



2025/26 SESSION
of the
BERMUDA SENATE
OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

15 JULY 2026

Sitting number 27 of the 2025/2026 Session
(pages 1107–1138)

Sen. The Hon. Joan E. Dillas-Wright, MBE, JP
President

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15 JULY 2026
10:04 AM**

Sitting Number 27 of the 2025/2026 Session

[Sen. the Hon. Joan E. Dillas-Wright, President, presiding]

[Crosstalk]

[Pause]

The President: Good morning, Senators.
The Senate is in session.
Shall we pray?

PRAYERS

[Prayers read by Sen. the Hon. Joan E. Dillas-Wright, President]

The President: Please be seated.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

SENATE VISITOR

The President: Senators, I would just like to acknowledge the presence of the Honorary US Counsel, Ms. Antoinette Hurtado, who is here with us in the Chamber.

Welcome to you, Ms. Hurtado.

**OATH OR AFFIRMATION
OF NEW MEMBER**

The President: I will call on Minister Ryan Robinson who is the Minister of National Security.
Minister Robinson.

[Crosstalk]

**AFFIRMATION OF ALLEGIANCE
SENATOR THE HON. RYAN ROBINSON
PERINCHIEF**

Sen. the Hon. Ryan Robinson Perinchief: I, Ryan Allen Robinson Perinchief, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King Charles III, his heirs and successors according to law.

The President: Thank you.

Sen. the Hon. Ryan Robinson Perinchief: Thank you, Madam President.

The President: You are welcome.

MESSAGES

The President: Ms. Beale.

The Deputy Clerk: There are no messages, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Ms. Beale.
Reports of Committees: There are none.

[Crosstalk]

The President: Oh, I am rushing.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

[Minutes of 1 July 2026]

The President: Vice President John Wight, the Confirmation of Minutes.
Sorry everyone.

Sen. John Wight: Thank you. Good morning, Madam President.

The President: Good morning to you.

Sen. John Wight: Madam President, I move that the Minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, 1 July 2026, be taken as read.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

Sen. John Wight: Madam President.

The Deputy Clerk: There is an objection.

The President: Oh, I didn't see your hand. Sorry.
There is one objection.

Sen. Lauren Bell: Thank you, Madam President.
I just want to highlight that there are two errors that I've spotted in the Minutes, and I am referring to page 1. There is the name Senator L. K. Simmons-Bell, so I am requesting that "Bell" be removed from Senator Simmons's name.

[Crosstalk]

Sen. Lauren Bell: And the second error is on page 3, and the Minutes are reflecting Senator L. F. Bell move that the Bill be now read a third time, which was objected to. There was no objection to that motion at that sitting.

The President: Yes, the corrections are noted.

Sen. John Wight: Thank you, Madam President.

With those modifications, I move that the Minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, 1 July 2026, be confirmed.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?

No objection. The Minutes are confirmed [as corrected].

[Minutes of 1 July 2026 confirmed as corrected.]

The President: Thank you, Vice President John Wight.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The President: There are none.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The President: There are a few Announcements, and the first [Announcement] is from myself as the President.

BERMUDA OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REPORT 2025

The President: Senators, I wish to announce that in accordance with the provisions of section 24(1) and 24(3) of the Ombudsman Act 2004, a copy of the [Ombudsman for Bermuda \[2025\] Annual Report](#), which covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2025, has been forwarded to me as the President of the Senate, and that copies of the said report are hereby tabled in the Senate for the information of Senators.

Senators, you can access a copy of the report on your tablet or on the Parliamentary website.

The next announcement is in the name of Senator Lindsay K. Simmons, the Junior Minister of Youth, Social Development and Seniors.

Senator Simmons, you have the floor.

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I hereby present for the information of the Senate the [Human Rights Commission 2025 Annual Report](#).

Senators may access copies of the report on their tablet and/or the Parliament website.

The President: Thank you, Senator Simmons.

The next announcement is in the name of Senator Mischa Fubler, the Junior Minister of Tourism and Transport, Culture and Sport.

Senator.

CIVIL AVIATION (AIR TRANSPORT LICENSING) REGULATIONS 2026

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Thank you, Madam President.

I hereby present for the information of the Senate the [Civil Aviation \(Air Transport Licensing\) Regulations 2026](#), as made by the Minister responsible for Aviation in exercise of the powers as conferred by section 18 of the Civil Aviation (Air Transport Licensing) Act 2007.

Senators may access copies on their tablet and/or the Parliament website.

The President: Thank you, Senator Fubler.

And the next announcement is in the name of yourself as well. You have a second.

TOURISM INVESTMENT (ROSEWOOD BERMUDA) ORDER 2020 REVOCATION NOTICE 2026

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Yes, thank you, Madam President.

My next announcement is I hereby present for the information of Senate the [Tourism Investment \(Rosewood Bermuda\) Order 2020 Revocation Notice 2026](#), as made by the Minister responsible for Tourism in exercise of the power, conferred by section 6A(1) of the Tourism Investment Act 2017.

Senators may access copies on their tablet and/or the Parliament website.

The President: Thank you, Senator Fubler.

NOTICE OF MOTION

The President: We have one Notice of Motion, and that is in the name of Senator the Honourable Kim R. Wilkerson, spokesperson for Finance in the Senate.

Minister, you have the floor.

MOTION

CONTRIBUTORY PENSIONS (AMENDMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS AND BENEFITS) ORDER 2026

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Good morning, Madam President, and good morning to the listening audience.

Madam President, I hereby present for the consideration of Senate the [Contributory Pensions \(Amendment of Contributions and Benefits\) Order](#)

[2026](#), proposed to be made by the Minister of Finance in exercise of the power conferred by section 37 of the Contributory Pensions Act 1970, and I give notice that at a later point in the meeting, I will move that the said draft Order be approved.

The President: Thank you, Minister Wilkerson, spokesperson for Finance in the Senate.

PETITIONS

The President: There are none.

STATEMENTS

The President: We have at least three Statements this morning. The first is in the name of Senator the Honourable Kim Wilkerson, Attorney General and Minister of Justice.

Minister, you have the floor.

PUBLIC GUARDIAN, UPDATE ON ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICE OF

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Thank you, Madam President.

Today, I rise to update this Honourable Senate on Government's progress in [establishing the Office of the Public Guardian](#), a commitment first made in the 2020 Throne Speech. I am conscious that for many in our community, this Office cannot come soon enough. As such, it is my duty to give an account and I do so today.

The case for this Office is not abstract. During the Government's consultations, families, care home administrators and hospital staff described the situations they confront. Seniors who are property rich and cash poor, left in hospital for months while relatives claiming to hold powers of attorney occupy their homes. Adults with intellectual disabilities who, upon turning 18, pass beyond the reach of the Children Act 1998 with nothing to take its place. Families who cannot afford to apply to the Supreme Court for receivership, and families who can, but who emerge from the process divided, because a parent made no plan and each child recalls his wishes differently. These accounts came directly from Bermudians, and they explain why the Government has treated this work as a matter of real consequence.

Madam President, it is also important that the public understands who this Office will serve because it is broader than is sometimes suggested. It will serve our seniors, certainly. But it will equally serve adults living with mental illness, intellectual and developmental disabilities, acquired brain injury and dementia; persons in group homes and on long-stay hospital wards; and vulnerable persons in the community who have no one able or willing to act in their best interests.

At present, the Senior Abuse Register Act 2008 protects persons aged 65 and over, and the Children Act protects those under 18. An adult between those ages with impaired capacity has, outside the narrow provisions of the Mental Health Act 1968, almost no protective framework at all. That gap has existed in our laws for generations and this legislation will close it for the whole of our vulnerable population.

Madam President, let me set out what has been done. The need for an office of this kind was formally documented in 2015 by the Seniors Law Reform Committee. In response, the Government commissioned a scoping exercise which was completed in June 2023 and which produced the policy foundation for the Office with an analysis of the gaps in every relevant Bermuda statute; a review of public guardianship systems in Scotland, England and Wales, Australia and the United States; an assessment of the population in need of these services; and a phased implementation plan.

In October 2024, Cabinet approved the establishment of the Office of the Public Guardian as a two-year pilot programme, approved its funding, mandated annual reporting to Cabinet on the Office's activities and effectiveness and authorised the issuance of drafting instructions for the necessary legislation. I can advise this Honourable Senate that those instructions have now been issued to Parliamentary Counsel, and the Public Guardian Bill is in active drafting.

I wish to address the question that if Cabinet approved a pilot programme, why has the pilot not simply begun? The answer is that the pilot cannot lawfully be conducted until the legal framework is in place to allow the Office to function. The Public Guardian's work will involve investigating the circumstances of persons who may lack capacity, obtaining access to medical and financial records, applying to the Court for guardianship orders and making welfare, health and financial decisions on another adult's behalf. No public officer may exercise powers of that kind without statutory authority.

Indeed, one of the reasons this legislation is needed at all is that officers of Ageing and Disability Services have for years been performing functions akin to guardianship out of sheer necessity, without a purpose-built framework, exposing both those officers and the Government to civil liability. It would therefore be irresponsible to launch the Office on the same unsound footing. The legislation must come first; the pilot follows from it. That is the correct sequence, and it is the sequence the Government is following.

Madam President, the Bill is modelled on the Public Guardian Act 2014 of Queensland, Australia, which our jurisdictional review identified as the most suitable framework for Bermuda, but adapted to our circumstances and reconciled with the Senior Abuse Register Act, the Mental Health Act, the Children Act and the Powers of Attorney Act 1944. It will define the functions and responsibilities of the Public Guardian; au-

thorise the Public Guardian to investigate whether guardianship is warranted; provide for applications to the court and prescribe the criteria the court must apply for before ordering guardianship; and permit both sole guardianship, where no other person is acting, and guardianship oversight, where care is being provided but with shortcomings that require monitoring and supervision.

Ageing and Disability Services will serve as the primary referral gateway and corresponding amendments to its enabling legislation are being pursued in parallel. Because these powers engage fundamental rights under the Bermuda Constitution and the Human Rights Act 1981, the Bill builds in the necessary safeguards; appointment by the court, rights of appeal, periodic review and strict limits on emergency powers. The law must serve the people it is intended to protect, and these safeguards are how it will do so.

Madam President, as to next steps, the draft Bill, once complete, will be released for consultation. We will consult with external stakeholders, with the courts, within Government and with the public, because those who live with these realities daily have practical knowledge that the legislation must reflect. It is the Government's intention to table the Bill thereafter, and to bring the Office into operation with a Public Guardian recruited and in post so that the pilot begins on a proper footing from its first day.

Madam President, there has been evidence that data from Ageing and Disability Services show that reports of senior abuse rose from 100 in 2023/24 to 211 in 2025/26. The Government takes those figures seriously; however, it should be noted that the department attributes a significant portion of the increase to greater public awareness of what constitutes senior abuse, an awareness generated in part by that department's own campaigns encouraging people to come forward. Reporting is hidden . . . has previously hidden how abuse is brought into the light and rising reports reinforce, rather than undermine, the case for the Office we are now establishing.

Madam President, it should not be suggested that vulnerable persons stand unprotected in the meantime as the Senior Abuse [Registrar] and the officers of Ageing and Disability Services continue to investigate reports, to intervene in cases of abuse and to apply to the courts to safeguard the welfare and funds of clients with diminished capacity who have no responsible person to act for them. This legislation will give those officers the full authority of law and extend that protection to the many more who need it.

Madam President, the measure of our justice system is whether it will serve those least able to protect themselves. I will return to this Honourable Senate as the Bill progresses. The work ahead remains substantial, but it is essential, and it is well advanced.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: And thank you, Attorney General and Minister of Justice, the Honourable Kim R. Wilkerson, for your Statement.

The second Statement is in the name of Senator Lindsay K. Simmons, the Junior Minister of Youth, Social Development, and Seniors, and is titled with The Journey of Autism Spectrum Disorder Out-of-School Programmes.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Senator Simmons, you have the floor.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER OUT OF SCHOOL PROGRAMMES

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam President, I rise today to provide the Senate with an update on the work being advanced by The Office of Youth Affairs (TOYA) to [strengthen support for children](#) with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and other neurodivergent needs within our Out of School programme.

This work reflects the Ministry's commitment to inclusive youth development. As more children with neurodivergent needs participate in after school, mid-term, holiday, and summer programmes, our responsibility is clear. Recreational spaces must be welcoming, structured, safe, inclusive, and properly supported.

Madam President, the ASD initiative has developed through observation, parent engagement, [staff] reflection, and programme experience. It was not designed as a single event. It has grown through several programme periods, including the October 2025 mid-term session, the December 2025 holiday session, the February 2026 mid-term session, and the April 2026 programme period. Each session helped staff understand what children need in real recreational settings. Staff observed the value of predictable routines, clear transitions, calm spaces, visual supports, sensory activities, and carefully planned group interaction.

Progress also looks different for each child. For one child, progress may mean joining a game with a peer. For another, it may mean asking for a break before becoming overwhelmed, moving through a transition with less distress, communicating a need, or building confidence through play.

Madam President, that learning has informed the development of an ASD curriculum framework for the Out of School programme. At the centre of this framework is a recreation social skills model, supported by Individual [Recreation] Plans for participating children. These plans will be informed by registration questionnaire calls with parents and guardians, staff observations, previous programme notes, known strengths,

identified triggers, and strategies that have already helped children succeed.

The mission is to provide a structured, high-energy, and inclusive recreational environment where neurodivergent children can build social communication, emotional regulation, independence, and confidence through play. This is recreation with purpose. It helps children practice real-world life skills in a safe and supportive setting.

Madam President, the August 2026 Summer Session will be the first dedicated summer session shaped by this ASD framework. It will bring lessons from previous Out of School programme sessions into a more coordinated summer model, using structured recreation, predictable routines, and staff-supported engagement to help children learn, interact, and grow. We currently have 12 confirmed registrations and room for more.

The curriculum will focus on practical areas of development. Social communication and peer interaction will be supported through cooperative games, buddy activities, structured group challenges, visual communication aids, and low-pressure opportunities for connection. Emotional regulation and self-advocacy will be supported through check-in stations, calm spaces, sensory supports, and simple ways for children to signal when they need a break.

Executive functioning and daily routines will be strengthened through visual schedules, responsibility rotations, transition countdowns, and consistent daily patterns. Personal care and independence will also be woven into the day through routines such as packing belongings, drinking water, using sun protection, cleaning up, and sorting personal items.

Madam President, inclusion must be intentional. Neurodivergent children should have access to meaningful recreational opportunities, while also receiving the support they need to participate safely and confidently. Where appropriate, and where it supports the child's Individual Recreation Plan, there will be planned opportunities for interaction with the wider Out of School programme population. These activities will be guided by staff and shaped around each child's readiness, strengths, and support needs.

Madam President, preparation for the August session includes staff training, practical coaching, and clear expectations across the programme. Staff must be ready before children arrive. The Office of Youth Affairs is placing strong emphasis on mandatory preparatory training, online learning, and direct coaching.

The training pathway will include autism-[informed] practice, routine-based social communication, social narratives, positive reinforcement, and structured work systems. Staff will also receive practical coaching from the programme coordinator, including modelling calm transitions, using sensory spaces appropriately, and supporting self-advocacy without escalating distress. Training will continue throughout the programme through observation, reporting, and guid-

ance. This supports consistency for children, confidence for staff, and trust with parents and guardians.

Madam President, leadership and coordination will be central to the success of this work. The Youth Programme Senior Supervisor will oversee implementation, standards, parent relationships, and programme growth. The Programme Coordinator will operate directly in the field, supporting activity planning, specialised supplies, parent intake, site observations, and the practical delivery of each child's Individual [Recreation] Plan. This structure supports the initiative at both the planning level and the programme delivery level.

Madam President, this is a significant step for the Out of School programme. It builds on the commitment of staff who have worked session after session to understand the [children] and families they serve. It also reflects a wider commitment to prepare environments that help children participate with dignity, [safety], inclusion, and joy.

The August 2026 Summer Session will be an important milestone. Learning from this session will help inform future after school, mid-term, holiday, and summer programming. It will also strengthen how we plan, train, communicate with parents, and support each child's experience.

Madam President, I thank the staff of TOYA and the Out of School programme for their commitment to this work. I also thank the parents and guardians who continue to share information, ask questions, and work with us as partners. Most importantly, I acknowledge the children whose personalities, strengths, needs, and progress continue to guide this work.

Through this ASD initiative, TOYA is taking practical steps to ensure that more children can experience recreation, friendship, independence, and belonging.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: And thank you, Senator Lindsay Simmons, Junior Minister of Youth, Social Development, and Seniors.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

SENATE VISITOR

The President: And Senators, before I move on to the next Statement, I would just like to acknowledge the presence of former MP Wayne Perinchief, the father of our new Minister, [Ryan] Robinson Perinchief, and family. Welcome to you, sir.

[Statements by Senators, continuing]

The President: The next Statement is in the name of, again, Senator Lindsay Simmons, Junior Minister of Youth, Social Development, and Seniors. And its title is the Human Rights Commission 2025 Annual Report.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam President, I am pleased today to submit to this Honourable [Senate] the [Annual Report of the Human Rights Commission](#) for the year ending 31 December 2025.

Madam President, the Commission has a statutory remit to protect and promote human rights under the Human Rights Act 1981. The Commission's mandate involves education, the promotion of principles of equality and non-discrimination, the investigation of alleged contraventions of the Act, and the resolution of complaints of discrimination.

Madam President, as Bermuda's National Human Rights Institution, the Commission plays an important role in protecting and promoting human rights while supporting the effective implementation of international human rights standards. Guided by the United Nations Paris Principles, the Commission carries out its work through complaint handling, education, outreach, advocacy, policy engagement, and advice to government and stakeholders.

Madam President, the Commission serves both as a complaints-handling authority and as a public resource. Through its officers, the Commission provides guidance to individuals, [employers], service providers, landlords, educational institutions, community organisations, and the government regarding rights and obligations under Bermuda's human rights framework. The Commission furthers its objectives by

- receiving and assessing complaints of discrimination;
- investigating alleged contraventions of the Human Rights Act;
- providing voluntary mediation services;
- referring appropriate matters to the Human Rights Tribunal;
- conducting education and outreach initiatives;
- participating in policy reviews and consultations;
- providing guidance to support compliance with human rights obligations; and
- promoting understanding of human rights across Bermuda.

Madam President, included in the Annual Report you will note that during the 2025 calendar year, the Commission received 215 intakes, consisting of complaints, queries, and special programme applications, representing a significant increase from the previous reporting year. Of these, 96 were complaints, 118 were queries, and one was for a Special Programme application. The most commonly identified protected grounds were sex at 19 per cent, disability at 18 per cent, and ethnic or national origins at 14 per cent. These figures continue to highlight the areas where

members of our community most frequently experience concerns about unequal treatment.

Within the protected areas of discrimination identified by [complainants], employment-related discrimination accounted for 31 per cent of reported concerns, followed by discrimination relating to goods, facilities and services at 17 per cent, and workplace harassment at 13 per cent. Overall, 70 per cent of intakes concerned employment and workplace-related matters.

The Commission conducted 24 investigations during the reporting period and referred nine matters to the Human Rights Tribunal, demonstrating a continued increase in matters progressing through the Commission's formal complaint-handling process.

Madam President, a major milestone during the reporting year was the publication of the report entitled "Disability Inclusion in Bermuda: Findings & Recommendations from a National Consultation." This report was informed by extensive consultation with more than 300 residents and was grounded in the principle of *Nothing About Us, Without Us*. The report provides a framework of recommendations to advance disability inclusion in Bermuda and to support implementation of Bermuda's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The consultation revealed that nearly one in two respondents with disabilities reported experiencing discrimination or harassment and highlighted the need for stronger accessibility, accountability, representation, and coordinated national action.

Madam President, the Commission also strengthened its public education and outreach efforts during 2025, delivering 71 education, outreach and advocacy activities, including presentations, consultations, workshops, community discussions, and public awareness initiatives. The Commission continued to collaborate with a wide range of organisations, including Ageing and Disability Services, Bermuda Is Love, Beyond Inclusion, Vision Bermuda, the Bermuda National Library, Imagine Bermuda, OUTBermuda, and many other community partners.

The Commission further expanded its public engagement through the formal integration of social media into its communications strategy. Between March and December 2025, the Commission's digital platforms generated more than 194,000 views, reached over 51,600 individuals, and recorded approximately 5,400 interactions, helping to make information on human rights more accessible to the public.

Madam President, the Commission also represented Bermuda internationally through participation in the Caribbean Disability Network Conference in Barbados under the theme "Breaking Barriers: Advancing Inclusive Education for All Abilities." This engagement strengthened regional collaboration and allowed Bermuda to share lessons learned from its Disability Inclusion Report while contributing to broader discussions

on accessibility and disability rights [throughout] the Caribbean.

The Commission continued its advisory role to Government and stakeholders, participating in approximately 20 policy reviews and consultations on matters including constitutional reform, disability rights, age discrimination, pay transparency, HIV criminalisation, and human rights protections.

Madam President, in closing, I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Human Rights Commission for its dedication to the advancement of human rights in Bermuda and for stewarding the Commission's mandate with integrity and excellence.

In accordance with section 30A of the Human Rights Act 1981, I am pleased to have laid before the Senate the Human Rights Commission Annual Report for the year ending 31 December 2025.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Lindsay Simmons, Junior Minister of Youth, Social Development, and Seniors.

Moving on with our agenda.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The President: There are none.

FIRST READING OF PUBLIC BILLS

The President: There are none.

FIRST READING OF PRIVATE BILLS

The President: There are none.

QUESTION PERIOD

The President: Senators, we will now start with the questions arising out of the [Statements] that were presented this morning, starting, first of all, with the Ministerial Statement, I should say, that was given by Senator the Honourable Kim Wilkerson, J.P., Attorney General and Minister of Justice. And the title was Update on the Establishment of the Office of the Public Guardian.

Would any Senator care to ask questions on this?

Senator Victoria Cunningham, Opposition Leader in the Senate, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: PUBLIC GUARDIAN, UPDATE ON ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICE OF

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Thank you, Madam President, and good morning. And thank you to the Attorney General for bringing this much-needed update. I know a colleague in another place will be delighted.

The first question is that the Statement mentioned that in October 2024 Cabinet approved the establishment of the two-year pilot programme. And I then understand what followed, that you can't give people the abilities of the Guardian without the legislation in place. But my question simply is: What has been happening since October 2024 to now, and assuming that we won't get the legislation and the consultation before the end of this October, what has been happening for the last two years?

QUESTION 2: PUBLIC GUARDIAN, UPDATE ON ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICE OF

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Then a second question would be how is the . . . so we are seeing that the reports of senior abuse are rising from 100 to 211, which, quite frankly, is quite concerning. How are we going to ensure that we have the right people in the right positions? Because this is obviously just senior abuse, not even coming under the mental health, adults with disabilities and the rest of it.

So, how are we going to ensure that we have enough staff and trained staff to potentially deal with increasing numbers?

Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Cunningham.

Would any other Senator care to ask questions on the Statement?

Hearing none . . . I don't see any other questions.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Thank you, Senator Cunningham.

So, the first question was really what has been happening in the past two years? I did attempt to address it in the Statement itself by saying that we have, and our Office has been working very closely with Ageing and Disability [Services].

So, they have the role at the moment. So, it's not as if . . . certainly in relation to seniors that there have been no investigations, because you can tell by the fact that we have the data on the increased number of reporting that the work is being done. I think where the failure is, is just ensuring that the people who are doing the work have the legislative grounding and authority to do the things that they are doing.

And I just heard of a case very recently where people were in need of receivership services, for example, and they just couldn't get it. They couldn't get it done. These are not straightforward. And so, ensuring that even people in Ageing and Disability [Services], those who are carrying out the roles have the necessary legal framework in order to go to court and things of that sort. So, that is the extra part that is coming. But it is not that there aren't efforts to deal with these problems, just as we are recognising really acutely the legislative shortfalls.

The second question was around staffing. I think we don't know what the staffing needs are going to be until the Office begins to roll. So far, the offices in Ageing and Disability have been able to deal with the complaints that they have. But we do know that there is a need. It is really difficult to say at this point. But given that there was funding, a funding spot already for the office itself, there is anticipation that in the next budget cycle, it will be something that we will be talking about. How do we create more staffing support for the office? Supplemental?

The President: Yes, you have a supplemental?

QUESTION 3: PUBLIC GUARDIAN, UPDATE ON ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICE OF

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: It could be a supplemental, but I will use my third question.

Can Madam Attorney General confirm whether or not anyone is still being paid in a consulting role for this office?

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Not at the moment. So, the work currently is being driven out of Ministry Headquarters. We are working very, very closely with Sarah D'Alessio at Ageing and Disability [Services].

And I would say we have been really fortunate to have some legal help on a pro bono basis, expert help at that. Thank you.

The President: Thank you.

It appears there are no further questions on this Statement. So, we will move on then.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Cunningham. And thank you, Minister Wilkerson.

We will move on to the second Statement then, and that's in the name of Senator Lindsay Simmons, and that was The Journey of Autism Spectrum Disorder Out of School [Programmes].

Would any Senator care to ask questions on this Statement?

Senator Cunningham, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER OUT OF SCHOOL PROGRAMMES

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Thank you, Madam President, and thank you to the Junior Minister for delivering the Statement.

A few questions. You mentioned on the Statement mentioned that there were 12 current confirmed registrations. I am just wondering what the total capacity is of the programme.

QUESTION 2: AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER OUT OF SCHOOL PROGRAMMES

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: And second question. The Statement also mentioned staff training. And I am just wondering what percentage of staff are expected to undertake this training and to date how many of those staff have actually undertaken the training.

Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Cunningham.

Would any other Senator care to ask questions on this Statement?

Yes, Senator Tawana Tannock, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER OUT OF SCHOOL PROGRAMMES

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Yes, thank you, Madam President.

My question is regarding the autism charities and services that currently exist. What consultation, if any, was provided or the chance afforded for them, and is there any collaboration with them with this Out of School programme?

The President: Thank you.

And I see Senator Rogers, you have a question on this Statement?

Sen. David Rogers: Good morning, all.

The President: Good morning.

QUESTION 1: AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER OUT OF SCHOOL PROGRAMMES

Sen. David Rogers: Yes. It's good to see the focus on inclusion. Definitely happy about that. My question is: Will these programmes include specifically applied behavioural analysis [as] part of [their] offer or ABA therapy? Because my understanding of this sector is a lot of ABA therapy is provided by practitioners who are not necessarily in a statutory body. So, they do not readily receive insurance reimbursement. And that has been one of the biggest challenges that parents who have, who are dealing with or who are trying to find support for a child with autism.

So, it would be very interesting to see if this is, if there is intended to be a change in ABA coverage with HIP, FutureCare, and GEHI, and if this programme itself also offers those services.

Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Rogers.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam President, to date, 11 staff have been trained, and we are prepared for 25

students. However, it is heavily dependent on staff availability.

Just waiting for my technical officers.

The President: Mm-hmm.

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Can I ask a supplementary to that answer?

The President: Certainly.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: So, if we have got capacity for 25 students, is there the potential for a non-neurodivergent sibling to join with their sibling? So, you know, able mentally, I don't know what the word would be. I don't want to say normal. Non-neurodivergent children to join a sibling.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: So, the Out of School programme is already established. This is an extension of it to add students [who are] neurodivergent. So, all children are welcome. It is just a special programme that we are doing for children with neurodivergence or ASD.

The President: Mm-hmm.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: So, we have been doing training and partnerships with Tomorrow's Voices and Solstice.

And we are also working with Ms. Sherri Lee Bucci, who is the President of Bermuda Autism Support and Education, acronym BASE. So, this is an Out of School programme that we do during breaks. So, TOYA will not be conducting behavioural assessments as they are outside of the remit. But their support will be sought through the appropriate agencies.

And I believe that answers all the questions, Madam President.

The President: Yes. I believe so. Thank you very much, Senator Lindsay Simmons, for responding to the questions on your Statement.

And the final statement is also yours, and that is the Human Rights Commission 2025 Annual Report.

Would any Senator care to ask questions on this Ministerial Statement?

Senator Tannock, you have the floor.

QUESTION 1: HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Yes, thank you, Madam President. My first . . . thank you to the Human Rights Commission for submitting this report in a timely fashion.

My first question is regarding the amount . . . I mean, there is a lot of information and a lot of statistical information. However, I don't see what has been done with the statistical information. So, my first question is: There were six matters forwarded to the Human Rights Tribunal in 2022/23. How many of those matters were heard and concluded?

¹QUESTION 2: HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Sen. Tawana Tannock: My second [question] is that there were six forwarded to the Human Rights Tribunal in 2024. How many of those were heard and concluded? And are any of the nine that are reported as being concluded last year actually the tribunal matters that have been listed for 2022, 2023, and 2024?

So, essentially, what I am asking is: There is a report that there have been nine tribunals in 2025, but it doesn't state when those tribunals began or commenced. So, I am trying to figure out if what has been reported as nine tribunals in 2025 are actually part of the six from 2022/23, part of the six from 2024, to find out how many tribunals were actually held and have been concluded. Because if you look at the report, you just see a summary of one tribunal finding, and it says that others may have been sent to mediation or whatever as the case might be.

But I would like to know when that tribunal . . . when was that sent to tribunal? So how quickly are matters being heard and how quickly are matters being disposed of? That's my first [sic] question.

QUESTION 3: HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Sen. Tawana Tannock: My second [sic] question is: Last year the Bermuda Government signed onto a new UN contract, and we were told that the Human Rights Commission would be helping the Government to advance that. I did not see any discussion about that in the report. I also did not see any discussion about CEDAW, [Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women] which we signed up to also many years ago. And I did not see any discussion about any furtherance of that in the report.

And then when I saw the statistical breakdown of matters that have arisen, I saw that it says that if the Human Rights Commission feels like goods and services, discrimination of goods and services is underreported. We have always seen employment issues. But what I didn't see was, *and as a result, this is the action that we took*. So, we held information sessions. We held training sessions. I saw 20 pages of numbers and no programming.

Those are my three questions.

¹ [See answer to question at page 1125.](#)

The President: Thank you, Senator Tannock.

And I believe, Senator Cunningham, you have questions on the Statement as well.

QUESTION 1: HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Yes, so my first one is kind of in relation to Senator Tannock's, I think, first question. And that's when we are talking about the nine matters being referred to the Human Rights Tribunal. Along with her question, what is the average time that it takes for one of these, from referral to decision, ultimately, of these tribunals? And as a supplementary to that, is there a backlog under that?

QUESTION 2: HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: And then my second question, because it speaks about the HIV criminalisation, and I know that there are discussions about the Human Rights Act, but does the Government intend to repeal that section of the criminal code for the HIV—sorry, HIV criminalisation within the Human Rights Act?

Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Tannock *[sic]*. Sorry, Senator Cunningham.

[Laughter]

The President: I am looking at Senator Tannock. I am sorry.

Would any other Senator care to ask questions on this Statement?

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Madam President.

The President: Yes.

POINT OF CLARIFICATION

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: I think a point of clarification, Senator Cunningham's question really didn't relate to the report itself—

The President: Mm-hmm.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: —in relation to the question. But I will attempt to answer the question because I think the question relates to kind of the legislative layout.

And what I would say, for the Senator's benefit and the benefit of the listening public, is that I think Senators will be aware that we are going to be looking at . . . they have been circulating some other changes to the Human Rights Act. There is recognition that there needs to be a review of the Human Rights Act itself with

a view to modernisation and change, and there is recognition that we are, you know, making Band-Aid approaches as matters arise.

And so, I just wanted to make it clear that that is in the view of Chambers and of the Ministry, that we should be looking in the future to a new, more modern Human Rights Act as opposed to this kind of system of Band-Aids.

Thank you.

The President: Thank you for that clarification, Madam Attorney General.

I think we are still waiting on responses from the technical offices to Senator Simmons.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Madam President, if I may, I can answer at least one of the questions from Senator Cunningham, around the average time of disposals of cases.

Our Ministry meets with the Human Rights Commission on a quarterly basis to examine, you know, what matters are before them, clearly to identify if there are matters on which there have been findings which would then need to result in perhaps policy change or legislative change. And so, it is a very difficult question, because we have asked it before, as to an average time. An average time doesn't mean anything in the context of these cases.

The time of the case depends on the severity of the matter, whether there is evidence, and very often the Commission is waiting on complainants to continue to bring the information for their cases, and sometimes for various reasons that can be challenging for a complainant, and often that leads to the delay. So, it is not a matter of the processing and timing for the Commission itself. Yes, often it is the parties. So, it is a difficult question to answer. There is no average as such.

The President: Mm-hmm.

Thank you, Madam Attorney General, for that clarity.

Senator Simmons, [do] you have responses?

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Yes. Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, regarding the matters referred to the Tribunal, the nine reported were within the year 2025 and not from previous years. They represent nine matters in total which were sent to the Human Rights Tribunal in 2025.

The President: Mm-hmm.

Senator Tannock.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Yes, thank you.

I actually have a follow-up to that. So, my question was: The six in 2022 and the six in 2024, how were those resolved?

[Crosstalk]

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam President, I can return with the answer. That actually wasn't in my Statement today. The technical officers might give me an answer, but that might be something that they have to go back and look at because we are doing the annual report for 2025, not 2022/23.

The President: Duly noted.
Senator Tannock.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Yes, Madam President.
Those figures are from the annual report for 2025, so they were presented to the Senate today.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: So, again, I did get information from the technical officers. We can undertake to get you those answers, but they would have to pull the figures. They were just going off of my Statement today. So, we will undertake, and I can give you a written response on that.

Does that work?

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Yes. Thanks.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you.

The President: Senator Simmons has indicated you are waiting for an additional answer.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Yes, one more answer.

The President: Just one more answer.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: It is just to, again, reiterate that the numbers were referenced. However, the figures will need to be looked at in fulsome. We would have to get each of the six and give you the answer, and I will undertake to get that to you in a written response as soon as possible.

Thank you, Madam President. I think I answered all the questions today.

The President: Yes, you certainly have, and thank you, Senator Lindsay Simmons.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senators who have asked questions on this Statement.

We will now move on to the questions that were presented for response today, and the first one was to Senator Lauren Bell to provide written response to a

parliamentary question from Senator Victoria Cunningham.

And, Senator Bell, I just . . . what the question is . . .

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Should I read the question?

[Crosstalk]

The President: Did you get a response?

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Yes. Do I not read the question?

The President: No, you are not required to read the question. The response is—

[Crosstalk]

The President: If you have received the response,—

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Received.

The President: —that is fine.

QUESTION: MINISTRY OF HEALTH REPORTS OUTSTANDING

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: *The publication of the following reports are currently outstanding: The Health Insurance Department (HID) Year End Review for 2019–2020; The Bermuda Health Council (BHeC) Annual Report for 2023–2024; The 2019 Actuarial Report relating to Bermuda's health insurance system; and The Bermuda Hospitals Board (BHB) 2024 Annual Report. Can the Junior Minister please inform the Senate the reason for their delay in publication and what steps, if any, have been or will be taken to ensure future compliance with the legislative publication and/or tabling requirements?*

The President: Next, Senator Lauren Bell was to provide oral response to a parliamentary question from Senator Cunningham as well. And [Senator Cunningham] you can read this question.

QUESTION 1: ALLSHORES MERGER, LEGISLATION TO GOVERN PROVIDER CONDUCT MISSING

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Thank you, Madam President.

To Senator Bell, the question is: No legislation or regulations have been introduced to govern insurer or provider conduct since the Allshores merger completed in 2025. Will the Junior Minister state whether

the Government intends to bring forward such legislation, and if so, on what timeline?

Sen. Lauren Bell: Thank you, Madam President, and I thank my colleague for her question.

Madam President, the Government does intend to bring forward legislation to govern the insurer and provider conduct, and this work is scheduled for introduction in the third quarter of this year. This timeline reflects this Government's commitment to strengthening oversight, improving accountability, and ensuring that conduct within the health system aligns with the standards expected of entities operating within a regulated environment.

The President: Do you have a supplementary?

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: I have a supplementary question.

The President: Senator Cunningham, you can ask your supplementary.

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Thank you, Madam President.

Has the Bermuda Health Council, the BHC, completed its review of the Allshores pharmacy network policy? And just because I believe Allshores are still proceeding with that, so just wondering if the review has been completed.

Sen. Lauren Bell: Madam President, I am just going to seek guidance from you because this appears to be a completely different question, not a supplementary question.

The President: It is a different question, and not a supplementary.

Sen. David Rogers: So, my question supplement to the question asked would be: So, the expectation is that it will be in the third quarter of the year. Will it be addressing pharmacy networks? Will we be receiving the analysis that the Health Council did before there was . . . during the hiatus where the arrangements between Allshores and the pharmacy were conducted?

And also, has the Government done an impact assessment on how it will affect other pharmacies to have these sorts of sole provider arrangements?

Sen. Lauren Bell: Madam President, I have the same unreadiness. This appears not to be a supplemental question but appears to be a completely different question. And it appears it is not one, but it was two questions incorporated in my colleague's presentation just now. So, I seek your guidance.

The President: Yes, they are not related.

Sen. David Rogers: I am slightly confused. The question is clearly related to—

POINT OF ORDER

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Point of order, Madam President. You have already ruled on it.

Sen. David Rogers: I am seeking clarity from Madam President.

I am slightly confused. The Statement is clearly related to how Allshores is currently operating under an unregulated system. If there are going to be regulations in the third quarter, I need to understand how that—

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Point of order, Madam President.

Sen. Lauren Bell: Madam President, I believe—

Sen. David Rogers: I haven't finished my statement—

POINT OF ORDER

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: But point of order, Madam President. It is a point of order.

Madam President, what he is asking is not in the Statement. You already ruled—

Sen. David Rogers: That is not a point of order.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: It is a point of order. Madam President has already ruled on it.

The President: I will rule. The question is not related.

Sen. David Rogers: The question is not related.

The President: No.

Sen. David Rogers: Thank you for your . . .

The President: Senator Bell, have you . . .

Sen. Lauren Bell: I believe we have addressed the questions that have been raised with your ruling, and I am prepared to move on to the next question.

The President: Fine.

So, the next question posed was—

Sen. Lauren Bell: I believe the next question is to be answered by Senator Lindsay Simmons.

QUESTION 1: EDUCATION AUTHORITY EXPECTED DATE FOR LEGISLATION

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Okay, my next question was for oral response from the Junior Minister in charge of Education.

Can the Junior Minister please inform the Senate the current expected date for the Education Authority legislation to be tabled in the House of Assembly, and advise whether this timeline has changed as a result of the recent change in Minister?

Thank you.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, it is anticipated that the Educational Authority legislation will be tabled and debated in the House of Assembly in the September 2026 sitting. The timeline has not changed as a result of the recent change in Ministers. I would also note to the Honourable Senator that the Minister of Education intends to deliver a Ministerial Statement in the House of Assembly this Friday, providing a full update on the Education Authority Bill.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: And thank you, Senator Simmons, for your response.

The next question . . . sorry?

[Crosstalk]

The President: Yes. You just caught it in time.

[Laughter]

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Thank you, Madam President. And thank you for that answer, and we look forward to seeing the legislation.

Can the Junior Minister confirm whether that legislation will speak to the independence of an Educational Authority, including independence over staffing, school-level outcomes, and such like?

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, what I can say is the Minister is actively speaking to stakeholders, and he will be giving a Ministerial Statement on this in full on Friday. So, look out for that.

The President: Thank you, Senator Simmons, for your response.

The next question . . . I would just like to ask Senator Rogers . . . there was a written question that required a written response to a parliamentary question from Senator David Rogers, and I would just ask whether or not you received a response.

Sen. David Rogers: I did receive the response. Thank you.

The President: Thank you.

QUESTION: CARICOM FULL MEMBERSHIP, POTENTIAL HEALTH CARE COST IMPLICATIONS

Sen. David Rogers: *Can the Junior Minister please advise whether the Ministry has undertaken, or intends to undertake, any analysis of the potential health care cost implications of full CARICOM membership for Bermuda; and if such analysis exists, will the Junior Minister provide details, including any categories of treatments, services, or pharmaceuticals considered?*

The President: Moving on now to the next . . . the next question was Senator Lauren Bell to provide an oral response to a parliamentary question from Senator David Rogers.

Senator Rogers, please read your question.

QUESTION 1: VECTOR CONTROL QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE METRICS

Sen. David Rogers: Thank you, Madam President.

Government has previously indicated that its rodent strategy is one of reduction and control, rather than total eradication. Based on the most recent data available to the [Ministry] and the Vector Control team, does the Government consider that it has met its quality and performance metrics for vector control, including rodent control, for the current [fiscal] year?

Sen. Lauren Bell: I thank my colleague for his question.

Madam President, based on the most recent data available to the Vector Control team, the Government considers that the Vector Control programme is meeting its current quality and performance standards. However, we also recognise that there is scope to strengthen how performance is both measured and reported.

Bermuda cannot fully eradicate rats. Experience both locally and internationally demonstrates that rats are highly adaptable, reproduce rapidly, and readily exploit available food and shelter. According to the Government's Vector Control programme, it is focused on prevention, population suppression, and reducing public health risks rather than eradication.

Rodent control extends well beyond the mere placement of bait. The department routinely treats public drains and identifies hot spots, inspects properties to reduce access to food and beverage and harbourage, and supports food establishments and animal premises in maintaining compliance, and enforces the rodent control regulations. The department also responds to

public complaints, investigates reported infestations, and requires property owners to address conditions that contribute to rodent activity.

Sustainable success depends on a shared responsibility, Madam President, with residents and businesses properly managing waste, eliminating food sources, and reducing opportunities for rodents to shelter. Public education remains a cornerstone of this programme, Madam President. The department continues to provide guidance on rodent-proofing properties, proper waste storage, responsible feeding practices, and recognising the early signs of rodent activity.

In response to recent increases in rodent sightings and heightened concerns regarding rodent-borne diseases, the department is modernising its Vector Control services in response. This work includes enhancing staff training, updated control strategies, improved data management systems, and the introduction of new technologies. As part of this effort, Vector Control officers will attend pest management workshops hosted by the US National Environmental Health Association in August.

The modernisation programme also strengthens the department's performance framework by introducing enhanced indicators, including response times, reoccurrence rates, treatment-to-resolution ratios, and hotspot analysis. These measures will improve accountability, support evidence-based decision-making, and ensure that resources continue to be directed to where they are most needed.

The President: Senator Tannock.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Yes, thank you, Madam President.

I have a follow-up supplementary question to Senator Cunningham's *[sic]*. Currently, Senator Bell, what are the performance *[metrics]* for vector control? How are they measured?

[Inaudible interjections]

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Oh, sorry. Supplementary to Senator Rogers. My apologies.

So, I know that it was indicated that there is room for improvement, but how are they currently measured? So, is it the number of bait boxes, the number of drains cleaned, the number of rats caught?

What are the performance measures? Thank you.

The President: Senator Rogers.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Sen. David Rogers: Yes, I have a supplementary question as well.

The President: Mm-hmm.

Sen. David Rogers: And thank you for the response. It was very thorough. And I am happy she mentioned the vector (how to say?) the rodent-borne illnesses.

Given that we are in a place where we have to live with the rats now, and not eradicate them, how has that affected Bermuda's emergency preparedness plan, our surveillance system, and the laboratory capacity specifically for rodent-borne diseases? So, things like *Yersinia pestis*, things like leprosy. How have we factored that into our close exposure with rodents now?

The President: Thank you, Senator Rogers.

[Pause]

Sen. Lauren Bell: Madam President, while I wait for some support from the technical team, I just want to highlight, in response to Senator Rogers' question, that there are new methods that are currently being developed. In response to his question. And I will just wait for my technical team to provide me some additional information.

Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Bell.

[Pause]

Sen. Lauren Bell: And just further to my response, Madam President, while new methods are being developed, it is important to highlight that the impact of illnesses is low, and there is very little impact on the labs. So far there have only been one to three cases so far reported.

The President: Hmmm.

[Crosstalk]

The President: Senator Bell, are you still waiting on any further responses?

Sen. Lauren Bell: Yes, Madam President. I am just waiting for a response to Senator Tannock's question, if we just give it a minute. If not, I am prepared to provide her that response offline. But if we just give it one more minute. Thank you.

The President: We will certainly give you a few more minutes.

[Pause]

Sen. Lauren Bell: Madam President, in response to Senator Tannock's questions, I just want to clarify that the team is currently working on amending the current

performance measures to better provide reporting, including how to better identify hot spots.

[Inaudible interjection]

Sen. Lauren Bell: Thank you, Madam President.

And I believe I have answered the questions, the supplementary questions, and I am prepared to—

Sen. David Rogers: Wait. Quick question. You answered—

The President: Thank you. But the Senator . . . he had a second question.

Can you present your second [supplemental] question?

Sen. David Rogers: So just for clarity, the answer to my supplementary question was that the persistence of rat-borne diseases is low, and we have new technology. That was the answer?

Sen. Lauren Bell: Yes. So, to provide further clarification, my responses were that new methods are being developed. And in addition, the outbreak of diseases is so low. So, there is no current real impact on the labs, et cetera, as there have only been one to three cases so far. So, yes, that was my answer to his question.

Sen. David Rogers: Okay. And the supplementary question—

[Crosstalk]

The President: Thank you. That was—

Sen. David Rogers: —What specific resources?

The President: Second question.

Sen. David Rogers: Oh, I am sorry. I can't ask another supplementary?

The President: Your second supplementary.

Sen. David Rogers: Yes, this is my second supplementary.

What specific funding resources or capacity-building have been provided to the hospital in preparation for any type of rat-borne disease outbreak?

The President: Mm-hmm.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Madam President, the Senator is entitled to ask any supplemental question that he wishes.

The President: Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: I am challenged with the logic of the question, however, given the previous answer that the incidences of rat-borne illnesses are very, very low. And I believe the question is: How is the hospital preparing for the eventuality of a threat of increased disease that doesn't appear to be borne out by the data?

Sen. David Rogers: So, I will take that as an answer that it is not . . . there is no preparation. That is the answer of the Government?

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: I was trying to get him to refine his question, given the context that the apparent risk is low. I thought he might have wanted to refine the question.

Sen. David Rogers: So as the prevalence of the rat population increases, and there is more contact with the human population, it may begin slowly. But as disease operates, they spread [via contamination] through touch, through airborne. So, if we are going to talk about the progress of disease, we can do that.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: The question was about the funding.

The President: Yes.

Sen. David Rogers: So, what funding has been provided to the hospital? If we are not going to eradicate or significantly reduce the rat population, we can expect disease.

Sen. Lauren Bell: And I would like to, Madam President, just reiterate what has already been said by the Attorney General.

With such a low impact on rats, there's currently no real impact on BHB. And I believe that is the answer.

Sen. David Rogers: I am okay with that answer.

Sen. Lauren Bell: Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Lauren Bell, for the clarification. And thank you also to the Attorney General for assisting in that.

Senator Rogers, though, you have your second question. Would you like to read your second question that you had?

Sen. David Rogers: Yes.

Will the Junior Minister identify and list—

The President: Please proceed.

Sen. David Rogers: Oh, thank you.

Will the Junior Minister identify and list . . . Oh, sorry.

The President: This is CARICOM.

QUESTION 2: CARICOM FULL MEMBERSHIP ANALYSIS OF HEALTH CARE PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

Sen. David Rogers: I was reading it off the . . . I was reading it off.

Can the Junior Minister please advise what assessment, if any, has been made by the Ministry comparing health care partnership or cooperation arrangements available to full CARICOM member states with those currently accessible to Bermuda under its Associate Membership status?

[Crosstalk]

Sen. Lauren Bell: Thank you, colleague, for your question.

And just to provide further clarification to my colleague, that while such assessments are being undertaken and are expected to be articulated in the White Paper regarding CARICOM, which is currently under development, it is important to highlight this is being carried out through another Ministry, which is the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The President: So, Senator Rogers, as has been stated, it is being handled by another Ministry. She is not able to address this question.

Sen. David Rogers: That is fine.

The President: Thank you, Senators.

Now we will move on to Senator Tarik Smith, who wants to provide a question to Senator Lauren Bell for oral response today.

So, Senator Tarik Smith, would you like to read your question?

QUESTION 1: MINISTRY OF HEALTH CONSULTATION FOR OVERSEAS TESTING BY QUEST

Sen. Tarik Smith: Yes. Thank you, Madam President, and good morning to my Senate colleagues and the listening audience.

For the Junior Minister, Senator Lauren F. Bell, can she please answer:

Following KEMH's announcement that it will cease sending certain tests overseas to external laboratories such as Quest, was the Ministry of Health consulted on or required to approve this decision before implementation?

Sen. Lauren Bell: Thank you, colleague, for your question.

Madam President, the BHB advised the Ministry of Health of its decision

to discontinue sending certain tests overseas to external laboratories such as Quest. I can further confirm that the Ministry supported that course of action.

The President: Senator Tannock.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Yes, thank you. I have a supplemental to Senator Tarik Dunbar Smith's question, and that is . . . when the BHB advised the Minister, or when the Minister or Ministry agreed to this course of action, was there any analysis done of which tests will no longer be able to be given at all because they won't be able to be sent overseas?

So, do we know which tests we will no longer have access to because Bermudian labs cannot provide them? Was that part of the advice given, or the consideration by the Minister?

I am just trying to see if there is a shortfall when we say the implementation was approved. Was that part of the reasoning, or was that thought of?

[Crosstalk]

Sen. David Rogers: I have a supplementary as well.

The President: Senator Rogers.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. David Rogers: Were any other external stakeholders consulted to assess sort of clinical risks, behavioural costs, impact to the patient before the decision was made?

The President: Mm-hmm.

[Pause]

Sen. Lauren Bell: Madam President, I thank my colleagues for their supplemental questions. I am just waiting for some guidance from the technical team.

The President: Thank you, Senator Bell.

[Crosstalk]

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

SENATE VISITOR

The President: Senators, while we are waiting for the response, I would just like to acknowledge the presence of the former Clerk in the . . . [Mrs.] Shernette Wolffe. She is in the Gallery.

Welcome to you.

[Question Period, continuing]

[Pause]

Sen. Lauren Bell Madam President, in response to Senator Tannock's supplementary question, I just want to give assurance to not only her but to the listening public that this change only relates to tests that are sent overseas for analysis. So BHB will no longer be facilitating that.

Tests done locally are still done on the Island, so it will no longer be BHB's role to send away tests to Quest.

The President: Senator Tannock.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Yes, thank you.

I just wanted to make sure I understand. So BHB will no longer send the tests to Quest, but the private labs can send the tests to Quest?

[No audible response]

Sen. Tawana Tannock: So, for tests that can't be analysed in Bermuda, how do those now get analysed? What is the facility? What is the . . . If your test cannot be . . . if we don't have the capacity in Bermuda, or the equipment to analyse the test, how does that test then get analysed overseas?

Are we saying that the individual labs will then send it overseas . . . and not BHB? So, we still have that route of access, but just that BHB won't be facilitating it?

[Pause]

Sen. Lauren Bell: Yes, that's correct, Senator Tannock.

So, access is not being denied. And I think that is the important emphasis here. Right? Private labs still have those tests processed themselves through whatever their arrangements are with overseas labs.

[No audible response]

Sen. Lauren Bell: You are welcome.

The President: Mm-hmm.

Senator Tarik Dunbar Smith, you have the floor.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Tarik Smith: Just another supplementary question, Senator Bell.

What assessment, if any, has the Ministry made of this decision's impact on the access to diag-

nostic testing across the health care system, including whether any tests will become unavailable, delayed, or more expensive, or concentrated under a single provider? If no such assessment was conducted, will the Junior Minister please say so explicitly and explain why not?

[Pause]

The President: For the information of the listening audience, I just want to advise that Senator Bell is waiting for a response.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam President?

The President: Yes.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: If I may. The point of the hospital is to no longer be bearing the administrative cost and burden of being the middleman on behalf of the private providers who can still arrange tests themselves.

The President: Mm-hmm.

[Pause]

The President: Senator Bell, are you waiting for any further information from your technical officers?

Sen. Lauren Bell: I am, Madam President. But if there is a concern about the delay in the response, I am happy to provide that response to the relevant colleagues.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam President, I think part of my answer did answer the question for them . . . that the private providers can still do the test. It is not like the test can't be done at all. It is just that the hospital will no longer bear the cost.

So, I think the question that was asked is a bit irrelevant because they could still get the test. So, I believe the answer was pretty much answered with my response.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you.

Senator Rogers.

Sen. David Rogers: Any comment on the external consultation, or is that one of the questions she is going to get back to me on?

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam President, again, I would like to say that I can't speak on what they did with consultation, but I think that because the test can still be done at the private providers, it is not like you can't get the test. If the test could not be done at all, I can understand a fulsome consultation. But in my estima-

tion, they could still get the test done through their provider, private provider, so there is no need to go to the hospital. So, I think it does answer the question.

The President: Thank you.
Senator Tannock.

SUPPLEMENTARY

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Yes, thank you, Madam President.

I had a supplementary to Senator Simmons's statement in which she stated that the hospital will no longer bear the cost of the test. So, my question is now, who will bear the cost of the test?

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Just—

The President: Minister—

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: —to clarify, if I might.

The President: Certainly.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Senator Simmons's statement was that the hospital is merely being the middleman, as she described it.

The President: Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: So, it is sending the test overseas. They are no longer going to do that. Private providers will still provide the test. They bear the cost, and their patients, of the test and those things being sent abroad.

The President: Senator Tannock, did you hear—

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: And I think the important point in, I think, the essence of Senator Tarik Dunbar Smith's question was whether there was any impact on access to services.

The President: Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: There is not.

The President: There is no access—

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: And there clearly was an assessment of that.

The President: Senator Dunbar Smith, you are satisfied with . . .

[No audible response]

The President: With that said, then, Senators, we will move on to the next set of questions that were provided

by [Senator] Tarik J. D. Smith, and that is to Senator Mischa Fubler to provide oral responses.

And would you like to read your question—

Sen. Tarik Smith: Sure. Thank you, Madam President.

The President: —Senator Smith.

QUESTION: *WAR-BABY FOX* AND *JL CECIL SMITH* FERRY BOATS, UPDATE ON PUBLIC SERVICE SINCE NOVEMBER 2025

Sen. Tarik Smith: And, again, good morning to the listening audience and my Senate colleagues.

For the Junior Minister Mischa Fubler, now that the two new fast ferries, *MV Cecil Smith* and *MV War-baby Fox*, have been in public service since November 2025, will the Junior Minister please provide an update on the project's performance to date against the cost, environmental and operational claims that were made at the time of delivery of the vessels?

Thank you.

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Thank you, Madam President, and thank you to my colleague, Senator Smith, for providing an opportunity for us to highlight some of the successes of the Department of Marine and Ports.

And to your question around performance versus cost, the ferries are performing as expected against budgeted costs. It should be noted that the cost of ridership is subsidised by the government, as it should be, in my opinion. Passenger ridership across all routes will be reviewed at the conclusion of the current season to assess utilisation and inform future service planning.

In regard to environmental performance, the vessels are performing in accordance with the environmental expectations and specifications established at the time of delivery with respect to the 25 per cent lower CO₂ emissions when compared to the existing ferries on a passenger-mile basis, along with a reduction in fuel usage costs by switching from jets to conventional propellers.

Around operational performance, the vessels are operating as intended and are meeting operational performance expectations.

I also want to take a moment to kind of highlight some of the significant improvements in service lifecycle. In comparison, the previous versions of the *War-baby Fox* and *JL Cecil Smith* required engine rebuilds at a 7,000-operating-hours cycle, whereas the new ferries only require that at a 50,000-operating-hours cycle.

And I believe those were the responses to the question that was posed, Madam President.

The President: Senator Tarik Smith.

SUPPLEMENTARIES

Sen. Tarik Smith: Yes, just two supplementary questions, Junior Minister Fubler.

Were there any mechanical issues or unscheduled withdrawals from service in the first several months of operation of the two new ferries? And if so, what was the cause and the resolution?

Secondly, will the Minister commit to tabling a formal performance report once the ferries have completed a full year of service?

Thank you, Madam President, and thank you, Junior Minister.

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Thank you, Madam President.

I will await the response from the technical officers responsible for the management of the ferries.

[Pause]

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Thank you, Madam President.

While I await the responses from the technical officers in regard to commitment to a report on the effectiveness of the service run time of the ferries, I will endeavour to ensure that we incorporate that into the narrative we give during the budget process where we kind of highlight service of the ferries. Whether that would be a specific report, I think, is probably a question better placed to the substantive Minister in another place.

The President: Mm-hmm.

[Pause]

The President: Senator Fubler, so, that is your . . .

Sen. Mischa Fubler: No, Madam President. I am awaiting detail around whether there were service outages and the causes of the service outages, I think, were the supplemental questions.

The President: All right. Thank you.

[Pause]

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Thank you, Madam President.

Some of the responses I have had from the technical officers include the application of some minor mechanical adjustments after three months of operation. I am not sure if Senator Smith is the owner of a boat or not, but [he] would understand as an engine is new, you tend to have a break-in service period.

I am following up as to whether there were any service outages as a result of the adjustments that have been made.

The President: Mm-hmm.

[Pause]

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Thank you, Madam President.

I am receiving confirmation that there were indeed some minor service interruptions as a result of the mechanical adjustments that were required in the early months of the new ferries operating.

Hopefully, that answers the supplemental questions posed, Madam President.

The President: Yes, Senator Tarik Smith says yes.

And I have just been advised that Senator Lindsay Simmons has a response to questions that were asked earlier.

Senator Simmons.

QUESTION: 2 HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

[Continuation of answer]

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, instead of giving the written response, I think the public might want to know, so I will give an oral response if that is okay.

[No audible response]

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: No problem.

So, regarding the questions . . . statistics related to the Human Rights Tribunal matters between 2022 and 2023. There was a total of six matters referred to the Human Rights Tribunal, three in each year.

From 2023, the Human Rights Tribunal rendered decisions related to two of those matters, and one matter was resolved between the parties through the Commission's Voluntary Mediation Programme.

From 2022, the Human Rights [Tribunal] rendered a decision in relation to one of those matters. Of the remaining two, the Human Rights Tribunal heard evidence in one of them, and a decision is being prepared. With respect to the final matter from 2022, there have been legal arguments put forth to the Human Rights Tribunal, which includes an intervention. This matter has been scheduled for a submissive hearing to take place in 2026.

The Commission observed a trend over the five years where disabilities were cited as one of the primary reported grounds. Although the Commission undertook to study disability inclusion prior to Bermuda becoming a signatory to the UNCPRD, in 2024 the Commission's Disability Inclusion Report illustrated the findings and concerns of the public consultation. Importantly, stakeholder engagement across all sectors of the community, including a presentation to all Members of the Legislature in September 2025 . . . it is helpful to note that the findings of the reported year may not always inform the programming of the same year. However, as with disability inclusion, the trend assisted in

prioritising the consultation. I hope that answers your question.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Somewhat.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: No problem. You are welcome.

The President: Thank you.

So, Senators, that concludes the Question Period, and I thank all Senators for their questions and for all the Senators who responded.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The President: We will now move on to the Orders of the Day, and that is consideration . . . this is the only Order of the Day we have, and that is consideration of the Contributory Pensions (Amendment of Contributions and Benefits) Order 2026. And that is in the name of Senator the Honourable Kim R. Wilkerson, the spokesperson for Finance.

Senator . . . Minister, you have the floor.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Thank you, Madam President, and I am smiling. I am the spokesperson for Finance *today*.

The President: Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Going forward,—

The President: Yes.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: —my colleague to the left will be the spokesperson for Finance, except that, as before, I will be dealing with matters relating to the National Anti-Money Laundering Committee pieces of legislation. But otherwise, over to the left.

The President: The Minister will be—

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: The new Minister will be the man. But for today, Madam President, thank you.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 71(2)

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: I move that the provisions of Standing Order 71(2) be suspended.

The President: Mm-hmm.

[Motion carried: Standing Order 71(2) suspended.]

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Madam President, I move that Senate do now take into consideration the Contributory Pensions (Amendment of Contributions and Benefits) Order 2026, proposed to be made by the

Minister of Finance, in exercise of the power conferred by section 37 of the Contributory Pensions Act 1970.

The President: Is there any objection to that motion?
No objection.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Thank you, Madam President.

DRAFT ORDER

CONTRIBUTORY PENSIONS (AMENDMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS AND BENEFITS) ORDER 2026

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Madam President, I lay with the Governor's recommendation the [Contributory Pensions \(Amendment \[of Contributions and\] Benefits Order 2026](#), which reflects the Government's continued commitment to keep our promise to increase pensions by the rate of inflation every year.

Madam President, the contribution that our seniors have made to this country are invaluable. Therefore, this Government remains committed to increasing pensions by the rate of inflation every year, which is something that we promised inside of our Election Manifesto. We recognise the many challenges seniors face due to the rising cost of living. Our goal is to provide support and ensure that they can live the dignified life they deserve.

Madam President, contributory pension increases are just one aspect of that support. Whether it is financial assistance or other government support, or if they are public sector retirees who have seen the recent 10 per cent increase to their pensions, these are the things the Government continues to do to ensure we pay homage and ensure that the relationship between the Government and our seniors remain strong.

Madam President, Bermuda offers retired individuals a combination of social insurance benefits from the Contributory Pension Fund (CPF) and a mandatory employer-sponsored occupational pension. Ideally, the social insurance benefit serves as a first tier, or a basic pension, which a second-tier occupational pension should supplement. However, many retirees are not receiving an occupational pension, through no fault of their own. This situation is mainly because occupational pensions were not mandatory until 1999 when the [National Pension Scheme \(Occupational Pensions\) Act \[1998\]](#) was enacted. As a result, some retirees rely solely on social insurance benefits for their income.

Madam President, this situation could be better, and the Government continues to work to ensure that seniors who rely heavily on their social insurance benefits have a dependable source of income. However, it should be noted, Madam President, that individuals who are still having challenges, or who may not have an occupational pension can always avail themselves of the other social assistance programmes that are available in financial assistance.

Madam President, notwithstanding the above, the CPF benefit provides an important base retirement income. Currently, the maximum pension paid under the CPF is around 29 per cent of the median annual gross earnings for Bermudians, as indicated in the Bermuda Job Market Employment Brief produced by the Department of Statistics in [October] 2025. This compares closely with the United Kingdom where the full basic state pension as a percentage of average earnings is about 30 per cent.

Madam President, the purpose of the Order is to increase pensions and other benefits under the Contributory Pensions Act 1970 by 1.74 per cent as of 16 August 2026, when increases are typically made to the benefits. Per the government actuary, the 1.74 per cent increase in benefits would represent a small negative impact on the fund.

Madam President, Honourable Members are advised that according to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the cost of living increased by 1.74 per cent from September 2024 to August 2025. This figure represents the average year-to-date change since the last benefit increase. Therefore, the proposed benefit increase fully covers the prevailing rate of inflation to ensure that our seniors are not disadvantaged.

Madam President, there are five types of benefits payable under the Contributory Pensions Act 1970. All the pensions and allowances will be increased by 1.74 per cent. These pensions and allowances are:

- 1) contributory old age pension;
- 2) contributory widows' [and] widowers' allowance;
- 3) contributory disability benefits;
- 4) non-contributory old age pension; and
- 5) non-contributory disability benefits.

Madam President, the current maximum basic contributory pension is \$1,206.00 per month. The average contributory pension currently payable, which includes additional increments added to the basic pension, is approximately \$1,323.00 per month. Altogether, some 15,086 persons currently receive benefits underneath the Act. The proposed 1.74 per cent increase will raise the maximum basic contributory pension to \$1,227.00 per month. With additional increments, the average benefit will increase to approximately \$1,346.02 per month. Beneficiaries can expect to see a 1.74 per cent increase in their regular monthly payment on the 15th of each month, starting on September 15, 2026.

Madam President, I am proud of the fact that this 1.74 per cent increase marks the eighth pension increase—yes, Madam President, you heard correctly, the eighth increase—the Progressive Labour Party Government has put through in its time in Government, which is in stark contrast to the former Government who made our seniors wait five years for a pension increase and told them that money does not grow on trees.

As a reminder, Madam President, since 2017, this Government has increased pension benefits seven times: [Increased by] 1.75 per cent in August 2017; [increased by] 1.4 per cent in August 2018; [increased by] 1.2 per cent in August 2019; a 2.75 per cent effective increase in August 2021 (and that increase was slightly higher than the prevailing rate of inflation); [an increase of] 4.1 per cent in August 2023; [an increase of] 2.4 per cent increase in August 2024; [and] 2.3 per cent [increase] in August 2025. Today, Madam President, we are passing our eighth increase of 1.74 per cent effective 16 August 2026.

I note, Madam President, that many of our seniors do listen, certainly to the Senate, and recognise the difference in approaches that governments take. One government ensures that we take care of our seniors, increasing their benefits through social assistance, pensions, retirement benefits, or other measures, and also recognise the approach taken by the Opposition when they were in office.

Madam President, in every case which the Government has increased benefits for our seniors, the increase has been in line with or exceeded the prevailing rate of inflation, thereby placing seniors' pensions under the Consumer Price Index in good stead.

Madam President, the 2026 increase in benefits is accompanied by an increase in contributions. Per the government actuary, the contributions were to be increased by 2.5 [per cent] per annum more than benefits. That is estimated to extend the life of the fund.

Madam President, it should also be noted that contributions last increased in August 2025, as I previously stated, by 4.81 per cent. The Ministry of Finance continues to manage the CPF's financial position.

Madam President, pension reform work is developing options to sustainably address and secure future benefits for Bermuda's people. We have managed to fix the Public Sector Superannuation Fund (PSSF) by extending its life and putting it in a positive position which has enabled us to give retirement benefits to public sector retirees.

Madam President, as stated inside the budget, the Government is committed to tabling a Position Paper in regard to our approach to social insurance reform or reform of the Contributory Pension Fund. Those matters will be set out and the actuarial team will be on Island shortly to review all of the previous pension reform items because it is vital that we fix these funds for the long term, as the Government has done with the Public Sector [Superannuation] Fund, which removed a \$2 billion unfunded liability from the Government's balance sheet.

Madam President, as has been previously stated, the Government also intends to shift to a per cent of income contribution model for the Contributory Pension Fund. The contemplated changes are consistent with the overwhelming majority of Tier 1 pensions systems globally. Based on the results of continued actuarial analysis, the Pension Reform Commit-

tee will put forth options to achieve a path to pension sustainability for the Bermuda Government.

Madam President, as of March 31, 2026, the Fund had net assets of over \$2.36 billion, representing approximately 10 times the value of benefits paid in this fiscal year, 2025/26. The effect of this is that if CPF received no further contributions, it could continue to pay out pensions at the prevailing rate for almost 10 years. However, the reality is that contributions will continue through time and will be increased from time to time. Consequently, prudent investment of pension fund assets is an important factor in the Fund's financial position.

Madam President, in this regard, the Government's sound investment strategy for pension fund assets is achieving good results. As of 31 March 2026, the Contributory Pension Fund investments stood at \$2.211 billion. The nominal rate of return for the 10 years preceding 31 March 2026 has been 7.4 per cent.

Madam President, as evidenced by the 2023 actuarial report tabled in the House on 4 March 2025, the viability of the fund in the short- to medium- term is good, with the fund being positive for the next 19 years until 2042.

However, in addressing the long-term challenges associated with pensions generally, as stated, we will bring forward a Position Paper on these matters. It should also be noted that the funding policy for the CPF is based on sustainable funding rather than on full actuarial funding. That is, contributions plus investment income should cover benefits and administrative expenses on an annual basis, while the fund builds sufficient reserves to cover several years of benefits and expenses to withstand future adverse circumstances.

Madam President, we do know that there is work to be done to stabilise the Contributory Pension Fund, requiring a number of measures. I am pleased, Madam President, that the measures that have been put forward by our actuaries are broader than the measures that were done previously. This means that when that Position Paper comes after being approved by Cabinet, we will see a wider range of options that will allow us to move forward and fix this issue for the future.

Madam President, I look forward to dealing with those matters as this Government continues to strike the right balance between social and fiscal responsibility. And the right balance in our eyes, Madam President, is to keep faith with our seniors, ensuring that we increase their pensions each year by at least the rate of inflation. And, Madam President, that is the record of this Government.

In closing, I wish to again assure Members and, more importantly, current and future pensioners, certainly those who are listening, that the Government recognises the challenges that they face. We will continue to take the appropriate and decisive steps to enhance the benefits paid from the National Pension Plan

and ensure the pension fund has the ongoing ability to pay for such benefits in the future.

Madam President, since we have come into office, the maximum contributory pension has increased by \$271 a month. That is over \$3,000 a year. That is what happens when you keep your promise to increase pensions by the rate of inflation.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Minister Wilkerson, spokesperson for Finance today in the Senate.

Would any Senator care to speak on this?
Senator Cunningham, you have the floor.

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Thank you, Madam President.

And the Opposition is in agreement with this proposed increase. Obviously, our seniors have contributed a lot to Bermuda. But I do have a few points to raise. I have no idea if they are actually going to end up in questions, so we will have to wait and see where I go with this.

But the statement just delivered there talked about the sustainability of the current fund until 2042, based on, I believe, 2023 actuarial assumptions. That sounds like it is a long way away. It is 16 years away. And when I was thinking about it, 2010 was also 16 years ago. So, I just thought that that was interesting. And I also think, because the statement also mentioned the Occupational Pensions Act of 1998 that came in in 1999. And I worked out, not giving away my age, but that would have made me 18. And so, for an 18-year-old going into the Contributory Occupational Pensions Act, ultimately, my retirement is slightly after 2042, at 65, if it even stays that way. So, I am just thinking that a lot of people my age and younger, of which there are quite a few in this Chamber, may not actually have, you know, get this pension, but will be paying in at an increased rate of 4.2—

POINT OF ORDER

[Misleading]

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Point of order, Madam President.

My colleague may unintentionally be misleading the House. I think the statement highlighted that if no further contributions were made to the fund, it would last until 2042. So, the current line of reasoning around how someone who was 18 in 1998 being unable to receive payout at the end of that time is not exactly accurate.

Thank you.

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Fubler.

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: I take that on. But in 2042, the value of the dollar as it is today is going to be very

different. So, I am speaking about, you know, what are we going to see, for those of us who are slightly younger?

And I think, to me, you know, we have got to be looking at . . . and it is the age-old problem of increasing the population so we have more people paying into this fund than the 15,000 people, I think you referenced, who are taking out of it.

Actually, my question, because this time last year, I think it was possibly the previous week, I asked a parliamentary question around the number of delinquent employers paying into the fund. And I believe the answer back then was 1,738 employers were in arrears, which affected 7,475 employees.

I am not expecting numbers, but I am just wanting to see . . . has work been done to ensure that those numbers are coming down so that when our Bermudians are retiring, that they are seeing the full benefit amounts that they are eligible for, assuming that their employer had paid the full amounts?

And the other thing . . . so the 4.25 per cent increase in the contributions. I was just wondering where . . . you know, it's obvious the 1.74 [per cent]. We have learned that that is the CPI figure for the last 12 months. Where was the 4.25 [per cent] projected to come from? Yes, what is the grounding of that number for the increases being seen?

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: I am just seeking clarification on the last question. I wasn't sure . . . if you could repeat about the 4 per cent.

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: So, Schedule 2 of the [Order] is amending the rate of contributions. And the increase is 4.25 per cent. I was just wondering where that number was derived from. Quite a specific number, rather than 5 per cent or 4 per cent, given that the other number is specifically tied to the actual CPI.

And with that, we congratulate all our seniors. And thank you very much for bringing this [Order].

The President: Vice President John Wight, you have the floor.

Sen. John Wight: Thank you, Madam President.

For starters, I just wanted to declare my conflict of interest if this goes through. As a senior, I will be receiving (very shortly) an increase of 1.74 per cent.

[Laughter]

Sen. John Wight: So, I just want to put that out there.

So overall, I do support the [Order]. I do have a couple of caveats.

One is I really have a hard time supporting the cost of living or rate of inflation between September 2024 and October 2025 as being 1.74 per cent. I really

believe that is not indicative of the basket of goods and services of the average Bermudian, but be that what it may, I think that it is a balancing act for Government to try to increase a figure that is both affordable to the fund and, at the same time, providing to assist the needs of those in the community who have worked very hard to earn these benefits. So, I do agree with the recommendation.

I just . . . my second caveat, I just want to refer to the . . . as part of my preparation today I reviewed the [Actuarial Review of the Contributory Pension Fund as of August 1, 2023](#), which was prepared by a well-respected independent organisation called TELUS [Health]. And I think that is a triennial review, so the next one should be prepared fairly shortly, as of August 1, 2026, coming up.

So, the actuarial report had been tabled in the other Chamber back in March of 2025, and if I could just quote, with your permission, Madam President, just some relevant items.

The President: Certainly.

Sen. John Wight: So, it said that the Contributory Pension Fund is not financially stable for the long term, as the Attorney General referred to. The assets are 55.2 per cent of projected accrued liabilities, and the fund is projected to be exhausted around 2042, which is public information.

I know, Madam President, that politicians globally are more focused on the short-term than the long-term, which is no surprise. This is the nature of politics. However, I think we can all agree that whether a Bermudian retired 16 years ago or will retire in 16 years from now, when the fund, as of August 1, 2023, was projected to run out, every Bermudian who is currently paying into social insurance, or has previously paid into social insurance, or will be paying into social insurance, has earned benefits the Government and all future governments need to fund appropriately.

So, Madam President, I take comfort in the words stated by the Minister of Finance in the March 2025 session in the other Chamber. And again, if I may quote, Madam President, he said, ²"I wish to assure current and future pensioners that the Government is clear on the challenges facing Bermuda's pension plans. We have started to take necessary actions to ensure that the [fund] is sustainable, and we will not shirk the responsibility . . . to ensure that the social insurance [fund] benefits [the] many Bermudians [who rely on these] for future generations."

So, I think everybody fully understands that every Bermudian who has paid into the fund is owed an appropriate pension, and I take it upon this Government and all future governments to ensure that the funds are fully funded so that pensioners can receive the benefits in their retirement that they are due.

² [Official Hansard Report](#), 1 March 2025, page 18

So, with that, Madam President, again, I support the [Order] put forward by the Government.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Vice President John Wight.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

SENATE VISITOR

The President: And before I . . . I would just like to acknowledge the presence of Dr. Douglas DeCouto, Member of Parliament, who is in the Gallery.

Welcome to you, sir.

[Consideration of Draft Order, Contributory Pensions (Amendment of Contributions and Benefits) Order 2026, continuing]

The President: Would any other Senator care to speak?

Senator Tawana Tannock, you have the floor.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Yes, thank you, Madam President.

So, my question is regarding the calculations and the cost of living. So, you will know that in section 13(1), paragraph 2, and then also in Schedule 2, that there is a limit. Right? So, you can't have it . . . for your non-contributory pension. You have to be able to prove that your annual income is not more than \$4,000. And we see that again in Schedule 2.

With the increase in the cost of living, why hasn't that amount also increased? Because, certainly, \$4,000 today doesn't get you as far as it got you when \$4,000 was the limit.

So, if we are looking at keeping pace with the cost of living, why haven't we kept pace with it and said, *Look, \$4,000 doesn't get you what it got you last year, two years ago.*

So, when we talk about actuarial analysis, I was just wondering if the actuarial analysis that was applied was applied to all of the rates and financial conditions in the Act, or was it solely targeted to benefits and contributions? And if that was the case, why wasn't the cost of living looked at in terms of what is the marker for being eligible?

Thank you.

The President: Thank you, Senator Tannock.

[Pause]

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Madam President, I assume there are no other questions.

The President: I am also assuming.

Was there any other Senator who wanted to speak?

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: I didn't want to go in front of you.

The President: No, no. Madam Attorney General, I fully understand. I was looking for other hands but didn't see any.

So, certainly, you can respond to the questions that have been posed so far.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Okay. I will take them in order. And I think on the last question, I am going to get some support there, which was Senator Tannock's question.

So, for Senator Cunningham, there was question around sustainability and the [year] 2042. And I believe (and I am grateful to Senator Fubler for answering the question) it was, if there wasn't anything else done, we would be stopped at 2042. And, like you [said], that would be quite a scary situation because, quite rightly so, when we are younger some of these numbers feel like they are further away. And then you recognise that, you know what, 2042 is not very far away. So, I acknowledge that.

You talked about the . . . question of delinquent employers and is . . . I think it was, what efforts are being made to address delinquent employers? I am aware, because I have just seen the statement (I am not sure if it is public but . . .) from the Department of Public Prosecutions around one of the things about challenging employers is the government must be sure that it has accurate records on employment. And so, the Office of Statistics has sent information out for employers to answer about their employment statistics.

So, it actually is an offence to not answer that information. And so, there will be an advisory, if it is not out already, from the Department of Public Prosecutions in relation to that. And that is a way to help to get under this problem because we can't take action against, for example, employers who perhaps no longer exist. They closed their businesses down or things of that nature. So, it is a data gathering exercise now with some force of threat to ensure compliance with these statistical data.

To Senator Wight's questions and comments, [I am] grateful for the comments and the support. You have questioned whether 1.74 [per cent] is a correct measure of the CPI. As far as I am aware, it is. But I understand the point that you are making because it feels like when I go to the supermarket the increase in things is significantly more and it is hard to understand how that is an average.

What I do know from my position, you know, clearly at the Cabinet table, is that what constitutes the basket of goods on which the CPI is measured is something that the Minister of [Economy and] Labour and, as well, the Minister of Home Affairs are taking under consideration. Certainly, as she deals with the affordability agenda, does the current basket of goods that establishes the CPI accurately reflect what is in the average

basket? So, that is a point that is under consideration. Thank you.

And then on to Senator Tannock's question, which is around . . . I think it was a question of whether there was actuarial support across all of the levers, including the \$4,000 eligibility threshold and why that hasn't increased.

[Crosstalk]

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Right.

[Crosstalk]

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Okay. So, I think the answer is that the increases contemplated now in the actuarial reviews are just on the increases to the fund itself, not on eligibility. And that would be a separate exercise.

What I would say, though, is if someone's income eligibility is \$4,000, for example, and they are already retired, that number itself won't change over time because they are already retired, as it relates to what their income would have been to become eligible. So, it is not like that is a changing target, but I do take the point that you make for broader consistency. Should that be looked at over time? And I think the answer is, it is. But it is a separate exercise. Thank you.

[Crosstalk]

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Oh, yes. I did miss Senator Cunningham's question, which related to . . . how 4.25 per cent was arrived at as the increase in contributions, while we understand that the increase in benefit is driven by the CPI.

So, the contribution level has been measured so that it is a percentage more than the benefits increase. And based on the actuarial calculations, it is designed to be 2.5 per cent more than the benefits increase. So, it is building up from that to get to the 2.5 per cent. Thank you. Grateful. Thank you.

The President: It would appear that you have answered the questions.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Great, thank you, Senate colleagues, and thank you for the support across the floor for this important Order, increasing contributions for seniors . . . benefits for seniors.

Madam President, I move that the said draft Order be approved and that the following message be sent to His Excellency the Governor.

May it please your Excellency, the Senate having had under consideration the draft Order entitled the Contributory Pensions (Amendment of Contributions and Benefits) Order 2026, proposed to be made by the Minister of Finance, in exercise of the power conferred by section 37 of the Contributory Pensions Act 1970,

has the honour to inform Your Excellency that the Senate has approved the said draft Order.

The President: Thank you. A suitable message will be sent.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Thank you, Madam President.

[Motion carried: The Contributory Pensions (Amendment of Contributions and Benefits) Order 2026 was approved.]

The President: With the agreement of all Senators.

Thank you, Honourable Minister Wilkerson, for the presentation of your Order.

MOTIONS

The President: There are none.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

The President: Would any Senator care to speak?
I don't know which hand went up first.

[Laughter]

The President: Lindsay, Senator Lindsay Simmons, all right.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Thank you, Madam President.

The President: You have the floor.

Sen. Lindsay Simmons: Madam President, on a sad note, I would like to express condolences to Walde Saltus's family. I went to The Berkeley Institute with Walde. He was a couple of years older than me. He was in my sister's class, but he was always a beautiful person. I want to especially give condolences to his fiancée, Denise Wilson, and his children, Anaye Rayner and Stoli Wilson-Saltus. It was heartbreaking to see that he had passed. So, condolences to them.

Madam President, on a brighter note, I want to congratulate Dame Flora Duffy, as she announced today her retirement. Madam President, Flora Duffy is our only gold-medal Olympian, and she won the gold medal at Tokyo 2021. Dame Flora Duffy first entered the Olympics in Beijing in 2008, and then she was in the Olympics in London and Rio. Then she won in Tokyo, and her last Olympic appearance was in Paris. She also won two gold Commonwealth medals. Her testimony of endurance and making Bermuda proud is, I mean, we cannot thank her enough. She has done

Bermuda proud. She is a four-time triathlon world champion.

And on that note, Madam President, I want to encourage Bermuda to . . . on Friday, they are going to open back up the Commonwealth Games' greatest moments. Flora Duffy is one of three going up for the greatest moments in the Commonwealth Games. And we encourage all Bermudians to go out and vote for our Olympic gold medallist, Ms. Duffy. So, on Friday, everybody get out and vote for her so that we can beat Jamaica's Usain Bolt and take home the medal for our small Island.

And I want to also congratulate Olivia Gazzard and Isabella Sousa after winning gold medals for the Bermuda Eastern Caribbean Volleyball Association under [20] in St. Kitts and Nevis. Congratulations to them. You have done Bermuda proud. They had a welcoming at the airport.

And I also want to thank Sakari Famous, who is now a professional high jumper. And she took on gold at the Ed Murphey Classic in Memphis, Tennessee. And she was the top winner. She has done amazing things in the world of high jumping. She is also the cousin of MP Chris Famous. So, congratulations. We are proud of you.

And thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you, Senator Lindsay Simmons. Victoria Cunningham, Senator Cunningham.

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Thank you, Madam President.

I would like to add to the comments of Senator Simmons about Dame Flora Duffy. I had . . . well, in a previous life I worked at Tokio Millennium Re, and we sponsored Flora. And quite frankly, she is an extraordinary athlete [and] woman; just, you know, I think, you know, being on the world stage for over two decades is quite amazing. And I think . . . well, I hope, but I think her legacy will continue. And, you know, we have seen the explosion of triathlon in Bermuda. And so, I just want to congratulate her on some remarkable achievements. And hopefully now she can settle back into, you know, a slightly less fast-paced life.

I would also like to send congratulations to Bermuda students who are scholarship recipients. I know there are some kind of delayed award notifications out there, but a lot have already found out that they have got their funding for the next year of university. So, I just want to congratulate them. And it is so great to walk around town and see all the student interns walking around in their, you know, business attire.

And then finally, with my colleague always talking about football, I just want to say, *Go England*, for this afternoon.

[Laughter]

Sen. Victoria Cunningham: Thank you very much.

The President: Thank you.
Senator Tannock.

Sen. Tawana Tannock: Yes, thank you, Madam President.

I will start off on a sad note and send condolences to the family of Ms. Carol [Noelette] Bassett. Ms. Bassett is the mother of my . . . well, was the mother of one of my dear friends, Dana Bassett. And so, my condolences go out to Mr. Randy Bassett, to LeVar (Dana's brother) and to the family. I have so many great memories. I cannot talk about a lot of them because what would happen is that when my family would go on vacation, they would let me stay at the Bassetts' house. And we had a good time. I was always looking forward to it. And so, the Bassetts took care of me as one of their own. And I have fond memories at that house. So, my heart and my mind go out to the Bassett family. And many will know Ms. Bassett, as she was our headmistress at Somerset Primary School for many, many years.

And then I would like to send congratulations to Mr. Ajani Robinson. I opened up *Bernews*, and I saw that a Bermudian was the grand national jump rope champion in the United States, in Buffalo, New York. And when I looked into it a little bit more, I found out that he won the gold medal in jump rope in China in January this year. I mean, there is nothing that Bermudians cannot excel at. And I love to see our young people just seizing the moment and taking the opportunities to excel.

And that leads me into my second congratulations, which is to Mr. Ryan Perinchief. I was so pleased to learn that he will be joining us in the Senate. I was on a scholarship committee when I first met Ryan and was blown away by just his engagement, his intellect, his interest, his ability to advocate for what he believes. And so, I think when you meet somebody when they are a little bit younger, and you see all of this potential, and to see it come to fruition and to the fore, it is really a wonderful thing. So, congratulations to our new Senate colleague, Senator Perinchief.

Thank you.

The President: Thank you.

Vice President John Wight, you have the floor.

Sen. John Wight: Thank you, Madam President.

I would like to associate with the remarks with our newest Senator as well. Being a senior citizen, it is nice to see some really young blood join the Chamber.

[Laughter]

Sen. John Wight: So welcome and I look forward to working with you.

And I would also like to associate myself with the remarks about Dame Flora Duffy. I think as great an athlete as she was, I have been equally or more im-

pressed by the way that she represents Bermuda, both in our community and overseas. So, congratulations on an amazing career, and I look forward to hearing more about her future careers following her latest one.

So, thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you.

Senator Tarik Dunbar Smith, you have the floor.

Sen. Tarik Smith: Thank you, Madam President.

I just want to associate myself, not often, when I'm surprised, and I set up . . . and Lindsay was talking about Walde, and I am kind of . . . whoa, I did not know. And Walde, as we called him, [was] one of the nicest human beings, and I am shocked by his loss. Whoa! Definitely has shocked me. I had to sit up in my chair and say, *How did I miss that?* So, my condolences to Walde's family, one of the nicest human beings—I think Lindsay can back me up on that—[that] you ever would want to meet in your life. Always pleasant when he sees you around, and he will see you around and say hello and catch up. And, of course, like Lindsay said, one of my classmates at The Berkeley Institute.

Also, Mrs. Bassett, the condolences to the family of Mrs. Bassett. As I have said many times, it takes a village to raise a child. And Mrs. Bassett was definitely one of the village folks who helped raise me as a young boy in Warwick. [I am] close with her brother LeVar. And I did see Dana the other day, and I am very sorry for your loss. And Mrs. Bassett was a wonderful, wonderful woman. It is nice to see that Senator Tannock and I have a connection that we did not even know, in such a lovely person in Mrs. Bassett. And again, condolences to Mr. Bassett and LeVar and Dana.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you.

Senator Mischa Fubler.

Sen. Tarik Smith: One more thing. I do apologise.

Also, I would like to welcome Senator Ryan Perinchief, a strong name in Bermuda politics. Nice to see your family here, and to welcome you, and we look forward to wonderful exchanges throughout our time here in the Senate.

Welcome, Minister and Senator Ryan Perinchief.

The President: Senator Fubler.

Sen. Mischa Fubler: Thank you, Madam President.

I would like to start off by associating myself with my colleagues. Congratulations to both Dame Flora Duffy as well as the Bermuda Beach volleyball team.

And continuing on from that, I would like to extend congratulations to the Bermuda Football Associa-

tion's Second Annual Legends and Scholarship Award recipients. I had the pleasure of representing the Government at the event recently. And in such, they awarded \$5,000 scholarships to five aspiring professional footballers as they continue through their education journey, while also highlighting five footballers at the end of their football career, as it were. And they kind of paired them together. It is a nice kind of full circle around football in Bermuda.

And also extending congratulations to all of the end-to-end participants, myself included. As per usual, I cycle end-to-end. I'm working up to getting to the end-to-end-to-end level, but for now, just once is sufficient. But through our efforts, as well as those of fundraisers, the top fundraisers, as it were, were also highlighted at the event at the Hamilton Princess recently. The event in total raised approximately \$300,000. I think we saw some coverage in the media. And several organisations received grants to continue their good work in the community, including that of the Future Leaders Bermuda.

And also, to OUTBermuda and Bermuda Pride, another successful Pride march and concert recently in Victoria Park and through the City of Hamilton. The theme this year being "Deep Roots." Again, I was pleased to participate in the march and show my support.

Also, to the 2026 Central American and Caribbean [Games], the CAC Games. This year, we have our largest contingent to date with 78 athletes competing across 17 sports. We wish you all the best in Santo Domingo from July 24 through August 8. I hope those of you who are able, tune in to the competition.

Moving on, the Bermuda Arts Council's annual award recipients 2026 that was recently published. Congratulations to all of our creatives who were recipients of awards from the Bermuda Arts Council. Your contributions contribute to the culture that is Bermudian. Thank you.

Also, congratulations to our Bermuda Youth Parliament debaters. I think we had recently a live stream here from the House.

The President: Mm-hmm.

Sen. Mischa Fubler: They put on an excellent presentation debating an issue that I think has both a topical and electoral relevance given that we are engaging in this electoral reform process. Congratulations, particularly to the winners of the debate. Although I think they have an unfair advantage being the alumni of the Bermuda Youth Parliament programme. But I look forward to seeing you again next year.

And finally, I would like to extend congratulations to the Lumina Festival's Playbook financial literacy investing programme participants. Over 10 weeks, they had three cohorts complete a programme that prepares them for enhancing their financial literacy and

moving towards economic independence, something that we very much support.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: And thank you, Senator Mischa Fubler. Senator Lauren Bell, you have the floor.

Sen. Lauren Bell: Thank you, Madam President.

I first want to associate myself with the comment that's been raised by my colleagues to extend a warm welcome to our new Senator. I can concur that I have had the privilege of working with Senator Ryan Perinchief in a different space. And I can concur and support Senator Tannock's comments. It is brilliant to see him in this space. I thank him for his willingness to serve his country. So, thank you, Senator Perinchief and thank you again and welcome to the Senate.

I want to extend condolences to the Jacob and Harvey families on their recent loss of Wendy Harvey. I know my colleague has brought condolences to the family previously for the loss of Wendy Harvey's stepfather, Mr. Jacob. So, it has been a very rough period for the Jacob-Harvey family, who have experienced great loss throughout their family over the last couple of years. The Harvey-Jacob family was a neighbour of myself, and I believe is also the neighbour of one of my colleagues. So, I extend the deepest condolences to both families on their recent loss.

On a lighter note, I want to extend congratulations to the Office of the Youth [Affairs], which hosted its annual national 18-plus youth conference on Sunday, July 12 at Bermuda College. The theme was "Power and Participation: Youth Shaping Bermuda's Future." And the conference featured an information fair, a brunch, a roundtable discussion, as well as a town hall that featured "Ask Your Leader."

I had the distinct privilege of being able to slip into the back and observe both the panel discussion as well as the "Ask the Leader" town hall [discussion]. And whenever I have the opportunity to be in the space of Bermudian youth, it invigorates me. It brings me great hope for Bermuda's future. Congratulations again to the Office of the Youth [Affairs] for their conference. Congratulations.

The President: Thank you, Senator Lauren Bell.

And I believe no one else has put their hands up. I will move it to you, Madam Attorney General, Minister of Justice.

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Thank you, Madam President.

I am not on adjournment quite yet. I am on congrats—

The President: You are on congratulatory and—

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Yes. Congrats and obits. Thank you. And just congratulatory from me at the moment, Madam President.

I want to join certainly the comments from Senator Simmons and others in the congratulations for Dame Flora Duffy on her retirement. We understand her contribution.

Madam President, I, for my sins, am currently still today covering for the Minister of Youth . . . Sorry, no. Minister of Sport, Tourism and Transport. What else? Right.

[Inaudible interjection]

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Culture. And Culture. It is a Ministry.

So, all of that was to say, Madam President, I was in the Minister's shoes yesterday to greet the under-20 volleyball team when they came in. And I just want to say, you know, concurring with comments already made in relation to. these are very young participants. So Isabella Souza, Olivia Gazzard, these girls are 16 and 18. So in this under-20s team coming back with a gold trophy. They played this final in St. Kitts against St. Kitts. They were up against a home crowd, and they managed to persevere. And the kind of presence that these young women have is definitely something to be commended.

But I did not want to stop just with the girls. The under-20s team also featured a boys' team. And with that, Marcus Rodrigues and [Carter] Lamb also were part of the team that we greeted. And they did very well. They placed ninth. It was their first time out competing in this international event. So, I want to congratulate all four of the young Bermudian athletes, as well as their coaches, Meagan McPeck and Sean Tucker, for a fine job that they have done in understanding the dedication all around.

Madam President, as again, covering for the Minister of Sport, I had the pleasure of attending last evening the Bermuda Big Game Classic awards. And those of us who, you know, if you have the opportunity to look out to the sea at any time over the past few weeks, you have seen these amazing multimillion-dollar fishing vessels going up and down. And that event has a major impact to our tourism economy because they come for weeks. Some of the boats and their owners and crews come for up to a month's time for this event. But I did want to use this forum to congratulate the [Atlantic Tournament] Director, Michelle Gaylord, for a fantastic event for the whole of the competition and also for the ceremony last night. So well done. And I think we look forward to growing an event of this nature, given the impact that it has for Bermuda and for tourism.

And finally, Madam President, I want to join the whole of the Chamber in the warm welcome that it has given to my colleague. When I had an opportunity to talk to him about it before, I know we were going to be

watching later, but we are all been watching FIFA. And in one of the FIFA commercials, there is a tagline that says: "Next Starts Now." And I certainly think that Ryan captures that. And so, he just is an example of the incredible talent that Bermuda has. But particularly the incredible talent that the Progressive Labour Party has to choose from. So, I am ecstatic that he has accepted the challenge to join us here and to take on a Ministerial portfolio. So certainly, we will be hearing from him shortly when he delivers his maiden speech.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: And thank you, Minister of Justice, Attorney General.

And adjournment.

ADJOURNMENT

Sen. the Hon. Kim Wilkerson: Yes, Madam President, I move that the Senate do now adjourn until July 22.

The President: July 22.

And this is the opportunity for our new Minister, Ryan Perinchief, Robinson Perinchief, you have the floor.

MAIDEN SPEECH

Sen. the Hon. Ryan Robinson Perinchief: Thank you, Madam President.

It is with great honour that I rise in this Chamber for the first time in my capacity as Senator and Minister of National Security to deliver my maiden speech.

I am humbled by the task before me, grateful for the trust bestowed, and mindful of the sacrifices borne by those who came before me.

First, I thank God. I also thank the Premier for the confidence placed in me with this appointment, my colleagues, and the community for the welcome I have received.

As I begin to chart this path, I must say that while I have a deep understanding that this role is an immense privilege and responsibility, I also know that I chose public service. I decided to come home immediately after my master's studies at Oxford to be immersed in community. And my presence today is the result of intense preparation, intention, guidance, and support. Therefore, to many, my decision to answer the call to public service was no surprise.

A few years ago, I stood in the Supreme Court as a newly qualified barrister and attorney. I looked around at the state of Bermudian society and it was evident to me that our community needed more people with integrity and courage who are willing to advocate for our people and represent their needs. I had a strong view that our Island needed leaders to help uplift, empower, and restore the moral and social fabric of our

society. In that moment, I asked myself where am I best placed to assist in this charge. And I stated that regardless of whether I was in a court of law wearing a wig and advocating, or representing elsewhere, that my commitment to advocacy, integrity, and the cause of justice and nation-building would remain unwavering.

Madam President, it is with that same spirit that I sit among colleagues in this Upper House today, where I aim to articulate a vision on the subject of answering the call of public service, the mission of transformative leadership and nation-building.

Madam President, I was raised by dedicated public servants who lived out its pressures, its disappointments and its potential in front of me, long before I came to understand exactly what it would eventually ask of me. My mother, Tammy Robinson, is a dedicated member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, serving as president of the Bermuda Conference's community services. My father and his siblings were dedicated public servants, on both frontline politics as well as within the civil service itself.

I woke up on Sunday mornings to the smell of codfish and potatoes, and the sound of politics in action, shouting, debating, and most importantly, civic interest. My family would passionately debate the latest issues and policy proposals during the early days of the Progressive Labour Party's rise to power, when an entire country was riding the wave of hope for a new Bermuda. A moment in time that we still remember today as a date with destiny, a milestone in our democratic history that gave Bermuda an alternative Government for the first time since the party system began.

My upbringing shaped how I view our Island home, a place with much potential yet to be fully realised, but one I have always strived to serve as a great duty to the community. It is a duty and a privilege I do not take lightly. That is why the bulk of my professional journey has been shaped by my dedication to the goals of community, nation-building, and empowerment. I chose to study law to gain an understanding of how societies work. I wanted to understand how systems and rules shape the way of our world.

Feeling helpless as a student overseas, watching my Island change while being physically removed from Bermuda, I developed and founded the Future Leaders Programme to provide a platform to inspire the next generation to challenge the status quo and empower them with the skills they need to take charge of their futures as leaders. Following law, my decision to study public policy at the Blavatnik School of Government was to obtain a broader perspective on good governance and brainstorm solutions to some of the most pressing challenges facing society among dedicated leaders from around the world.

Madam President, I recognise that the call I have answered is one that has been answered by many before me, though I must admit that I did not anticipate it would come this early. I am 29 years old, and soon I will enter my 30th year. As I think about a life in 30 years

in pursuit of public service and community empowerment, I know that I stand on the shoulders of many giants, servant leaders who demonstrate that age is not a measure of one's ability to lead. Rather, true political competence requires a synergy of character, vision, and the capacity to deliver tangible results for the people. These are the qualities that serve as the foundation of public trust and for transformative leadership.

Let us look to our friends down south. The Honourable Mia Mottley was just 26 years old when she entered politics upon her appointment to the Senate of Barbados and soon after the Cabinet. Madam President, nearly 35 years later, the Honourable Mia Mottley's legacy is still being defined as Barbados' first female leader, a transformative figure with global influence.

I reflect on some of my childhood heroes, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. At age 29, Malcolm X, a man who only a few years earlier had been serving a prison sentence, was one of the most compelling voices of a nation, commanding platforms and audiences that few ever would have predicted based on where he started.

Martin Luther King Jr. was already a prominent civil rights leader at age 29. He published his first book, negotiated with President Eisenhower, and laid the groundwork for his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. Madam President, both Malcolm and Martin would only live another 10 years, both being assassinated at age 39. How thankful we should be, Madam President, that they did not waste any time in answering the call to lead or take seriously the advice of those who suggested that they should wait a little longer for their turn or that maybe they were too young.

Madam President, when we consider the impact of these transformative leaders in just a few short years of youthful, energetic activism and public service, it should remind us that our precious time on this spaceship called Earth must not be taken for granted. And when we consider the events shaping our world today and the pace of change, it is clear that right here in Bermuda, we too can afford to waste no time nor take the future for granted when presented with the opportunity to lead.

Madam President, Dr. E. F. Gordon was 29 when he arrived in Bermuda from Trinidad. Not much longer, he established the Bermuda Workers' Association and cemented his place as the founding father of trade unionism.

Our own son of the soil, Dr. Pauulu Kamarakafego was around 29 when he established the Bermuda Committee for Universal Adult Suffrage in 1961. His campaign succeeded by the age of 31 in the form of the Parliamentary Election Act. One man, one vote. On the back of his own activism, Pauulu was elected to Parliament himself by age 35.

Dame Jennifer Smith ran for Parliament at 24 and became a Senator at 33.

So, Madam President, when we suggest that our young people must wait their turn, let us remember that if the portraits of those inspirational figures in history were taken at the time when they made the courageous decisions that got them there, they too would have been on the receiving end of what some have said in relation to me and my appointment as "just a *bye*," which evokes scepticism in some and hope in others.

Madam President, having paid homage to some examples of the transformative leaders who just happen to be young, I now wish to speak briefly to the specific responsibilities I have been entrusted with. National Security is a portfolio that touches the lives of everyone in Bermuda daily because it is about providing the foundational safety needed to maintain a stable society. Every Bermudian deserves to enjoy the peace of mind that comes as a result of this foundation of safety and stability so that as a people we can move on to reach our fullest potential. In that same spirit of restoring and building up our community, I look forward to collaborating with the dedicated servants within my Ministry to advance this mission of ensuring a safer Bermuda.

Madam President, National Security is not a portfolio that should be making headlines daily. It is a Ministry full of quiet heroes who show up every day and whose work in many ways requires them to be laser-focused, trained to shut out the noise, publicity and commentary that would otherwise lower the standard of their work. When our first responders arrive at an accident scene in our most critical moments, we rely on their dedication, diligence, ethics and competence to see the job through, regardless of who is watching, who is commenting or who doubts their ability.

Madam President, if we are doing our jobs right, there is often no headline at all. The reward is simply that nothing happens, and our community enjoys a comfort and peace that creates a stable foundation for prosperity. It is a Ministry about reliability, not visibility.

Fittingly, as the first portfolio I have been entrusted with, I take my cue from our firemen and women, our police and customs officers and our Regiment. Without pomp, without showboating and without regard for the politics of personality that too often shape our decisions around leadership and our perceptions of what this Island truly needs to prosper.

In that regard, Madam President, I intend to be judged on my integrity and the stability and security that flows from the work of my Ministry in the same tone as the brave public officers that I am accountable for within my remit as Minister of National Security.

Madam President, although National Security is about core safety and stability, I recognise that there are also many in our community today who suffer, who feel hopeless. In the political context, we are at a crossroads in our Bermudian society. And in this current moment in political time amidst constitutional reform, amidst leadership change and a geopolitical environ-

ment that has shifted drastically within our lifetime, many of us are seeking a vision and direction for the future of our Island home.

Madam President, as an academic who is passionate about self-determination and nation-building, during my studies I took a keen interest in the challenge of development faced by small island nation states. I questioned how we can compete and grow in a world of much larger countries with far greater resources. I read Lee Kuan Yew's book, *From Third World to First*, where he details his leadership as he transitioned Singapore from an impoverished colonial outpost to a thriving and wealthy nation renowned for its sophistication, stability, and world-class civil service. I reflect on the qualities necessary to achieve this type of transition. Pragmatism, not being so tied to a particular ideology that it comes at the expense of what works. Meritocracy, ensuring persons entrusted with leadership are capable and qualified, and that opportunity is afforded based on talent and hard work, regardless of where you come from. Fairness and social cohesion, a society where citizens' basic needs are met with dignity while still being expected to work, save, and build their own path towards self-reliance.

Madam President, these are some of the decision points and features of nation-building. The process of constructing a national consciousness and identity, building unity and cohesion across a country's population, and fostering a shared sense of belonging and purpose through intentionality and good governance.

Madam President, I may have been charged with specific political priorities, which I intend to fulfil, but my answer to the call of public service is with the goal of nation-building in mind. I have spent my career learning where power comes from and how it is used, how laws and systems can work for the people's interest and sometimes against it. And how some of our institutions have struggled to modernise quickly enough to keep the people they serve at their centre, rather than as an afterthought to their own procedures, where everyday people in our communities are the drivers of change and not the victims of it.

Madam President, I want to end by speaking directly to our young people. Frantz Fanon tells us that, "Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfil it, or betray it." I firmly believe that the mission of our generation is to transform and shape Bermuda into a stable and unified nation. A community of people who are bound together with shared purpose and not division or inequality. A Bermuda where we do not have entirely different conceptions of reality or shared cultural heritage, depending on racial background, financial status, or what school we went to.

A Bermuda where the symptoms of wealth disparity and oppression, in the forms of poverty, dispossession, trauma, and violence, are closed chapters of our past. One where young people are willingly embraced and welcomed to the table when they come

home from overseas, or seek to bring their talent, expertise, and global insights with them, and have a place to call home and build upon when they come.

A Bermuda where we do not simply trust that things will work out at the individual level, but where our community relentlessly works to make this a reality as part of a greater whole and with a unified vision.

A Bermuda where the opportunity to be a transformative leader is not determined by the politics of personality, but where we all have the opportunity to prove ourselves through sound leadership and the force of character.

So, wherever you are, whether in international business or in tourism, whether overseas or at home, or finding your place in Bermuda today, young people, you do not need permission. This is your home. Let us begin the work of building our national consciousness and shaping a vision for Bermuda that we want to see.

Madam President, rebuilding and restoring our fractured communities will require a fundamental rethink across multiple sectors of our society. But I thank all those in our society who are doing this work, answering the call to public service in pursuit of the process of nation-building and empowerment with the greatest pride and honour.

Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Thank you.

[Desk thumping]

The President: Thank you very much for your maiden speech. It was wonderful.

Would any other Senator want to speak on the motion to adjourn?

Senator, Vice President John Wight, you have the floor.

ORDER PAPERS NOT RECEIVED ON TIMELY BASIS BY INDEPENDENT SENATOR

Sen. John Wight: Thanks, Madam President.

I will be very brief. I am just going to raise a matter that I have raised before. We know as Senators we all want to prepare appropriately for these sessions, and we received the Order Papers the evening before, as always. And so, as an Independent Senator, it is very difficult to receive an order paper the night before to fully prepare for sessions. And I typically use the order papers for the House of Assembly [from] the previous Friday.

In this case today, it was very different, so I prepared for something that did not happen today, assuming that [from] what happened in the House. So, I have asked before if it is possible to get even a draft a few days before just so that, especially as Independent Senators, we can have some view of what we are going to be debating on a Wednesday. Because to have to guess every session, you know, I just do not think is

appropriate. I do not think that is the way we should be conducting ourselves. So, you know, I have raised this before, Madam President. I am just raising it again.

Thank you.

The President: Thank you. We will certainly take that on board.

[Crosstalk]

The President: Would any other Senator who would care to speak on the motion to adjourn?

I have taken your observation, and we will certainly try to address it.

Sen. John Wight: Thank you, Madam President.

The President: Would any other Senator care to speak on the motion to adjourn?

Hearing none.

Senators, the Senate will stand adjourned until the 22nd of July. I want to thank you all for your contributions today.

[At 1:10 pm, the Senate stood adjourned until 10:00 am, Wednesday, 22 July 2026]