

PEOPLE'S NATIONAL MOVEMENT - TOBAGO COUNCIL

DRAFT CONSTITUTION (AMENDMENT) (TOBAGO SELF-GOVERNMENT) BILL

HUMAN RESOURCES – TOBAGO CIVIL SERVICE / SERVICE COMMISSION

The inclusion of the appointment of two commissioners to the Public Service Commission and the Teaching Services Commission does not sufficiently cater to addressing the issues that Tobago faces. While it can be argued that the issues are operational in nature we are of the view that, the establishment of an office can assist with matters on a ready basis. (Section 15 and Section 17 of The Constitution (Amendment) (Tobago Self-Government) Bill, 2020).

The Bill makes no mention of the Judicial and Legal Services Commission. The mandatory inclusion of representation from Tobago in the Judicial and Legal Services Commission is critical in improving the efficiency of the Administration of Justice in Tobago.

Draft Tobago Island Government Bill

THE FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

23 (4) (c) Should be deleted from the roles and responsibilities of the Fiscal Review Commission. The THA has in place several layers of auditing systems to unearth and determine compliance with regulations and laws. Some of these are internal audit systems, as well as, the Auditor General Office which has independence of executing tasks.

Additionally, there are several committees inserted in The Tobago Island Government Bill, 2021 (Amendment) Bill, 2021 and at the level of the Assembly Legislature, headed by the Opposition which can cause

monitoring of the THA's accounts.

In light of this, we are of the opinion that, the inclusion of special audits exercise control over the affairs of the THA and is a measure aimed at Cabinet and Parliamentary dominance over the THA.

In addition, the Bill is silent on how funds are to be remitted to the THA and we wish to have included similar to the current THA Act, 40, 1996, Part IV Finance, 47, that all monies appropriated by Parliament for the service of the financial year of the Assembly shall be credited to the Fund in quarterly releases in advance *en bloc*.

We also recommend that there be a Treasury department established in Tobago for the purpose of treating with matters as it relates to Tobagonians. Such action will eliminate the need for paperwork such as the assessment of pensions and gratuities to be processed in Trinidad. This creates inordinate delays.