and B, and A is, is to be dealt with at this stage, and then B before moving on to the, to the remaining clauses.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

So let's make sure I understand.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Hon. Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

So before we go after 5, we're going to start a new 6?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Yeah, 6 and 7.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Are these 6 and 7?

Hon. Rhondalee M. Braithwaite-Knowles, OBE, KC:

That's 8 and 9. Yeah, 6 and 7, that's 8 and 9.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Yeah. Will this come below here then? After 6?

Hon. Akierra Mary Deanne Missick:

It comes after 6.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Just read it out. Okay, so just read it out. And so which one is close by? It's 5 there. So this becomes— this becomes 8 then, and this becomes 9? Is that what you're saying? So, Madam Chair, we turn to the motion to amend. It is suggesting that there be a renumbering of the clause. So where 6— there's a new 6 and a new 7, and then there's— and the current 6 and 7 become 8 and 9, and where the new 6 is— this is new 6?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Keep it close.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

After clause 5, we're going to insert a new 6, and that new 6— a new 6 and 7, and the current 6 and 7 becomes 8 and 9, and the new 6 and 7 will read section 59. 59 amended. So it says Section 59 of the Principal Act is amended by deleting the words the board and substituting the words the minister on the advice of the board.

And then 8— sorry, 7. The new 7 is an amendment to Section 76 of the Principal Act And that will read A in the marginal note by deleting the word regulations and substituting the word rules.

Hon. Akierra Mary Deanne Missick:

Second the motion, Madam Chair. Okay, so that was A.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

And B, by deleting the word regulations And substituting the

word rules. Okay, yeah, you got it. You got it.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Okay, thank you, Honorable Premier. So the motion has been moved by the Honorable Premier and seconded by the Honorable Minister of Home Affairs that we'll be renumbering a new Clause 6 and 7 as 8 and 9 respectively by inserting after Clause 5 The following clauses to amend Section 59 of the Principal Act is amended by deleting the words the board and substituting the words the minister on the advice of the board.

And Section 76 amended. Section 76 of the Principal Act is amended to read in the marginal note by deleting the word regulations and submitting the word rules And B, by deleting the word regulations and substituting the word rules. All in favor? Aye. Those to the contrary? No. The ayes have it.

Are there any further contributions to Clause 7— sorry, 6? Are there any further contributions? Any contributions? There being no contributions, the question is that Clause 6 stands part of the bill. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

Hon. Rhondalee M. Braithwaite-Knowles, OBE, KC:

Madam Chair.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Chair recognizes the Honourable Attorney General.

Hon. Rhondalee M. Braithwaite-Knowles, OBE, KC:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Having dealt with that old Clause 6, you now need to go back to the new Clause 6, which is set out in In the notice of motion to amend in terms of your instruction to the Clerk.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you. Are there any contributions to the amendments in Clause 6? Are there any contributions? Any contributions? There being no contributions, the question is that Clause 6 sends part of the bill. All in favour? Aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

Clerk:

Clause 7, Section 111, amended.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honorable Premier.

Clerk:

Sorry, clause— Section 7. Clause section 7— clause 7, section 76, amended.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

All right, Honourable Premier. Motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier and seconded by the Honourable Minister of Innovation that Section 7, Clause 7 stands part of the bill. All in favour? Aye. Those to the contrary? No. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions to Clause 7? Any contributions? Are there any contributions? There being no contributions, the question is that Clause 7 stands part of the bill. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no. Ayes have it.

We may have some amendments.

Hon. Rhondalee M. Braithwaite-Knowles, OBE, KC:

So, Madam Chair, what is next would then be to call out the new Clause 8, which is the old Clause 6, but you have already dealt with the substance of that. But you can call it out as the new Clause 8 and then invite the Clerk to move on to the new Clause 9, which is the old Clause 7.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Okay, Madam Clerk.

Clerk:

Clause 7— sorry, Clause 9, Section 1.1 amended.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Section 1.1.1.

Clerk:

Sorry, Clause 7. Sorry, Clause 9, Section 111, amended.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honorable Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I move that Clause 9 now stands part of the bill. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Arlington Alexander Musgrove:

Second.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Motion has been moved by the Honorable Premier and seconded by the Honorable Minister of PPID that Clause 9 stands part of the All in favour? Aye. Those to the contrary? No. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions? Any contributions? Are there any contributions? Chair recognizes the member for Blue Hills.

Hon. Randy Dexter Howell:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I believe the oath in Clause 8 goes a bit further than confidentiality. It prohibits disclosure of— Clause 9, confidentiality, and Clause 8 now. Yep, the oath in Clause 8, the new Clause 8. Which clause is that? Section 110 amended? I know, but what I'm saying is— The order changes. The oath of secrecy in 110. Madam Chair, I'll wait till we reach the schedule and start it.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you. Are there any further contributions to 9, Clause 9? Any contributions? Are there any contributions? There being no contributions, the question is that Clause 9 stands part of the bill. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Chair, I have an amendment to make. If you look at the motion to amend sheet, there is C under— 2.

Hon. Akierra Mary Deanne Missick:

You could just read it out. By inserting—

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Wait, inserting where? Yeah, so after— By inserting after the renumbered clause 9 the following clause: Section 115 amended. Clause 10. Section 115 of the principal Act is repealed and the following instituted: substituted rules. 115— sorry, the Board may make rules under this Act. And D— That's it. Okay. Oh, okay.

Hon. Akierra Mary Deanne Missick:

Second.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier and seconded by the Honourable Minister of Home Affairs that Clause C, by inserting the renumbered Clause 9— by inserting after the renumbered Clause 9 the following clause: Section 115 amended. Section 115 of the principal Act is repealed and the following substituted: Rules 115. The Board may make rules under this Act and— All in favour? Aye. Those to the contrary? No. The ayes have it.

Are there any contributions to this? The Chair recognizes the Member for Madam Member, sorry, the Minister of Home Affairs.

Hon. Akierra Mary Deanne Missick:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, in your motion you included the word and, so my motion is to delete the word and since that was just meant that that was another motion, another thing for amending, so that it's captured. So Madam Chair, I move that on the motion to amend as just read, inserting new clause 10, that the final word and be deleted.

May I have a second?

Hon. Erwin Jay Saunders:

Second.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Motion has been moved by the Minister of Home Affairs and seconded by the Honourable Minister of Innovation that the word and be removed at the end of Section 115. All in favour, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Are there any further contributions? Are there any further contributions? Any contributions? There being no contributions, the question is that Clause 10 stands part of the bill. All in— sorry, the amendments. The amendments and Clause 10 be inserted as part of the bill. All in favour? Aye.

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

Clerk:

Clause 10, Section 115, amended.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Honourable Premier. Motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Education, that Clause 10 stands part of the bill. All in favour? Aye. Those to the contrary? No. The ayes have it. Are there any contributions? Any contributions? Are there any contributions? There being no contributions, the question is that Clause 10 stands part of the bill. All in favour? Aye. Those to the contrary? No. Ayes have it. Honourable Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

A further amendment under Section 10, this D, by renumbering Clause 8 as Clause 11. So this So we're going to number Clause 8 as Clause 11. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Akierra Mary Deanne Missick:

Second.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Motion has been moved by the Honourable Premier and seconded by the Honourable Minister of Home Affairs to amend Clause 10. by renumbering Clause 8. As Clause 11. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Are there any further contributions? Any contributions? Are there any contributions? There being no contributions, the question is—

Hon. Randy Dexter Howell:

Hold on.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

So we do— oh, sorry, I didn't see you. Sorry. Sorry, the Chair recognizes the Member for Blue Hills.

Hon. Randy Dexter Howell:

Thank you, Madam Chair. What I was referring to earlier was the fact that the oath goes further than just customer confidentiality. It prohibits disclosure of opinions, advice, privileged information, business proceedings, etc. And it got me thinking that we need to make a distinction somewhere. We cannot allow Confidentiality to be a shield against accountability. There must be an assurance so that certain questions should be able to be asked by the general public, such as how many mortgage applications have been received, how many have been approved.

How many have been declined? What is the average mortgage value? And so forth. Those are questions that the public will ask, and I don't want confidentiality, the oath of secrecy, to shield that information because that information is about accountability. So where can we insert an assurance so that we have that distinction?

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Honorable Premier.

Hon. Akierra Mary Deanne Missick:

Madam Chair.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

The Chair recognizes the Minister of Home Affairs.

Hon. Akierra Mary Deanne Missick:

Thank you, Madam Chair. While the Premier reviews the question, I just want to put the oath in context with these types of institutions. So there is actual legislation called the Confidentiality ordinance which provides the parameters in which institutions can disclose certain confidential information and the process in which those steps would have to be taken.

The mortgage fund would fall— the mortgage corporation would fall within the realm of that legislation. Now, I

understand the Honourable Member's question as it relates to the operational design of the corporation in terms of how many applicants, how many applications they may have received. That sort of information is more statistical information and not necessarily qualifying for that, that would fall afoul of the confidential information ordinance. I want the member to understand and appreciate that the House or the Parliament will still have its required scrutiny mechanisms and functions, and information that the House is allowed to request from statutory bodies and TCIG will still be able to be requested from the, from the Mortgage Corporation.

What would not be eligible for requests would be Akierra Missick's mortgage application, the amount of the mortgage, and what Akierra Missick needed in order to satisfy the amount that has been granted to her. That sort of information would be captured by the Confidential Information Ordinance. The reason why the oath of secrecy is important is that laypersons will be on the corporation Who are not employees of the corporation. See, bank employees are subject to the confidentiality because it's defined in the legislation.

They are employees. These persons here will be board members as well as the employees. And for the employees, this clause would be even more detailed in the employment contract because they are employees of the corporation. This is providing that extra layer of protection to that confidential information that board members would be privy to.

And in that regard, the oath as drafted, it is, in our view, is fair and meets the threshold that is required, but it doesn't impact the Parliament scrutiny ability in reviewing whether it's the Public Accounts Committee the Administration Committee, the Excess Expenditure Committee, or the Appropriations Committee's ability to obtain the information that is required for them to discharge their duty and parliamentary oversight. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Great, thank you for that. Chair recognizes the Honourable Attorney General.

Hon. Rhondalee M. Braithwaite-Knowles, OBE, KC:

Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, in addition to what the Honourable Minister for Home Affairs has just explained, with which I agree. I also would like to draw to the Honourable Member's attention that this oath of secrecy refers to not agreeing not to disclose any opinion, advice, or privileged information. So the kind of information which the Honourable Member just asked about, which is the statistics about how many applications, etc., have been made.

That does not fall into any of these 3 categories of information that are protected by this oath of secrecy. And so it is very important to it's a good question, and it's important to raise the question because this power is being given to this entity by this Parliament. And so in giving this The parliamentary debate is important to explain the extent of it and to guide the operationalization of the provisions of this Act.

So it is a good question to raise in a public way, as the Honourable Member has done, and for the kinds of explanations as the Honourable Member from Minister for Home Affairs and myself have given on behalf of the House, because Because it informs the intention of the Parliament at the time that this power is being given.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Honourable Attorney-General. Are there any further contributions? Any contributions? Are there any further contributions? There being no contributions, the question is at Clause 11. That's part of the bill. All in favor, aye. Those to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Honorable members, we've reached the end of our scrutiny of the Mortgage Corporation amended Bill 2026, and I will now suspend to allow the Speaker to take the chair. This session is hereby suspended.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable Members, this Honourable Parliament now resumes its sitting. Pray be seated. Honourable Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Jameka L. Williams:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the committee has gone through its considerations for the Morgue Corporation Amendment Bill 2026. With amendments. I now turn this proceedings over to you.

MORTGAGE CORPORATION AMENDMENT BILL 2026 - THIRD READING AND PASSAGE

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Members. I want to thank the Honourable Deputy Speaker for chairing the Committee of the Whole House and to overseeing the passage of the Mortgage Corporation Amendment Bill 2026. Honourable Members, I will now return to the Order Paper, and we are still on Orders of the Day. We are now at the 3rd reading of bills, and we will now have the 3rd reading of the Mortgage Corporation Amendment Bill 2026, to be moved by the Honourable Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Mr. Speaker, I move That pursuant to Standing Order 99, that the Bill entitled Mortgage Corporation Amendment Bill 2026 be read a 3rd time. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Erwin Jay Saunders:

Second.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable Members, motion moved by the Honourable Premier and seconded by the Honourable Minister for Innovation, Technology and Energy that the Bill entitled Mortgage Corporation Amendment Bill 2026, being now read a 3rd time. All in favor say aye. All to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Madam Clerk.

Clerk:

This Act may be cited as the Mortgage Corporation Amendment Act 2026. And shall come into operation on such day as the Governor may appoint by notice published in the Gazette.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Madam Clerk. Hon. Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that pursuant to Standing Order 99, that the bill entitled Mortgage Corporation Amendment Bill 2026 Do now pass. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Rachel Marshall Taylor:

Second.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable Members, motion moved by the Honourable Premier and seconded by the Honourable Minister of Education that the bill entitled Mortgage Corporation Amendment Bill 2026 do now pass. All in favour say aye. All to the contrary, no. The ayes have it. Honourable Members, the bill entitled Mortgage Corporation Amendment Bill 2026 To now pass. Honourable Members, we are still on Orders of the Day, and we now have a motion— you will not come back after lunch? Okay. Honourable Members, we have surpassed the 1 PM hour, and so we will now take our midday break.

This Honourable Parliament is hereby suspended. Until 2:30.

APPOINTMENT TO THE STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable Members, this Honourable Parliament now resumes its sitting. Pray be seated. Honourable Members, prior to our break, we were on orders of the day. And we had the passage of the Mortgage Corporation Amendment Bill 2026. We are still on Orders of the Day, and we will have an appointment to the Standing Orders Committee, and I will call on the Honourable Premier.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's a motion.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Standing Orders Committee. Mr. Speaker, I move that the membership of the Standing Orders Committee As provided for under Standing Order 112, the increase for this session of the Parliament to include the Honourable Attorney-General as a 5th member. Do I have a seconder?

Hon. Edwin Andre Astwood:

Mr. Speaker, I rise to second that motion.

TWO MINUTE SPEECHES BY MEMBERS

TWO MINUTE SPEECHES BY MEMBERS

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much. Honourable Members, motion moved by the Honourable It has been moved by the Premier and seconded by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition that the membership of the Standing Orders Committee, as provided for pursuant to Standing Order 112, be increased for this session of the Parliament to include the Honourable Attorney General as a 5th member. All in favour say aye. All to the contrary, no.

The ayes have it. Thank you very much. Honourable Members, I will now return to the Order Paper, and we are

now at 2-minute speeches. Are there any contributions? Are there any contributions? Are there any contributions? Okay, we can move on.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

No, we're finished with government business.

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

But that is under government business?

Hon. Gordon Burton:

That's coming. That's farther down. Yeah, because we— so it doesn't— ministerial statement is not a part of government business. Yeah, I think it's best that we just follow the order of paper.

PETITIONS

PETITIONS

Hon. Gordon Burton:

There were no 2-minute speeches. Petitions?

STATEMENT BY MINISTERS

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Hon. Gordon Burton:

There are no petitions. Papers? No papers. Government notices? No government notices. Private members' notices? Notices of questions? There were none. Reports from committees? There were none. We are now at statements by ministers, and the first ministerial statement we are going to have is from the Honourable Minister of Home Affairs. You want to go first?

Hon. Gordon Burton:

All right, so we will have the first ministerial statement from the Honourable Minister of PPID.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF PHYSICAL PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Arlington Alexander Musgrove:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank the Minister for Home Affairs who yielded to me. Mr. Speaker, my Honourable Premier, Cabinet colleagues, parliamentary colleagues, parliamentary staff, strangers in the gallery, the beautiful people of the Turks and Caicos Islands, and most especially to my heart, The hardworking, resilient, and loving people of Middle and North Caicos, good afternoon. Mr. Speaker, Psalm 136:1-5 declares, O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercies endureth forever.

O give thanks unto God of gods, for his mercy endureth forever. O give thanks to the Lord of Lords, for His mercies endureth forever. To Him who alone doeth great wonders, for His mercies endureth forever. To Him that by wisdom made the heavens, for His mercies endureth forever.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the Minister of Physical Planning and Infrastructure Development with a thankful heart Because my God has been faithful and will continue to see me and my Government through. I rise to make a Ministerial Statement to this Honourable Parliament on behalf of my Ministry and update the people of our islands on works promised that have been completed, works that are ongoing, and works that are still to come. Mr. Speaker, I do not rise today with a new announcement. Or a new promise.

I rise with an update because, Mr. Speaker, in this Ministry, the work does not pause between sittings of this Parliament. The work continues. Mr. Speaker, I will first start with the Ministry proper. Mr. Speaker, my Permanent Secretary and the Deputy Secretaries, along with the supporting staff, have been hard at work along with the various departments to progress works my Government promised in this Budget.

Mr. Speaker, we have made significant progress in our recruitment programme, having identified a number of candidates to present to the Public Service Commission for ratification, including a new Director of Public Works, Engineers Portfolio Manager, a Surveyor and Estimator, and other supporting roles needed to progress the infrastructure development of our islands. Mr. Speaker, We are fulfilling our ministerial— our Ministry Recruitment Update and want to give a sneak acknowledgement and thanks to the Office of the Deputy Governor and Human Resource Management for their assistance in this regard. Mr. Speaker, my Ministry is also in the final stage of setting up an office operation in North Caicos and currently assessing accommodations for setting up operations in

South Caicos. This, Mr. Speaker, will formally establish and re-establish the Ministry's presence for proper oversight of physical planning, public works, and infrastructure works on those islands to ensure accountability is maintained while also ensuring we provide an avenue for timely facilitation for the public without having to travel to Grand Turk or Providenciales

for a simple transaction. Mr. Speaker, we are now taking the work and operational supervision to the islands, all of them. Mr. Speaker, the Community Enhancement Programme continues to progress work with the funding provided in this Budget and continues to identify and contract works once costed.

Works identified will see the establishment and refurbishment facilities in our communities to give our children something positive to do in their downtimes and take them back to the days we grew up playing safely outside until the streetlights come on. This includes play parks, basketball courts, picnic benches, and bleachers at those facilities. Mr. Speaker, we are taking CEP even further and extending the program to an to centres where communities develop, the schools, and working with principals to establish lunch sheds in all assembly facilities. Now, Mr. Speaker, as Minister, I will take accountability that this programme is not moving as fast as we would want it, but it is moving.

I have and will continue to hold my team to the same account. We are working with the Members of Parliament across the various districts to ensure works that are established are significant enough that when they are completed, communities can quantify the positive impact and can benefit from those monies spent in years to come. Before I leave this topic, Mr. Speaker, I want to speak especially to the people of Grand Turk.

The Ministry is working along with the MP for Grand Turk North and will reach out to the MP for Grand Turk South, as I have already done in the past, as well as the Eighth All-Island Elected Member, to further extend our list of projects to be costed and issued, as it is our goal to have all projects costed, have bids requested and awarded by December of this year. Mr. Speaker, we will enhance our communities and we will do it right. Public Works Department. Mr. Speaker, moving into Public Works and Capital Projects, Mr. Speaker, the Public Works Department remains the cornerstone of maintaining and developing our public infrastructure, and the work there continues on multiple fronts.

Mr. Speaker, capital works continue with roads across Providenciales, Grand Turk, and North Caicos. Roadworks at Oak Street have been completed. Mr. Speaker, completion of this road accomplished the creation of an avenue to help alleviate congestion of traffic in the Grace Bay area, while also providing an additional and much-needed and well-developed emergency access point to the economic hub of our tourist product. Mr. Speaker, we have also completed roadworks in the area of The Bight, including road striping, speed bumps, and solar lighting.

Mr. Speaker, I'll wait for the applause. Mr. Speaker, I thank the member from The Bight for that applause. Mr. Speaker, I pause here to acknowledge the positive— positivity of these works. On Sunday evening, Providenciales was blessed by the good Lord above with heavy and much-needed rain, and my team was anxious, as many would be familiar with the flooding that usually occurs outside the beach's gate. and other parts of the Lower Bight Road.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that because of the installation of several new wells along that road, the flooding is a thing of the past. Mr. Speaker, we are making positive progress on our roads, and, Mr. Speaker, we have done it right. Mr. Speaker, there is more to come for the Lower Bight. We have procured additional solar lights in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and the Royal Turks and Caicos Island Police Force.

We will identify areas in the Lower Bight and other high foot traffic locations to provide additional protection to residents and visitors alike, ensuring sections of road that currently lack lighting receive that infrastructure, thereby supporting safety of life, safety of our tourist product, and in turn securing the bread and butter of the Turks and Caicos Islands. Mr. Speaker, several roadworks remain under active contract, including Cooperjack Drive, Industrial Drive, Old Airport Road, Gibson Close, Smith Close, Cadet Allotment, and Breezy Bay. The designs for these roads have been finalized, and residents will soon enjoy the sight of heavy equipment and the smell of fresh tar in the weeks to come. Mr. Speaker, we are progressing as quickly as we can.

And we ask for continued patience from the public. And, Mr. Speaker, we want to do this work once and we want to do it right. Mr. Speaker, the remainder of our capital works remain on target and in line with the published Annual Procurement Plan, with several tenders currently published for bids and others under review for publication, including the Community Centre for The Bight, and North Caicos, and the remaining lots for the South Caicos Restoration Project. All business cases are complete, and every project either has a published ITT or an ITT under development or review, including the remaining lots for roads across our islands.

Mr. Speaker, my team is working, works are progressing, and we are developing— are delivering in public infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, on to our schools. My government has heard the criticism and read the various press statements made on staff on the state of our schools and the slow delivery of the school maintenance program. Mr. Speaker, we take on those criticisms and are dealing with them head-on.

In my budget address, Mr. Speaker, my ministry acknowledged the challenges with the school maintenance program. That the expenditure vote for this work was underfunded and the program in its current form could not sustain the output and outcomes required. So, Mr. Speaker, as promised, the Maintenance Service Division under the Public Works Department, along with the Ministry of Education, has begun reviewing the process for how we, we delivered maintenance year-round and not just during the summer months.

We have submitted the necessary bids for additional funding, including an overall maintenance programme spanning the next 3 years. We are working with the Department of Education, including our principal, to determine the what, with the relevant technocrats to determine the how, and collaboratively between both ministries to formally establish the who, alongside the development of a digital platform for reporting and monitoring by educators and parents. Mr. Speaker, my Government will deliver on fixing and maintaining our schools, and we will do it right. Mr. Speaker, requests for

proposals are being finalised for the independent material testing laboratory in Grand Turk.

The laboratory means every road, every building, every structure Built with public money will meet a variable standard going forward. That is not a small thing, Mr. Speaker. That is accountability in concrete form. We will deliver this as promised. Physical Planning, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the work of planning our islands responsibly continues well. The Physical Planning Department continues its mandate to ensure our islands are developed in accordance with the National Physical Development Plan. The Department has completed recruitment for all essential positions, and we are now looking at how to expand roles for the additional technical skills needed to maintain the standards set out in the NPP.

Mr. Speaker, challenges remain in policing the development of structures across the islands. As promised, we are procuring additional vehicles for the Physical Planning Department on all islands to help us prevent and stop illegal and irregular construction activities. Mr. Speaker, to date, the Planning Board has met 3 times since April 1st, 2026, considering 229 applications and granting 201 approvals. The Board is set to meet again next week to consider a further 50 or more applications.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to update this Parliament that the beta testing for the digital platform— planning platform is almost complete, with further testing for architects to commence shortly thereafter. This platform will help the Physical Planning Department deliver faster turnaround times, allowing applicants to commence their development in a more timely and efficient manner. Mr. Speaker, we are not simply reacting to development anymore; we are shaping it, and that work, too, continues, and it will be done right. Housing and Community Renewal.

Mr. Speaker, on housing, the work continues for families who need it most. Planning for the programme under the Housing and Community Renewal Department continues, with applications for supplementary funding Now under consideration by the Budget Office to further progress works under Programme 2 for the home improvement. The Department has completed a review of the approximately 300 applications received under the programme, with applicants assessed based on their level of vulnerability. Following this review, the list has been narrowed to 88 eligible applicants, categorized in 3 priority groups.

High priority, medium priority, and low priority. Mr. Speaker, once funding is finalized, contracts for the approved applicants will be executed and work will commence immediately to bring much-needed relief to our residents through the improvement of their homes. Mr. Speaker, the Affordable Housing Initiative continues to take shape, with further development and revision to the housing policy currently underway. This work is being carried out in tandem and collaboration with the Physical Planning Department, the Mortgage Corporation, and the National Land Secretariat.

Mr. Speaker, my Ministry will provide updates as they become available. I would also like to take this opportunity to state that it is my Government's intention to formally break ground on this landmark initiative for our people before the close of this financial year. Mr. Speaker, on to Estates Management. Mr. Speaker, the comprehensive review of the Government Estate, rented and owned properties alike, continues.

My Ministry has made great strides on this review and is now approximately 65% complete. This work includes the negotiation of new leases, the renegotiation of several existing leases, the reconfiguration of certain spaces to centralize Government operations and areas where work coincides in improvement to workplace to ensure the health and safety of our public sovereigns is prioritized and maintained. In the coming months, Mr. Speaker, the Estate Management Department presented an estate strategy to Cabinet to ensure there is a concrete strategy for government estates and to give better direction when acquiring rental and purchasing properties for government operations, how they are set up, And the practical and modern ways in which they are furnished. The Ports Authority— sorry, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have great news. At our ports, the work continues and continues to move faster than some expected. Phase 2, Mr. Speaker, the second berth at the South Dock Port, is well underway and still on schedule to be completed by December. Mr. Speaker, when that berth is done, we will be able to accommodate up to 4 vessels simultaneously, effectively doubling our vessel capacity.

Phases 3 and 4 remain on the programme for subsequent fiscal years. Mr. Speaker, in South Caicos, the new port building is on track to be completed by Christmas and ahead of schedule. For the opening for the Member of Parliament for that area. And the Cedar Park Waterfront, Mr. Speaker, the development is also progressing ahead of schedule.

I will say it plainly, Mr. Speaker, that project is shaping to be far beyond what I and the people of South Caicos expected it to be. We are delivering for South Caicos. Mr. Speaker, Yet North Caicos Bellefield Landing continues to deliver. Of the 3 sub-projects there, the boardwalk, the commercial ramp, and the boat slip, the commercial ramp is completed and the boat slip is completed, with some minor alterations still being finalised.

The boardwalk is expected to be completed ahead of the 5th Annual Cue Days Festival so that the people of the Cue and North Caicos can walk it in celebration of their own community on their own soil. And, Mr. Speaker, I can also report that we are progressing— are in the process of converting or designating Bellefield Landing as an official port of entry. That is not a small administrative step, Mr. Speaker. That is North Caicos taking its rightful place as a gateway in its own right, and not merely a destination reached through another island's door. The port in North Caicos will be world-class, Mr. Speaker.

We are delivering it and we will continue to do it right. Mr. Speaker, the Airport Authority. Mr. Speaker, at our airports, the work continues across all 6 islands anchored in national aviation infrastructure. Development Program, a program valued at more than $500 million to be delivered by Turks and Caicos Islands Airport Authority as one coordinated plan for resilient national airport network from Providenciales to Salt

Cay.

Mr. Speaker, that program is moving from planning into delivery. At Howard Hamilton International Airport, architects and engineers were appointed in July for Terminal B, an interim passenger facility that will bring immediate relief. It moves border clearance into a larger temporary space and frees the existing terminal to handle more departures, with construction delivery targets over the next 18 months. Also at Providenciales, Mr. Speaker, the business case for the The full redevelopment is being finalised for approval, and the draft of the proposed Site Master Plan was presented to the National Steering Committee just last week.

Mr. Speaker, that redevelopment will deliver a new passenger terminal sized for approximately 2.5 to 3 million passengers a year, alongside a parallel taxiway. so that our main gateway keeps pace with the hotel investment and visitor demand now coming to our shores. Mr. Speaker, invitations to tender for the National Radar Project and for the A&E works on the parallel taxiway in Providenciales and the runway in North Caicos are due to be released imminently by the Procurement Department. Across the wider network, Mr. Speaker, design work on the Clifford Gardner International— Clifford Gardner Airport redevelopment in North Caicos is well advanced, with procurement of the construction works expected in the first quarter of the 27/28 financial year. The Authority is also carrying out safety and risk assessment work on the runway at the JAGS McCartney International Airport in Grand Turk, while works at the Norman B. Saunders International Airport in South Caicos Mr. Speaker, the Authority is also preparing a responsible, well-governed financing strategy, which will be brought forward through the proper approvals of the Board, Cabinet, and our partners in the UK.

A dedicated programme website will soon keep the public informed at every stage. Mr. Speaker, this is a national vision for aviation and a long-term commitment to our islands. I look forward to keeping this Parliament updated as each project moves forward. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I could stand in this Parliament and give a speech about vision alone, but vision without an account of delivery is just talk, and this Ministry does not deal Every department I just named, every statutory body under this Ministry watch, has work in motion right now, today.

Whether or not this Parliament is in session, the team is working hard and will work alongside them to work harder. Mr. Speaker, my Ministry will also enhance its communication to and engage with local communities to ensure we do not have to wait for a parliamentary sitting to receive updates. Mr. Speaker, as Minister responsible for the Department of Disaster and Emergency Management, I want to remind residents that although we have thus far been blessed with a hurricane season of very low activity, the season is not yet over.

Residents, business owners, and those who frequent our islands are reminded to remain vigilant and to ensure they are prepared should those circumstances change. Mr. Speaker, before I take my seat, let me leave this Parliament with one more thought. Some people plant a garden and stand behind it and admire it. Mr. Speaker, this Government plants the garden, waters it, weeds it, and is already tilling the soil for the next batch of seed before the existing plants even bloom. So don't blink too long on any one island or initiative of this Government.

Mr. Speaker, because by the time you look back, we have moved from Provo to Grand Turk to Salt Cay to South Caicos to my own Twin Islands and back again, building, building, building these beautiful-by-nature Turks and Caicos Islands. So, Mr. Speaker, I see the leader of the opposition laughing.

It may be that the critics on the other side are only using the— only used to cutting ribbons on the— on things the Progressive National Party has built. But this good government, this good government continues to progress on our communities, cut through red tape, knock down excuses, and yes, every now and then, and sooner than you think, cuts a ribbon too. Because, Mr. Speaker, the work continues directly and forever. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

May God continue to bless and shine his love and mercy on the beautiful by nature Turks and Caicos Islands.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS

Hon. Gordon Burton:

I want to thank the Honourable Minister of PPID for his ministerial statement. The Chair now recognizes the Honourable Minister of Home Affairs for her ministerial statement.

Hon. Akierra Mary Deanne Missick:

Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Afternoon, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to provide this Honourable House and through it the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands with an update on several matters under the remit of the Ministry of Home Affairs, and of course send the warmest greetings possible to the amazing people of Leeward and Long Bay. Mr. Speaker, there is much happening across the ministry, some of it visible, Some of it takes place quietly behind the scenes, but all of it is focused on improving the systems upon which our residents, citizens, and businesses depend.

So, Mr. Speaker, we'll start with some medium news and an update from the last, but the session before we broke or prorogued for the August recess. About passports. Mr. Speaker, as advised the Honourable House in a previous sitting, the Department of Citizenship continues its concerted effort to address the backlog of passport applications. I am pleased to report, Mr. Speaker, that progress continues. Mr. Speaker, it's painstaking work.

I wish I could tell you it was easy, and I wish I could tell you that the team feel that they are being appreciated and getting it done. But that is not always the case because you're dealing with people and people have emotions, and some people think

that it's intentionally being done, that their passports are being delayed. But that is not the case, Mr. Speaker, because I want to confirm that backlogs are not resolved by speeches.

They're resolved one file, one application One person and one workday at a time. So I therefore, Mr. Speaker, place my sincere appreciation to our Head of Secretariat in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ms. Sonara John, who has ably agreed to lead on the passport backlog project, and she chairs the special passport team within the Department of Citizenship. When I arrived in Grand Turk yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I was advised there are just 2 boxes left for them to go through, one here in Grand Turk, one in Providenciales. And so we are aiming to have that backlog at least cleared by the end of the first week of October, if necessary an extra week depending on if there are any unforeseen delays, and then we could draw a line under the passport backlog and move forward in other areas.

Mr. Speaker, that is definitely a significant task, and I want to thank Ms. John and the wider special passport team who have literally only been focused on progressing through the backlog and approving the applications to place on the system so that the UK can move ahead with printing them.

Once this passport exercise is completed, our attention will move on to the next Outstanding area, Mr. Speaker, specifically the backlog in naturalization and registration applications. Mr. Speaker, our objective is straightforward: deal with the backlog, restore reasonable processing times, and keep the department moving. Leaving Citizenship, Mr. Speaker, we move on to the DMV and Transportation. The Department of Motor Vehicles continues its work, including the ongoing audit of the public transportation sector.

The ministry is continuing its review of the transportation fares— so that's your taxi fares, your bus fares, or any sort of fares charged by a public service operator— and the wider Road Traffic Act, with the intention of concluding the work by the end of this year for any holistic amendments that need to be made in order to bring the Act in line with our current system of operations.

And/or whether there will be an increase in the rates that can be charged for public service operators operating in that industry. But, Mr. Speaker, while we speak of transportation, I want to make a direct appeal to motorists. Please pay attention to the road changes and the traffic rules being implemented by the Royal Turks and Caicos Islands Police Force. Yesterday, on arriving into Grand Turk, Mr. Speaker, I received a WhatsApp message from a father who was in the car with his son who was driving. I think it's a younger driver, Mr. Speaker, who for some reason saw the orange barricades but didn't think that the orange barricades applied to them and that they should have followed the direction in which the orange barricades were going and received a ticket and wanted to know what I could do as Minister to fix that. And my advice is, if you believe the ticket was issued in error, Then go to court and defend your ticket.

But if it was issued because you went in the wrong direction after being advised by Royal Turks and Caicos Islands Police Force of the measure they want you to go in, then you're in breach of the road rules. So I want to take this time to encourage motorists to respect and follow the road rules.

The DMV does not enforce the legislation. We don't have enforcement powers in that regard. That rests with our partner, the Royal Turks and Caicos Islands Police Force. So as the DMV, we cannot withdraw the tickets that they have issued you. Only the court can, or if you pay the fee to the Treasury, then the ticket is thereby discharged. So we appreciate, Mr. Speaker, that change to a familiar road system can sometimes feel inconvenient, You leave home knowing exactly where you intend to turn, only to discover that someone else has decided otherwise.

Thank goodness the barricades are bright and orange and they can't be missed, Mr. Speaker. But these traffic measures are intended to improve the flow of traffic, particularly in Providenciales. And I'll say it very plainly, on the heels of the Minister of Physical Planning and Infrastructure Development, Roads do not fall from the sky, Mr. Speaker. They require planning, design, engineering, financing, execution, testing, and eventually opening.

If, if it was easy to just drop blacktop anywhere, Mr. Speaker, successive governments would have done so because that is what some consider a low-hanging fruit. But having had the opportunity to serve in PPID, I know the extensive amount of work required in order to ensure that a road that is being added to the network is designed properly, engineered properly, and can withstand the test of time. So as PPID continues to work on the wider design and concept necessary to expand the road network in Providenciales and across the islands, until those larger interventions arrive, Mr. Speaker, we must all work together to make the best and safest use of the network we have.

On to status cards, Mr. Speaker. We had a press release come out, I believe it came out this morning, so I want to address that. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we are continuously— we are still experiencing delays while further work is being undertaken on the migration software and printer configuration for the TC status cards. We had confirmation from the DICE department in the Ministry of Innovation no later than yesterday on arrival into Grand Turk that they are almost there with the coding and configuration, and we are hopeful that within the next 2 to 3 weeks we will be able to make a notice advising the general public that status card printing is able to resume. Mr. Speaker, I understand the frustration this causes our residents. These documents Thank you.

These certificates matter to people. They identify who we are. They open up perks that only Islanders are eligible to receive. And so I understand and appreciate that the delay has practical consequences. However, we want the public to continue partnering with the Ministry of Home Affairs and the department because we will formally advise you when we are processing new And amended status card applications.

We will let you know when that is going to happen. So I make this particular appeal, Mr. Speaker, to applicants and agents who have had a long, prolonged wait. The sun and the light can be seen soon through the tunnel, but please await the

official notice from the department. Because, Mr. Speaker, daily repeated inquiries by email, WhatsApp, phone calls, bumping into the store will not cause your application to move through the system any faster. The system is not configured for your application at this time, and so following up every single week will not get you the card any faster in your hand.

What following up every single week is doing though, Mr. Speaker, it is overwhelming the team in the department who are already working through the substantial backlog and trying to meet the demand. Again, when the process resumes and we are printing cards left, right, and center, the public Will be notified. We experienced a similar issue with the printing of the PRC wallet cards, Mr. Speaker. That migration was a bit smoother than the TC status card migration from one software to the other, and so we confirm that the PRC wallet card issuance and printing has resumed, and applicants are asked to await the official notification that their individual documents are ready to be collected before attending on the department.

We are trying to ensure that we manage expectations and remind the general public and users of our services during this period where delays are going to be felt and experienced, our officers are working as hard as they can to be ready to hit print print when the configuration has resumed. So those are the public service announcements there, Mr. Speaker.

Now allow me to touch on the 69th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference that took place in Cape Town. Of course, Mr. Speaker, yourself, Leader of the Opposition, and I attended the 69th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Cape Town. And we want to say thank you to the Parliament of South Africa and CPA South Africa Branch for hosting us. The conference was held under the theme Strengthening International Law and Parliamentary Democracy in a Changing World: Order, Commonwealth Leadership.

It's— that was a long title, which was just long. But Mr. Speaker, the conference was not simply a conference about Parliament, as we know. It was a conference about what Parliament must become if democracy is to remain meaningful to the people whom we serve, and that's a particular or a deciding factor in what it is Parliament must do. A particular important thread for me, Mr. Speaker, as you know, I was a panelist on the exclusivity and relationship workshop between the executive and the legislature.

And so as a minister who sits in this House, obviously, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the executive must understand and respect the work of Parliament. Parliament is not an inconvenient step along the way to governing. Parliament is where we, the executive, is questioned. This is where legislation is This is where expenditure is scrutinized and where competing ideas meet, and where the decisions of the government must ultimately be explained to the representatives or by the representatives of the people. Mr. Speaker, we appreciate that, that conversation is important, especially in small jurisdictions like ours where the executive carry A large stake in the actual makeup of the Parliament.

As one of the dedicated small branches workshops in Cape Town dealt with specifically the separation of powers in small jurisdictions, examining how the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary can retain defined powers, independence, and effective checks and balances. Those conversations, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you would agree, reinforced the importance of a legislature having the institutional security necessary to do its work, include proper independence, management of its parliamentary timetable, and appropriate resourcing. Strong executives do not require weak parliaments. Strong democracies require both.

From passing of laws to testing them, Mr. Speaker, another important area that we discussed was post-legislative scrutiny. At the workshop, we described— we learned that post-legislative scrutiny as a means not merely for involving people in developing legislation, but of examining the actual effect that legislation has on our lives their lives, the people whom we represent. As delegates, Mr. Speaker, we examined how laws, once enacted, can subsequently be assessed and a determination made as to whether they should be retained, amended, or revoked. That is a very powerful concept and probably my most favorite workshop that we had during the, the days we were there.

Because, Mr. Speaker, too often in politics we treat the passage of legislation as the finish line. It is not. Passing a bill tells us what Parliament intended. Reviewing that legislation afterwards tells us whether it actually worked. That thinking is particularly relevant today as this Honourable House has received the new immigration bill Which includes the post-legislative scrutiny provisions that we just learned about last week as a test case, Mr. Speaker. And so this shows us precisely how international parliamentary engagement should work.

We do not simply travel to attend. We attend, we listen, We challenge, we learn, and where there is something of value, we bring it home and apply it here in the Turks and Caicos Islands. Indeed, the CPA program placed post-legislative scrutiny squarely on the conference agenda under the workshop titled Post-Legislatives Scrutiny: Connecting Parliament with the Public. I extend my sincere thanks to the Parliament of the Turks and Caicos Islands CPA branch for allowing me to attend the conference with you and the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker.

To the people of South Africa for their warmth and hospitality and for the exceptional experience in Cape Town. And moving on to that, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what it is about CPA and AK, but history will be made in another way as I have now been formally invited to be a facilitator on the CPA Academy residential program that is happening in October. This is important, Mr. Speaker, because what is so beneficial about the CPA is that it gives small parliaments access to something that money alone cannot buy.

That's network and experience. It creates opportunities for legislators from jurisdictions large and small to exchange ideas, learn from each other's successes, and perhaps even more importantly, learn from each other's mistakes. At our conference, we had the 10th Annual Women Parliamentary Conference, Parliamentary Conference for MPs with Disability Network, Small branches meeting and the general conference. And so I'm therefore honored, Mr. Speaker, that I, along with

colleagues from Belize and Bermuda representing our region, the Caribbean Atlantic region, have been invited to participate as an in-house facilitator at the CPA Academy.

This invitation is a recognition of the work we have done. Here in the Turks and Caicos Islands, the fact that wider parliaments want to hear about our experience in our parliament bodes well for the greater good of training newly elected members of parliament across the Commonwealth. Small doesn't mean small ideas, Mr. Speaker. Small jurisdictions do not mean we contribute in small ways.

The Turks and Caicos Islands, I am proud to say, has something worth bringing to the Commonwealth table, and we will bring it well and in order and highlight the amazing work that we have done in the 50 years of our ministerial representation in these islands. Wrapping up, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Most Honourable Juliet Holness, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Jamaica, on her election as Vice Chairperson to the CPA Executive Committee.

On September 17th, Mr. Speaker, we know, we were there networking, lobbying, negotiating. Honorable Speaker Holness was elected not only We have the small branch president being Speaker Woods from Belize. We have the vice chairperson, that is the number 2 in charge of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, being from our region. And that allows small states like ours and even Jamaica, which when we compare ourselves to them feels kind We're kind of out of sync because we feel very small compared to them, but it allows our branch— our small branch's voices to be understood.

Our realities are going to inform international decision-making at the CPA level. We have 2 firm seats at this international table, Mr. Speaker. Well done to the Caribbean for that achievement. So to Speaker Holness, I was able to offer our congratulations prior to her win and post her win when we had the celebratory session together, but

I want to officially offer her congratulations on behalf of our Parliament and know that she will take the perspectives of the Caribbean and Atlantic jurisdiction to the table with her, with vigor, conviction, And yes, Mr. Speaker, with plenty of gusto, because Speaker Holness definitely is a strong woman in her own right.

And so we wish her well, and we look forward to the amazing work that will be as a result of this appointment. And she'll be here in a few weeks' time, I understand, Mr. Speaker, and so we'll celebrate again. In good TI fashion. Ending, Mr. Speaker, representation matters. Our presence matters. And when we come together with a collective voice, the voice is not small.

It is firm. It is sharp. It is unique. And I am honoured to be a member of the CPA TCI branch. I am honoured to stand in the international CPA Arena, flying the flag for the Turks and Caicos Islands and reminding them that Turks and Caicos Islands has a contribution to make and will continue to make it for many, many years to come. So in closing, Mr. Speaker, whether with the Ministry of Home Affairs clearing the passport backlog at home, modernizing our transportation framework, fixing systems at our departments, Reviewing legislation after it has been passed, or carrying the voice of the Turks and Caicos Islands onto the Commonwealth stage, the principle is the same.

Public service, our service, must keep moving. Our institutions must keep improving, as we've seen today with the improvements to the Mortgage Corporation, brand new institution, 2026 institution. We are continuously improving. Our people shall and must remain the center of the work we do in this chamber, whether it's in the ministry, whether it's here in the Parliament on a committee.

And of course, Mr. Speaker, there is more work to be done. None of us shy away from that. We know exactly where we are going because, as Bishop said today, We made it plain. We wrote it out. Write the vision, make it plain on the tablet. I'm using my tablet today, Bishop. I'm not usually a tablet user. You know I like paper.

But I'm trying something new since we're amending the standing orders and we all gonna be using tablets in here real soon. I don't know how I feel about this tablet yet, but nonetheless, I'm trying, writing it so people could run towards the vision and understand it and appreciate it.

So So as the work is being done, Mr. Speaker, we pause to recognize the work that has already been successfully accomplished and recommit ourselves to the work going ahead. Mr. Speaker, it is always an honor and privilege to travel with you and represent the Turks and Caicos Islands, not only for your guidance and support and networking opportunities, but for making sure I ain't fall down that day when I fall out the taxi. So as we keep working, we continue to pray, Mr. Speaker, that the Lord will continue to bless this House and the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Good afternoon.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honorable Minister, for your ministerial statement. And it was a great trip to Cape Town, South Africa. The Chair now recognizes the Honourable Minister of Health and Human Services for his ministerial statement.

Hon. Kyle Knowles:

Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to everyone listening via radio and the internet. Good afternoon to the wonderful people of Wheeland and West Caicos who have given me this opportunity to serve them. Once again, good afternoon to my constituency council and my support system that helped me to get through these days and these trying times that we're in as the Minister of Health, and especially to the Ministry Executive, the Permanent Secretary, the CMO,

HOS, Deputy Sec, all of them.

Just working diligently as we go through this transition of health reform in the Turks and Caicos Islands. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to provide this Honourable House and the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands with an update on the work of the Ministry of Health and Human Services during the 2nd quarter of the 2026-2027 financial year. The period from July to September 2026 has been one of significant progress As we continue to implement our vision of building a stronger, more resilient, equitable, and more people-centred health system. Guided by the National Health Sector Strategic Plan of 24-27, the Ministry has remained focused on strengthening governance, expanding access to quality healthcare, enhancing public health, improving emergency preparedness, and advancing reforms that will position our health system to meet both current and future needs.

Our work during the quarter has spanned every major area of the Ministry, including the health sector reform, primary health care, disease prevention and control, environmental health, emergency medical services, mental health, aged care, health financing, waste management, policy development, and health infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, I will start off with health sector reform and governance. The Government continues to advance the transformation of the health system through the development of a more integrated, sustainable and accountable model of health service delivery. During this quarter, the exploratory assessment of the proposed Health Services Authority, the HSA, has been advancing, providing and evidence base for more consideration of a more autonomous model for health service management.

The proposed direction is intended to strengthen operations— operational accountability while allowing the Ministry of Health and Human Services to focus more clearly on policy, legislation, regulation, strategic planning, health financing, monitoring and evaluation, public health, and the overall stewardship of the health system. Following developments concerning the continuity of hospital services, further work is underway to assess secondary healthcare services and develop appropriate interim and long-term arrangements for their integration within the proposed HSA model. This work is intended to ensure continuity of hospital services while supporting the Government's broader health sector reform agenda. Mr. Speaker, the Government is therefore progressing a phased approach to health sector transformation, with particular attention on governance, service integration, financial stability, workforce requirements, and continuity of care.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry continues to advance the transformation of primary health care through the Primary Health Care Strategy of 2026 to 2035. The strategy provides a 10-year roadmap for strengthening primary health care and positioning it as the foundation for a more integrated, accessible, and people-centred health care system. It is structured around 8 goals addressing service delivery, the environment of care, The health workforce, leadership, coordination, community empowerment, equity and inclusion, digital transformation, and sustainable financing. Mr. Speaker, the strategy is intended to strengthen prevention, early intervention, and management of chronic conditions while improving coordination between primary, secondary, and community-based services.

The Ministry is also continuing to strengthen the foundation of digital health transformation including work to improve health information systems and support the future development for a more integrated health data and reporting mechanism. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry continued to strengthen the policy and legislative framework underpinning health services and population health. The Adolescent Health and Well-Being Policy and Strategy of 2026 to 2030 provides a comprehensive framework for addressing the health and well-being needs of adolescents. It addresses key areas including violence and injuries, sexual and reproductive health, communicable diseases, nutrition and physical activity, mental health, substance use and self-harm, while positioning primary healthcare as a key platform for delivery.

Mr. Speaker, work has also continued on the Government's Healthy Ageing Agenda, including the development of a policy and framework to strengthen services for older persons and improve access to appropriate residential and community-based support. The Ministry is also reviewing the legislative framework governing the treatment abroad process. The review is intended to strengthen oversight and accountability and the sustainable management of public resources, while supporting transparent and equitable access to specialized treatment that are not available locally. Thank you.

At least for the time being. The legislative and policy reform programme remains an important component to the Government's wider health sector transformation agenda. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry has continued to strengthen our national health security and emergency preparedness, recognising the vulnerability of the islands to hurricanes, infectious diseases and other public health emergencies. The Ministry's preparedness plan and response arrangements continue to be strengthened across the health sector, including updates to the Emergency Preparedness Framework and closer collaboration with regional and international partners.

The Ministry of Health recently successfully completed a country mission from the 7th to 10th of September of 2026 in collaboration with the Caribbean Public Health Agency, CAHPHA, to support the development of the Regional Integrated Early Warning Surveillance Systems in the Turks and Caicos Islands, and the activities included training, consultations, and a simulation exercise. Mr. Speaker, the Government continued to strengthen services for older persons and individuals requiring rehabilitation and long-term care. Mr. Speaker, a significant development during the quarter was Cabinet's approval of an additional $1 million in supplementary funding for long-term care. This— Mr. Speaker, this investment demonstrates the Government's commitment to strengthening the long-term care system and responding to increasing demands for appropriate and sustainable care arrangements.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry also continued to advance the policy framework for residential care for day-to-day services for older persons and adults with special needs. The Healthy Aging Campaign was promoted through community-based activities, including the Senior— the Summer Splash of 2026, Mr.

Speaker, the Move to Live Exercise Activity supporting physical activity, social engagement, and healthy aging among older persons. Mr. Speaker, the ministry held its 2nd annual Alzheimer's Walk on last week, Saturday the 19th, in observance of World Alzheimer's Day. The purpose is to continue raising awareness around, around the disease and dementia.

There's a— there was participation by residents, government agencies, healthcare professionals, community organizers, families, and supporters across the Turks and Caicos Islands, Mr. Speaker, as these activities would have happened throughout the archipelago. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry continues to expand access to oral health services across the islands. A Dental Officer was assigned to North Caicos, improving access to dental care within the community and supporting the Government's commitment to decentralising health services. Mr. Speaker, new dental equipment was also delivered to strengthen service capacity with additional procurement planned for further— to further improve the availability of quality dental services.

The Ministry also strengthened partnership with non-governmental organizations, and a memorandum of understanding with GreatShape was signed just Monday, which enables free dental services to provide— provided in Providenciales, demonstrating how strategic partnerships can extend across essential health services. And in October, which is Oral Health Month, the department, which once again will work in collaboration with Great Shape to offer free dental services to those in need, and further announcements will follow. The Ministry of Health and Human Services, the Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture, and Great Shape, along with the Sandals Foundation, supported this organ— supported the organization, signed the MOU On Monday with the Eye Care Charitable Outreach Program in the Turks and Caicos Islands. The MOU establishes the framework for collaboration to improve access to eye care services and enhance vision and general health outcomes across the Turks and Caicos Islands.

And as a part of the Youth Week, the Eye Care team will visit schools across— will visit schools to provide eye care services to students, supporting early detection and treatment of vision problems that affect learning and academic performance. A free country eye care clinic will be conducted in Providenciales by providing doctors and eye care professionals from the United States and Canada in collaboration with government and partnered organizations. Mr. Speaker, I hope the Leader of the Opposition is still here because he might want to take his pencil out for this one, or Where is Pen? I'll just speak briefly to hospital services. So, Mr. Speaker, the ministry continues to work closely with hospital service partners to support the— to support the continuity, quality, and sustainability of secondary healthcare services.

This includes ongoing engagement with hospital management and technical stakeholders to monitor service delivery, infrastructure, requirements and the overall resilience of the hospital facilities. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry also strengthened its focus on patient experience and service improvement. A patient satisfaction survey was completed for the dialysis patients at the Cheshire Hall Medical Centre, with findings shared with the Ministry leadership, hospital management, and the dialysis team. This feedback has already contributed to service improvements Including an earlier start time for dialysis patients in the Cheshire Hall Medical Centre.

The Ministry will continue to monitor the implementation of the recommendations arising from that survey. Mr. Speaker, permit me to further emphasize that I would have stated in my recent statement to the general public, I wish to update this Honourable House and the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands on the hospital services.

I will also respond to a statement from Indehel Canada issued on the 21st of September, 2026. The Cheshire Hall Medical Centre and the Cockburn Town Medical Centre are open. Clinical services at both hospitals are continuing as normal. In its statement on the 21st, Indehel said that all patients should continue to attend appointments as scheduled, and the Government asks patients to do so as well.

Mr. Speaker, the Government has a duty to explain to this House and to the public why there is a dispute. The Government is committed to high-quality clinical care in these islands, and over the past 2 years— 2 and a half years— it has commissioned a number of independent professional assessments at both hospitals Those assessments identified significant concerns about the condition, maintenance, and long-term integrity and elements of the hospital infrastructure. The Government then sought professional advice on the measures needed to address those concerns and to safeguard the continued operation of those facilities. The Government shared the relevant reports and recommended measures to India Health Canada and with the Health Professions Authority.

Under the contractual arrangements, InterHealth has an obligation relating to the maintenance and condition of the hospitals. The Government's position is that those obligations have not been satisfied to the standard required under the contract. InterHealth and its project financial stakeholders, including the Infrared Capital Partners, have been informed of the Government's concerns and the relevant assessments have been undertaken. have, have become available.

The government has withheld certain infrastructural payments in connection with those matters, and it has paid all its clinical costs due and will continue to do so. Mr. Speaker, in the government's view, InterHealth Canada's statement of the 21st of September does not address the concerns raised about the conditions and maintenance of the hospital infrastructure. It also does not address the independent professional assessment provided to InterHealth Canada. The Government's overriding responsibility is to protect the public interest. The Government's aim is for both hospitals to remain safe, sustainable, and capable of serving the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands for many years to come, and the Government will continue to take the steps considered necessary to protect the integrity and long-term value in the, in the important And the importance of the public— of the general public.

So again, I want to assure— to reassure the people of these islands that clinical services at both hospitals are continuing

as normal, and patients should continue to attend their appointments and seek treatment as normal. The wider commercial and contractual matters between government and Health Canada are subject to legal proceedings. The rights and obligations of the parties, including the basis for which the payments were withheld from those proceedings, will be addressed. And to respect the process and to protect the Government's legal position, the Government will not litigate those matters through the media. It will not make any further comments on the substance of those proceedings at this time.

So, Mr. Speaker, I hope for all of the persons who are concerned about the government's position with the Health Canada, I hope that kind of sums it up for you in a nutshell, because there's more information to come. But again, like I said in a previous, ministerial statement, we have to be responsible in the manner in which we relay this information to the general public. Mr. Speaker, Environmental Health has been carrying out protection activities and to continue support safer communities through strengthening public health safeguards across the islands. Mr. Speaker, our workforce planning and capacity development remain important components of the Ministry's health sector transformation agenda. Efforts continue to identify critical workforce requirements and strengthen capacity in priority areas, including primary health care, mental health, emergency medical services, laboratory services, and essential health functions.

The Ministry has also continued to utilize technical cooperation and partnerships with regional and international agencies to strengthen staff capacity, technical expertise, and institutional resilience. So, Mr. Speaker, as the Ministry moves into the next phase of the 2026-2027 programme, priority will be placed on translating policy and reform decisions into implementation.

And, Mr. Speaker, the key areas we will focus on will include progressing the establishment and transition arrangements for the proposed Health Services Authority, Strengthening continuity and integration of secondary healthcare services. Advancing implementation of the National Primary Healthcare Strategy of 2026 to 2035. Progressing the review of the Overseas Medical Treatment legislative framework. Implementing the Government's additional $1 million investment into long-term care.

Advancing healthcare, healthy ageing and residential care reforms, strengthening local diagnostic and laboratory capacity, continuing digital health and health information system development, strengthening environmental health and vector control and port health systems, and furthering the development of the health workforce and emergency preparedness capacity. So in closing, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry's overall focus remains on building a health system that is more accessible, resilient, integrated, and sustainable, while ensuring that health services respond effectively to the changing needs of the population.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, YOUTH, SPORTS, CULTURE AND LIBRARY SERVICES

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Hon. Minister of Health and Human Services, for your ministerial statement. Honourable members, the Chair now recognizes the Honourable Minister of Education for her ministerial statement.

Hon. Rachel Marshall Taylor:

Isaiah 41:10. So do not fear, for I am with you. Do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will uphold you with With my righteous hand. Mr. Speaker, a pleasant good afternoon to you, to the members of this honorable house, those joining us— oh, we don't have any in the gallery right now.

But Mr. Speaker, to everyone listening via RTC or watching the proceedings through the livestream on Facebook, a special and heartfelt greeting goes to the constituents of Electoral District 9, Five Cays, South Dock, and Chalksound. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to also join my colleagues in extending warm congratulations and best wishes to all those across our islands celebrating birthdays, anniversaries, and other joyful milestones. May these special occasions be filled with happiness, love, and cherished memories. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, I wish to extend my heartfelt condolences to the families throughout our islands who are mourning the loss of a loved one.

In moments of grief, words cannot often seem inadequate, but I pray that the love, support, and prayers of our community will bring comfort and strength to those who are grieving. In particular, Mr. Speaker, I wish to pay tribute to the young Yes. A student of the Thelma Lyburn Primary School on the island of Providenciales who sadly passed away over the weekend. My deepest— or our deepest condolences to her family, her classmates, teachers, and the entire school community during this difficult time. May God grant them comfort and strength, and may the memory of this precious young little one remain a blessing to all who knew her. I also extend my condolences to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, my PS, as well as my HOS, on the passing of their family member, Mrs. Laura Robinson McRae.

May her soul rest in peace and rise in glory. Mr. Speaker, I now turn my attention to a matter of great importance to our nation, the education of our children. Education is the foundation upon which we build our future. It is the means by which we empower our young people to dream, to innovate, and to build a society that is prosperous, inclusive, and just.

As a government, we have chosen the path of inclusion, equity, and quality for every child. We also recognize that this path brings real challenges. Mr. Speaker, as the new academic year brings— begins, our public schools are once again experiencing increased enrolment. And Mr. Speaker, this is a good thing— increased enrolment, particularly on the

island of Providenciales.

This growth reflects the confidence parents place in our public education system. But it also places pressure on classroom space. To address these capacity constraints, we are making better use of our existing facilities, planning for sustainable expansion, adopting flexible classroom arrangements, using technology to enhance learning, and working with our parents to find practical solutions. By working together, we can ensure that every student student receives the education they deserve despite the pressures of growth demand.

Mr. Speaker, to meet these challenges, we continue to make a multifaceted approach to ensure that no child is left behind. So I must make mention— I'm not going to read my entire speech, I'll just speak to it briefly— that we continue with our voucher program of 60%, inclusive of our subsidy the program offered to our parents.

And Mr. Speaker, this totals $1.2 million. Mr. Speaker, these initiatives underscore the government commitment to investing in the future of our young people. Mr. Speaker, I also want to make mention and bring to the public's information in terms of how our students are progressing across The Turks and Caicos Islands in relation to our 2026 CSAT results for our 4 public schools, which show real and measurable improvement.

I must emphasize that across Clemente Howell High School, H.J. Robinson High right here in Grand Turk, Marjory Basin in South Caicos, and Raymond Gardner High, the number of passes at grades 1 to 3 increased from 1,094 in 2025 to 1,158 in 2026, even though the number of subject sittings fell from 1,478 to 1,303. I must say, Mr. Speaker, that the combined pass rate therefore rose from 74% to 88.8%, an improvement of 14.85 percentage points.

So, Mr. Speaker, I say this to say that despite our increase in numbers in our schools when compared to the private schools, we continue to receive outstanding performances within the government schools. I take this opportunity to congratulate the leadership of our schools as well as our teachers. But Mr. Speaker, the quality of our passes has also improved. The number of grade 1 passes Doubled from 148 in 2005 to 317 in 2026. I should point out that these figures refer to subject sittings and passes rather than to individual students, as one student, Mr. Speaker, may sit several subjects.

In total, 488 candidates were registered across the territory In 2026. But Mr. Speaker, I must make mention that every one of our 4 schools improved or maintained its pass rate. H.J. Robinson High School in Grand Turk recorded the greatest improvement with its pass rate rising from 67.17, Mr. Speaker, to 91.11.

Mr. Speaker, Clement Howell High School in Providenciales continues to produce the largest number of passes, 559 in total. But while its pass rates improved from 75.66% to 88.59%, Mr. Speaker, these are the schools with the large population. And again, I must emphasize how well we are performing. Margie Basin High School in South Caicos almost doubled its passes from 59 to 111 and raised its pass rate, Mr. Speaker, from 69.41 to 81%. Mr. Speaker, congratulations once again. And Mr. Speaker, let me go on now to make mention that We are making an assertive effort to ensure that we partner with our regional entities.

So, Mr. Speaker, mathematics deserve particular attention. Although the number of sittings fell from 140 to 113, passes increased from 45 to 78, and the combined pass rate more than doubled, Mr. Speaker, from 32.1% to 69%. H.J. Robinson High School made the largest gain, Mr. Speaker, hear this, from 16.3% to 81%, Mr. Speaker. While Clement Howell High School improved from 38% to 71%, and Marjory Basin from 10% to 35.3%.

And of course, Raymond Gardner High School But, Mr. Speaker, this improvement did not happen by chance. It reflects deliberate and sustained effort by my Ministry to strengthen the teaching and learning of mathematics. This includes the introduction of standardized instructional strategies, stronger collaboration and professional sharing among mathematics teachers. And, Mr. Speaker, I also want to make mention that I have received correspondence from Professor Canute Thompson, who is the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Undergraduate Studies at the University of the West Indies, confirming that the ASCENT training, which has been delayed, will now commence under a revised schedule.

Mr. Speaker, this programme is being delivered across 17 participating territories, and Mr. Mr. Speaker, in my last meeting at COSOD, we ensured that the Turks and Caicos Islands will be a part of this great milestone. So, Mr. Speaker, what we have done is that we have nominated 4 master trainers, all locals, who will play a central Role in this work.

They will strengthen their own practice through the programme and bring that learning home to share with mathematics teachers across our schools. School, and the university has asked each participating territory to confirm our names, and we have done just that. But Mr. Speaker, on top of that, we have also provided an opportunity for specialized math teachers that I always emphasize within our primary schools so that the foundation is solid.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn to the readiness of our public schools on Providenciales And I'm not going to be very long with this because our able minister with responsibilities for PPID alluded to it. But at the commencement of the school year, there were 10 teaching vacancies across our private schools and secondary schools on Providenciales in both graduate teacher and assistant teacher posts. And you know what? I don't understand, Mr. Speaker, because I don't know where the other side get their data from and talking about, oh, so many teachers are not available.

We had 10, Mr. Speaker. All 10. And then, you know what, Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that we may be saying 10 is a lot, and quite a number of them as a result of late teachers resigning, we have been able to tap into our database and those teachers who went on early retirement, Mr. Speaker, They are now filling that position until those 10 come in, and they soon come.

But Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity at this time to

also thank the Deputy Governor for the new appointment of 6 educators, locals. I want to call their names. Ms. Sandra Arthur at Enid Capon in Five Cays. Ms. Myosha Smith at Eliza Simons in Grand Turk. Ms. Shakayla Ms. Rose Dickinson at Una Clinton in Grand Turk. Ms. Nakia Johnson— Nakia Johnson and Ms. Jamila Jackson at the Thelma Lyburn.

We are recruiting our teachers and putting them in place. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to talk about the summer work repairs because the minister alluded to that, but we will continue in our efforts to ensure that we work together so that we could mitigate the challenges in the future.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to our textbooks that questions were being posed, we have a number of schools who have a backlog of textbooks that they could have distributed for the first term. But I must say that the first batch of textbooks for the 2026 academic year has been procured and distributed to schools, and the procurement batch is in progress and is expected expected to be procured and shipped to the Turks and Caicos Islands by mid-November.

But this doesn't mean that schools are without textbooks. So the ones that were left over from the last academic year, they continue to sell them, inclusive of the first batch that arrived early and was distributed to schools. Mr. Speaker, also in relation to our bus services, all is in place. Our contracts have been signed, and our schools, they criminalize The A. Louise Garland Thomas High School and the schools on the island of North and Middle Caicos continue to have that service. Mr. Speaker, I'm also pleased to update this Honourable House on the continued progress of the Caribbean Vocational Qualifications.

Many persons may have heard myself and my team— we had a very good, discussion with Honourable Robert Hall last week Friday in relation to the progress we're making with CVQ, and CVQ is actually the Caribbean Vocational Qualification. So, Mr. Speaker, we have been quite intentional to ensure that we secure the manpower for the effective delivery of the CVQ program.

And, Mr. Speaker, we are— we have definitely recruited Miss Hilton, who is currently our Tamara Hilton, a former teacher of the H.A. Robinson High School, who is now our CVQ coordinator. But, Mr. Speaker, we don't just want to hire a CVQ Coordinator; we want to make sure that mechanisms are in place to strengthen the programme.

So the Department is advancing several other important components of this initiative. We are currently developing a National Work Experience Policy for the CVQ Programme, while the CVQ Student Handbook and the National Work Experience Workbook are nearing completion. Honourable Member for Grand Turk North and South Caicos. Looking ahead, Mr. Speaker, I must make mention that the Department of Education is committed to working closely with the TVET Dean from the Turks and Caicos Islands Community College because we want to ensure that our students easily transition from high school into the college.

But I just want to make mention of the introduction of 13 new Level 1 occupational areas. So listen to this, Mr. Speaker. These are what we're going to include in our high school CVQ curriculum: community tourism, building construction drafting, entertainment and events technology, floral arrangement, garment production, soft furnishing, as well as several hospitality-related certifications. In addition, we will also include 5 Level 2 pathways that are being proposed So we are making strides and we are ensuring that we pay careful attention to the national skill gaps.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that there are some students who are not necessarily academically inclined who look for different pathways to success. So we have also been approved the City and Guilds Centre for the Turks and Caicos Islands, and of course this approval allows us to deliver City and Guilds qualifications in carpentry, masonry, painting and decorating, electrical installation across the Turks and Caicos Islands.

So, Mr. Speaker, what now happens is that this cohort of individuals will be able to gain their internationally recognized certification at the end of high school. That provides an opportunity for them to easily transition whether into TCICC or into the workforce. Internationally recognized. That's how we do it at the Ministry of Education, and that's how we do it as a government, a progressive government. That's what we do.

Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Speaker, I'm also pleased to update this Honourable House on the continued progress of our National Daycare Program. But I want to stick a pin in here, Mr. Speaker. You know, that is the program where we provide an opportunity for all belongers to receive 75% A payment for their daycare service. But I want to say this to the parents, that is for students 0 to 3 years old.

If you're going to turn 4 before January, then you will transition into a regular government school to enter into K-1 and K-2. Because some people are thinking that until you reach 3, I mean 3, once you reach 3, 4, sorry. Once you reach 4 before December 31st, you now need to register into the government schools because we have exciting programs. You know, we have lunch, Mr. Speaker, after-school program, Mr. Speaker, all those nice things.

Come on, parents, register your children into government high school. The data is proving that we are trending well. The data, data-driven. And thank you, parents, because 182 of you have been approved and you are benefiting from the program. And based on my data, 92 boys and 92 girls. Now, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about, you know, the Sustainable Development Goals talk about not just education, Mr. Speaker, but the quality of the education. So hear me out for a few seconds.

The Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture, through its Quality Assurance Unit, prepares to commence the rollout of the National School Inspection Programme in October. Now, you remember my previous ministerial statements talk about what we intend to do. We are here now and now ready to deliver. I wish to update this Honourable House on the important work that has been undertaken to prepare our schools and our education system for this The National Inspection Program is an important part of our quality assurance function.

And, Mr. Speaker, while we are on that, we have a quality

assurance officer within the ministry as well as in Turks and Caicos Islands Community College. And it reflects this government commitment to raising standards. If you go to our Citizens' Contract, it talks about raising standards. So we are doing that.

Thank you. Doing just that. And not only raising standards, Mr. Speaker, we want to improve the outcome for every learner. Mr. Speaker, from the beginning we have been clear about our approach. Inspection is not something that is done to school. It is in partnership with the schools. So therefore, we have introduced the integrated approach to school improvement, which brings together school self-evaluation so that the schools self-evaluate themselves inspection, reporting, and school improvement planning as part of one continuous process.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm quite happy about that. We have taken the opportunity to train our principals and vice principals, and of course we have taken on the opportunity to prepare those inspectorates with partnership from Jamaica. Now, special education continues to stride Strive. Mr. Speaker, I remember when I took this office, Mr. Speaker, everything was talking about special education, what that government didn't do, and we said we're going to do it. What they didn't do, we have done that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I can move on and say congratulations to Dr. Anya Malcolm-Gibbs. A job well done. Mr. Speaker, you know, gone are the days when people say, oh, we need speech and language pathologists, We need occupational therapists. We need— Mr. Speaker, we got them all! And Mr. Speaker, this good, good government has been so intentional that we are training our children who will be returning home soon to take on that position.

That's how we do it, just like that. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to commend our Director of Youth, Ms. Howell, Jatavia Howell, and her team from the Department of Youth For the continuous work that they are doing. Our theme this year is Honoring Our Legacy, Youth Shaping Our Future. I want to encourage our people to continue to engage in the activities that took into consideration the ecumenical service, volunteering, Youth Skills Symposium, Mock Parliament, financial literacy, sports.

And I want to also commend the pastor, Pastor Braithwaite from the Bible Baptist Church. Who were quite intentional in their efforts to ensure they provide support to the elderly or the seniors' home here on the island of Grand Turk. And to all of this, congratulations. But Mr. Speaker, coming very soon will be the volunteering policy. And Mr. Speaker, next year is going to be bigger and better because everybody will be looking for potential opportunities to volunteer.

Mr. Speaker, Sports continue to play a major Role in the growth and development of our young people, and I want to take this opportunity to say a special thank you to our Director, Mr. Jared Forbes, and his team from the Sports Commission, because what they have done is that they have enhanced the safeguarding measures across our sector.

For example, the implementation at the Felix Morley Community Centre— what they have done is that they have They have strengthened access controls. They have strengthened the participant registration. They have designated supervision zones and expanded security coverage. Now, Mr. Speaker, I was actually invited to the Felix Morley Community Centre with residents, and the showing was great.

And I was quite impressed with the level of support that the Sports Commission is giving to that facility. And I'm quite pleased with the mechanisms that they have put in place to address the safeguarding. Mr. Speaker, if you want to get into Felix Morley Community Centre right now, you walk into the gate, your picture will be taken, you will be given an ID, and each time you use that facility, you have to show your ID. Parents had a great appreciation for it.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that the, the programs at the centre have increased exponentially, Mr. Speaker. I mean, we have over 200 to 300 children there per day. Praise God for safe spaces. Mr. Premier, thank you again for providing that funding for the Felix Morley Community Center in the Keys. Now, I must say that the Commissioner is also working in partnership with the Department of Education and our national sports governing body is pleased to commence the 2026-2027 school sports season this Saturday, the 26th of September, at the National Stadium, beginning with boys and girls football.

The school sports program provides students across the Turks and Caicos with the opportunity to participate, compete, and develop. And I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, congratulations to all the sporting disciplines, all the sporting bodies, because I think they're providing that opportunity not just for Competition and exposure locally, but also regionally and internationally, and we can see that being exhibited on a monthly basis. Mr. Speaker, I just want to bring some attention to the capital projects, the Grand Turk Sports Complex. I'm excited, Mr. Speaker.

The contractors are in from America and they are now laying the floor. So therefore, we will have greater follow-ups in terms of when we will have the opening of that facility. Women's Day for 2 years. It doesn't matter, but it's coming, 'cause you know, y'all are so used to cutting our ribbon, y'all ain't cutting this ribbon never.

So we gonna get it right, we getting it right, you understand, we getting it right. Better late than never. But can you imagine, can you imagine, Honorable Minister, I just heard a little birdie over there say for 7 years. But wasn't he Minister of Sport? Oh, and he didn't see the need to put that facility in Grand Turk? Yeah, looks like it. Oh wow, better late than never.

Let's go to the Raymond Gardner Art Block. The Raymond Gardner Art Block, we have received updates and it is shifted to be opening in September 2027. Another technical block that will improve our CVQ scores and provide an opportunity for engagement of our students. I just also want to make mention to Mr. Speaker that within my particular constituency, the construction of the speed table with pedestrian crossing in Five Cays between ECPS and Felix Morley Community Center, that closed on September 20th.

The construction of the playground and the construction installation of the new signage at the entrance of ECPS, supply installation of playground for I'm going to go out my scope now, but it's in my ministry, for the Charles Hubert James Primary School, the North Caicos Public Library refurbishment, refurbishment of the West Road Children's Park. But also, Mr. Speaker, I also must say that the ITT for the Gustavus Lyburn Sports Complex has been issued and expected to close on the 7th of October, 2026. But Mr. Speaker, I also want to encourage the residents of Electoral District 9 Five Cays and

South Dock, reminding them that we have a cleanup campaign on Saturday. Please pay careful attention to the locations where we're going to meet. Bring your garbage bags, bring your gloves. Your MP will bring those too. Bring your water. I'll bring those. We will bring those too. But I want them to support this initiative so that we together can take a collective responsibility in making sure that our environment is clean.

And I just want to encourage the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands. Mr. Speaker, you know, sometimes we talk about the pride that we have in this country, but when you drive around, I wonder where is the pride. So as a community, as a country, we must do better in terms of keeping our communities clean.

And Mr. Speaker, as Youth Week draws to a close, our observance of the 50th anniversary of ministerial government continues. And I wish to update this Honourable House on the remaining activities. On Tuesday, the 6th of October, we will hold a Youth Parliament, giving our young people the opportunity to debate matters of national importance and to experience firsthand the working of our parliamentary democracy. This will be followed by Thursday, October 8th, with a special sitting of Parliament to mark this historic anniversary. And on Monday, October 12th, National Heritage Day will be celebrated across our islands as we honor the history, culture, and traditions that have shaped us as a people. Now, last week we were given the opportunity to wear our paraphernalia shirts to work every Friday, and that is across our government sectors, but we also want to encourage the public to also continue to wear their 50th anniversary t-shirts on Fridays, every Friday, and we're also encouraging the wider community, if it's not your the 50th anniversary paraphernalia, our national colors, navy blue and gold, or your flag t-shirts, or just wear some red and white.

Let us continue to celebrate. Mr. Speaker, 50 years of ministerial government is a milestone that belongs to every Turks and Caicos Islander, and I encourage all island residents to take part in these activities. And also remembering that the gala awards will also take place on October 24th. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to serve my country as the Minister with responsibilities for Education, Youth Sports, Culture and Library Services.

And as the new academic year gets underway, we will continue to put in place the support our schools and young people need. And I call on parents, teachers and the wider community to work together, because where parents lead, indeed children succeed. May God continue to bless the beautiful by nature, Turks and Caicos Islands. Thank you.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

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Hon. Gordon Burton:

Thank you very much, Honourable Minister, for your ministerial statement. So I will now return to the Order Paper, and next on the Order Paper is personal explanations. There are none. Motions for leave of absence? I did receive requests from the Honourable Eighth— no, Ninth All-Island Member who is attending. He's an observer at the elections in the Isle of Man, and also the Seventh All-Island Member who is also an observer at the elections in the Isle of Man. Honourable, we are now at questions.

Okay, so do we take a short break before questions, or— Okay, okay, so we are now at oral replies to questions, and the first parliamentary question is to be asked by the Honourable Elected Member for The Bight to the Honourable Premier. Yeah, okay. This Honourable Parliament is hereby suspended for 5 minutes.

Hon. Gordon Burton:

Honourable Members, this Honourable House now resumes its sitting. Pray be seated. Honourable Premier.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Hon. Charles Washington Misick, OBE:

Mr. Speaker, I move that this House stands adjourned sine die.

ADJOURNMENT

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Gordon Burton:

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