



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

by:

The Hon. Senator Lauren Bell

Junior Minister of Economy and Labour

Factors Driving Emigration in Bermuda

2 July 2025

Madam President,

I rise today to lay the January 2025 Emigration Survey Report and highlight for Members of this Honourable Senate the key findings of the Survey.

The 'Retaining the Local Workforce Position Paper 2024' highlights Bermuda's declining birthrate, aging population and increasing emigration of the local population.

As noted in the Position Paper, migration is a social phenomenon, the causes of which can vary widely. While it is not uncommon for Bermuda to experience migration, emigration, if excessive, can be challenging for our small community.

Madam President,

There is no doubt Bermuda requires a skilled and experienced workforce to drive economic growth and innovation, and when talented individuals leave the island, the loss of human capital can hinder our ability to compete in the global market. We can lose knowledge, expertise and contributions to local economic development.

Against that background, the Ministry of Economy and Labour engaged Global Research to better understand the degree of emigration, what motivated Bermudians to leave the island, and what might entice them to return.

Madam President,

Global Research conducted three studies on Bermudian emigration, undertaking qualitative and quantitative research. The first involved in-depth interviews with 20 emigrated Bermudians, the second phase surveyed 105 emigrated Bermudians, and the third phase surveyed 416 adult Bermudians on island.

The survey reveals that the most common reasons cited for emigration are the high cost of living and the lack of affordability, particularly beyond retirement, as well as limited employment opportunities and lack of job growth. These economic pressures prompted Bermudians to seek better prospects overseas.

When comparing quality of life, respondents reported significantly higher satisfaction with life overseas, particularly in areas such as the cost of living, healthcare affordability, access to social activities, and overall life satisfaction.

Madam President,

The survey also asked what might have prevented emigration. Respondents pointed to a more manageable cost of living, increased job opportunities, improved public and post-secondary education, and initiatives to make Bermuda a more vibrant and appealing place to live.

To encourage Bermudians to remain or return, the most popular suggestions included addressing the high cost of living, engaging with those who have left to understand their reasons, improving educational opportunities, and expanding employment prospects. Respondents emphasised the need for lower costs in essential areas such as food, healthcare, housing, and retirement, as well as better access to affordable home ownership.

While the survey found that many Bermudians value family, friendships, the island's natural beauty, and safety, it also highlighted concerns about governance, rising crime, and limited social opportunities. Overall satisfaction with life in Bermuda was rated as fair, with the highest satisfaction in personal relationships and safety, and the lowest in cost of living, healthcare, and governance.

Notably, 53% of respondents indicated they may consider emigrating in the future, with 7% likely to do so within the next two years. This is a significant portion of our population, and it is imperative that we listen to their concerns and act decisively.

Madam President,

These findings present both a challenge and an opportunity. They challenge us to confront the realities facing our people, but they also offer a roadmap for meaningful change.

By addressing affordability, expanding opportunity, and enhancing the quality of life, we can create a Bermuda where more of our people choose to stay, and where those who have left feel welcome to return.

The beauty of the island, being close to family and friends, and living in a safe environment were all aspects that respondents valued about life in Bermuda.

The top five factors motivating Bermudians to emigrate are: the high cost of living, difficulty of retiring in Bermuda, overall management of Bermuda and the economy, availability of career opportunities in Bermuda and quality of life and activities in Bermuda.

Madam President,

In conclusion, the feedback from Global Research's survey work revealed that respondents appreciated having their opinions heard. They highlighted the beauty of the island, the safety of the environment, and the proximity to family and friends as key factors for enjoying life in Bermuda. However, the primary motivations for Bermudians considering emigration include the high cost of living, challenges in retiring, concerns about the management of the economy, limited career opportunities, quality of life and activities, public-school education standards, availability of specialized healthcare for persons with disabilities, and issues related to gang culture, crime, and violence.

Thank you, **Madam President.**