



Office of the Leader of the Opposition

For Immediate Release

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## **Opposition Members utterly disappointed by Premier's blame game**

Friday, September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 was indeed a sad day for the Cayman Islands and its people. It was the day that saw the culmination of the Governor's and the Premier's ill-conceived plan to impose the Domestic Partnership Bill (DPB) into law using colonial heavy handedness. Indeed, it is now obvious that this was planned well in advance of the proposed legislation being introduced by the Premier to the Legislature. As early as February 2020, it was reported in the House of Commons that the Premier was preparing to introduce the legislation, this year.

The Premier asserts that, *"As Premier, I am utterly humiliated that because of our failure to do our duty as a Legislature, the UK Government has been forced to legislate for us"*.

The Official Opposition would like to assure the Premier, that like a great many Caymanians, we too are humiliated by his lack of leadership and petulant behaviour which has now resulted in this unfortunate set of circumstances,

Leader of the Opposition, Hon. V. Arden McLean states:

"The Premier's attempt to blame the opposition and other members has not gone unnoticed. We remind the Premier of the fundamental tenet of democracy that 'majority rules'. He has leadership of the majority in the Legislature; hence he is the Premier and accordingly the Legislature is subject to his direction."

Mr. McLean adds:

"It speaks volumes of the Premier's ability to lead the country and lose a vote in the Legislature. We therefore suggest to the Premier, stop blaming everyone else, and undertake some introspection."

The Governor must bear no less blame. Despite his protestations that he did not want to find himself in this position and his love for the people of this country, it is alarmingly obvious that he too used this opportunity to fulfil a personal agenda. This is borne out by his total lack of respect for the members of the Legislature who voted against a bill that



was flawed and rushed. That lack of respect was further exacerbated by him having received a letter addressed to the Leader of the Opposition and making the letter public without consulting the Leader of the Opposition. Further, the same letter which was written by Baroness Sugg on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and curiously, was not sent to the Leader of the Opposition by the Governor's Office until August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

The Governor's actions and disregard for our Caymanian way of life, attests to the saying, "A man can't serve two masters.". While the Cayman Islands public purse is paying for his salary and lifestyle, he remains very much a devoted UK public servant.

Not having allowed proper time for consultation, the Premier and his Government introducing the DPB to the Legislature knowing that the majority were not in support, and the subsequent actions of the Premier and the Governor to implement a law regardless of the public's views, speaks volumes of their disregard for the people of the Cayman Islands.

It should be noted that the Opposition assisted with a survey on the question of whether the people supported the DPB in its original form, and of the over 1000 people who responded 90+% rejected the proposed legislation.

The Premier is elected to serve the people, and in the case of the Governor he is appointed to ensure good governance. The Premier needs to put his personal ego and pride aside and instead feel some level of humiliation for the many Caymanians that are:

- Marginalized and discriminated against in the workforce.
- Struggling to make ends meet from the high costs of living.
- Living pay-check to pay-check and in some cases, no pay-check.
- Being told they must go to the Immigration Department to prove they are Caymanians.
- Leaving school and cannot find employment.
- Still unable to receive their pension payments.
- Stuck in traffic on a daily basis.
- Facing an increase in insurance costs.
- Losing their homes or have lost their homes.
- Living below the poverty line from an inadequate minimum wage.
- Worried about the future direction for our beloved islands

It is clear that we need leadership that will put egos aside, place Caymanians first and serve the Caymanian interest."



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Mr. McLean concludes:

“Yes Mr. Premier, we are all humiliated, but more importantly disappointed in your lack of leadership in defending the very people you purport to love and defend.”

In keeping with the Official Opposition’s commitment to honesty, openness, and transparency we are also releasing the letter received from Baroness Sugg along with the Leader of the Opposition’s response thereto. We believe that outside of issues involving our National Security, the public’s business cannot be done in private.

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