

RESPONSES FROM THE ONE BERMUDA ALLIANCE

1. What are your views on saving open spaces and protecting the environment?

The One Bermuda Alliance is committed to environmental sustainability. The OBA will:

- Incorporate environmental considerations in all government decisionmaking.
- Implement a programme of expansion and upgrade of neighbourhood parks, recreational and open green spaces, coastal parks and picnic areas.
- Require environmental impact studies to be done on all major and unusual developments and projects.
- Establish a national reforestation plan, along with a national seed bank.
- Deliver on the Southlands national park.
- Conduct coastal sensitivity mapping aimed at identifying risk hazards and vulnerable areas.
- Provide incentives for new developments on brown field sites.
- Aggressively pursue illegal development in accordance with Bermuda's planning laws.
- Promote the "Polluter Pays Principle" through proper enforcement and increases in penalties for littering, illegal dumping, and other actions dangerous to the environment.
- Perform an operational review and an organizational methods review of the entire planning process to make the Department of Planning more user-friendly.
- Review the needs and operations of the Special Development Orders granted to the Environment Minister so that the entire process is clearly articulated, far more transparent, and equitable.
- Pursue solutions to the problems of feral animals and invasive species.

2. How do you propose to deal with the \$1.5 billion debt in the next 5 years?

Please see pages 8-9 of our *Jobs and Economic Turnaround Plan* (at the end of this document) for a full discussion of our plans for Reducing Government Debt. We believe that a balanced approach to economic management is the only way to send Bermuda on the road to meaningful recovery. Harsh austerity measures could have a negative impact on growth and prolong the recession. And

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we know that we can't grow our way out of debt by continued Government spending alone; that could lead Bermuda into a much deeper financial hole and loss of our hard-earned reputation.

That's why it's time Bermuda had a Government that really invests in our

people, welcomes rather than alienates job creators and plans for the future by living within its means, just like responsible individuals, families and businesses do.

The OBA *Jobs and Economic Turnaround Plan* will put Bermuda back on the road to recovery by stimulating investment, restoring badly needed confidence, creating new jobs for hard-working Bermudians and laying the foundation for future growth and shared prosperity. Our future depends on it.

An OBA government will deal with our \$1.5 billion national debt through responsible growth of the economy and disciplined financial management. Please see pages 4-9 in our *Jobs and Economic Turnaround Plan* (at the end of this document) for a discussion of our plans to Grow the Economy to Create Goodpaying

Jobs for Hard-working Bermudians, Control Government Spending, and Reduce Government Debt.

3. What plans do you have to find jobs for the youth of Bermuda?

See pages 4-6 and 9-11 of our *Jobs and Economic Turnaround Plan* (at the end of this document) for a full discussion of our plans to Grow the Economy to Create Good-paying Jobs for Hard-working Bermudians, and Create Ladders of Opportunity by Investing in Education and Skills Training.

We have concrete plans that will create new jobs for young Bermudians, as well as to create ladders of opportunity for young Bermudians by investing in education and skills training.

4. Statement

The high level of unemployment among young persons in the labour force is the direct result of the economic slowdown. The current recession is characterized by a dramatic decline in industry sectors that traditionally have employed significant shares of low skilled workers. These industries include but are not limited to construction, the retail sector, hotels and the restaurant sector. While advances in the use of technology in virtually

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every job in the workplace are ongoing many young people are leaving or completing their secondary education with little or no meaningful workplace skills. I'm referring to the type of proficiencies which are currently taught in the school system and would equip young people to secure entry level employment with an employer who is NOT a relative or family friend, i.e. speaking, typing, note-taking, basic arithmetic, strong grasp of MS Office, presenting, problem solving.

Question

How does your party propose to address the mindset of Bermudians who (i) seem to pay little attention to the quality of education their children

receive and;

(ii) do not have high expectations for their children as it relates to their work/study performance at school?

Please see the Education statement in Question 5(a) and pages 10-11 of our *Jobs and Economic Turnaround Plan* (at the end of this document) for our initiatives to improve the skills and training our young people receive to ensure that they have good career and job options when they graduate.

Our efforts to engage parents to play a more central role in their children's education will begin with programmes aimed at parental involvement at the preschool

and primary level in order to establish strong connections at an early stage in their children's development. We believe more needs to be done to enhance early childhood screening and intervention for learning and behavioural deficits, working with parents, to ensure that more children are school-ready by the time they enter primary school.

We believe that with stronger encouragement, PTA's can become a more effective and integral part of every school support team. In addition to establishing school boards that would include parents, we believe that more can be done to increase open communication with PTAs and parents to facilitate parental involvement and input.

5. How will your Administration/Government address and improve:

a) Education

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Please see pages 9-11 of our *Jobs and Economic Turnaround Plan* (at the end of this document) for a full discussion of our plans to address and improve our Education system.

The OBA's plan for the education and training needs of Bermudians begins in pre-school and continues through Bermuda College. It connects foundational education and skills training to the real-world needs of employers. It also includes those Bermudians who may have completed their formal education but need additional skills or retraining to maximise their job opportunities and take-home pay. We recognise that not everyone will complete formal education through secondary school and there must be an education safety net through GED and other vocational programmes to address their specific needs.

The OBA recognizes that in order for education reform to be successful, all those invested in the system—students, parents, teachers, principals, other education professionals and ministry officials—need to communicate respectfully, listen to each other and act in the best interests of Bermuda's students. This has not happened under the current Government. For example, it took a court decision to require the Ministry of Education to consult with parents over changes in

leadership at a school level.

The 2012 Labour Force Survey shows a strong connection between educational attainment and income. It also clearly demonstrates that Bermudians with higher education and skills training have much lower rates of unemployment.

Bermudians must have the appropriate skills and training in order to obtain the best jobs and participate in our economy in a meaningful way. There are many essential jobs that Bermudians should rightly occupy with proper training and education—jobs in financial services, healthcare, education, hospitality, and construction, to name a few. It is the responsibility of Government to help prepare Bermudians to take advantage of these opportunities.

Creating Ladders of Opportunity

To provide Bermudians with the education, training and skills they need to take advantage of job opportunities, the One Bermuda Alliance will:

IMPLEMENT THE KEY 2007 HOPKINS REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS AS A MATTER OF URGENCY

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ENSURE PRESCHOOL EDUCATION FOR ALL BERMUDIAN CHILDREN

- Expand government preschool availability to make early education more accessible to all.
- Enhance early-childhood screening and intervention for learning and behavioural deficits to ensure that more children are school-ready by the time they enter primary school.

SET HIGH STANDARDS, MEASURE PERFORMANCE AND ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESULTS

- Fully implement the Cambridge curriculum from primary to senior school, expanding beyond English, math and science.
- Establish an Independent Standards Board—the educational equivalent of the Auditor General—to provide independent and objective reports on school and overall student performance.
- Set a national standard for the education system, recognizing that the current Bermuda School Certificate is inadequate.

IMPLEMENT A TECHNICAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM INTEGRATED FROM MIDDLE SCHOOL THROUGH BERMUDA COLLEGE

- Ensure that all students have early exposure to a technical/vocational foundation so

they are able to begin a rewarding career when they graduate.

MAKE EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING A PRIORITY

- Establish a professional development center for teachers, focusing on teaching skills and effective classroom discipline, and require ongoing training.

- Allocate more resources to teacher training, teacher mentoring and support.
- Set high standards for hiring teachers and insist on performance in the classroom.
- Establish Master Teachers to recognize excellence in teaching and assist new and less experienced teachers in order to raise teaching skills in the classroom.

CREATE A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT THAT ENHANCES STUDENTS' SUCCESS

- Extend the school day to allow more time for music, arts, sports and additional academic assistance if needed, and work with principals and teachers to develop flexible schedules.
- Increase the number of guidance counselors in schools to provide meaningful direction to students with educational and career choices, as recommended in the 2009 Mincy Report.

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- Incorporate modern internship and day-release programmes in areas ranging from hospitality to financial services to better prepare students for job opportunities during the summer and upon graduation.
- Adopt behavioural management programmes used in some charter schools to provide better discipline and more effective classroom learning.
- Explore single-sex education for at-risk Bermudian males that would combine a solid academic foundation with a strong technical education curriculum to provide good career options on graduation.
- Transition Bermuda College into a four-year institution in select subject areas to give Bermudians without the ability to study abroad more options for college-level training on island.
- Create standards for a national physical-fitness programme that addresses health, exercise and diet beginning at the primary-school level

IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

- Review the effectiveness of mainstreaming.
- Address the adequacy of facilities and support staff.
- Review successes as well as emotional and behavioural issues.

PROVIDE GREATER AUTONOMY AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

- Create a specialist team for each school that provides academic, remedial and social assistance to students and parents, and allocate more resources for counseling.
- Create local school boards for each school.
- Assist PTAs to become more effective and an integral part of every school support team.

INVEST IN CONTINUING EDUCATION AND RETRAINING

- Partner with the business community, unions and Bermuda College to define the

skills and training required for good-paying jobs in the professions and trades.

- Create a modern version of the National Training Board as a Bermuda Technical Education and Workforce Development Agency in conjunction with employers. The agency will include a National Training Centre as well as a National Certification and Assessment Centre.

- Provide additional support for GED and job training programmes for Bermudians who have not completed their education and need to upgrade their skills, in order to enhance their employment opportunities.

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b) The Economy

Please see pages 1-6 of our *Jobs and Economic Turnaround Plan* (at the end of this document) for a full discussion of our plan to address and improve the Economy.

The OBA's *Jobs and Economic Turnaround Plan* follows two tracks, providing balance between responsible growth and disciplined financial management.

The first track implements specific pro-growth economic policies to stimulate much-needed foreign investment, restore confidence in our economy and create new jobs.

The second track eliminates wasteful Government spending and reduces the national debt, thereby making more money available for critical social programmes like the police service, healthcare, education and training, and social support for families.

By implementing our two-track approach, the OBA will:

1. Grow the economy to create good-paying jobs for hard-working Bermudians
2. Control Government spending
3. Reduce Government debt
4. Create ladders of opportunity by investing in education and skills training
5. Strengthen critical Government services
6. Reduce the cost of living

c) The Public Sector/Civil Service

A healthy and respectful working relationship with the public service civil servants is one of the keys to moving our country forward.

Civil servant jobs will be safe under an OBA government. We will not lay off civil servants – that is our promise on page 7 of our *Jobs and Economic Turnaround Plan* (see the end of this document).

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We will invite civil servants to partner with us to reduce our crippling Government debt by strictly adhering to budgets and by seeking ways to improve the efficiency of government departments.

We will also re-instate the Tripartite Economic Advisory Council to enhance

communication and the critical working relationship among unions, government and business – that is our promise on page 6 of our *Jobs and Economic Turnaround Plan* (see the end of this document).

6. We have many students going off to college but as far as I know, there is no one place that advises what careers are available in Bermuda and what they could/should be studying. For instance, the Government of Bermuda has many areas with foreign workers and have had them for years because we don't have Bermudians studying in those areas. I can think of department like Marine and Ports and Works and Engineering that have highly specialised positions. My suggestion is that we put together a listing of ALL jobs in Bermuda that are filled by guest workers, along with the qualifications for those posts. Make this information available to ANYONE who wants it, but specifically target students in Middle school or early high school so that they know what is out there before they go to college.

We agree. Information about the types of jobs available in government and particularly those that are filled by non-Bermudians should be more widely accessible through an on-line information site at the very least.

The Department of Statistics also puts out detailed reports on job categories in Bermuda (Employment Survey and Labour Market Indicators) and lists the percentage of jobs that are filled by non-Bermudians.

In our Education Plan (See 5(a)) we have included the need for more guidance counselors in the schools, and this type of information should be regularly distributed to them and to Bermuda College, to assist students with career planning. We believe that an integrated technical curriculum beginning at the middle school level will also expose all students to a strong technical foundation and provide them with more options and career choices when they graduate.

7. How does your party plan to assist Bermudians between the ages of 16-24 to find employment?

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See pages 4-6 and 9-11 of our *Jobs and Economic Turnaround Plan* (at the end of this document) for a full discussion of our plans to Grow the Economy to Create Good-paying Jobs for Hard-working Bermudians, and Create Ladders of Opportunity by Investing in Education and Skills Training.

This question is very similar to question three (above).

Bermuda's unacceptable level of youth unemployment is the direct result of our failing economy.

We will create jobs for young people, and indeed for all Bermudians, by getting Bermuda back on the road to economic recovery.

We will also:

- Implement a fully integrated, modern technical curriculum , beginning in middle school and extending through Bermuda College. This will ensure that all students have early exposure to a technical/vocational foundation so they are able to start a productive career when they graduate from secondary school.
- Increase the number of guidance counselors in schools to provide meaningful direction to students with educational and career choices, as recommended in the 2009 Mincy Report.
- Incorporate modern internship and day-release programmes in areas ranging from hospitality to financial services to better prepare students for job opportunities during the summer and upon graduation.
- Explore single-sex education for at-risk Bermudian males that would combine a solid academic foundation with technical education curriculum and solid career options.

8. Does your party have a favorable opinion in reference to the role that labour unions play in Bermuda?

Yes, the One Bermuda Alliance understands and appreciates the important role that labour unions play in Bermuda in protecting the rights of workers.

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We also appreciate the broader role that labour unions play in the area of workforce development, as well as the importance of an effective working relationship among Government, employers and unions.

We know that Bermuda's trade unions have valuable ideas and perspectives that should be heard by government on a regular basis.

Trade unions figure prominently in our *Jobs and Economic Turnaround Plan*:

- On page 6 is our promise to “Reinstate the Tripartite Economic Advisory Council to enhance communication and the critical working relationship among unions, government and business”.
- On page 11, under the heading ‘Ongoing education and retraining’, is our promise to “partner with the business community, unions and Bermuda College to define the skills and training required for good-paying jobs in the professions and trades”.

The Economic Advisory Council would meet every few months to discuss moving the economy forward.

We believe there needs to be a forum in which all of Bermuda's economic stakeholders have the opportunity to share their insights and to work together, with Government, to get Bermudians working again.

9. Specifically, what is your party's plan for debt reduction?

Please see pages 8-9 of our *Jobs and Economic Turnaround Plan* (at the end of this document) for a full discussion of our plans for Reducing Government Debt.

The OBA's two-track economic plan will have a positive impact on reducing government debt. Our pro-growth strategies will create new jobs and business activity on island. That increased activity will result in increased government revenues. We will use annual surpluses to pay down our national debt. In addition, by controlling excessive spending, the Government will start to live within its means once more.

In the meantime, Government will still have debt that requires proper management. To facilitate this, the OBA will marshal as many resources as are

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available in Bermuda by creating a Public Debt Advisory Board. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank consider such boards as international best practice for sovereign-debt management as they promote transparency and confidence among both creditors and citizens.

The Board will advise and assist the Minister of Finance on planning and managing government's existing debt, as well as any potential future borrowing requirements. The net result will enhance confidence and transparency with Bermuda's creditors and credit rating agencies by providing:

- An orderly reduction in the public debt and debt service costs.
- The replacement of the present approach with a more effective risk management framework to manage risk and cost trade-offs.
- An effective partnership between Government and private sector expertise.

Reducing our national debt will make more money available for critical social programmes like the police service, healthcare, education and training, and social support for families.

10. What will the OBA do to protect jobs to make sure there are no more job losses?

See pages 4-6 of our *Jobs and Economic Turnaround Plan* (at the end of this document) for a full discussion of our plans to Grow the Economy to Create Good-Paying Jobs for Hard-Working Bermudians.

A healthy and thriving economy is the best insurance against job losses and redundancies.

The OBA *Jobs and Economic Turnaround Plan* will put Bermuda back on the road to recovery by stimulating investment, restoring confidence, creating new jobs for hard-working Bermudians and laying the foundation for future growth and shared prosperity.

Growing our economy is the only way to create more jobs, and to protect the jobs of those already employed.

Civil servant jobs will be safe under an OBA government. We will not lay off civil servants – that is our promise on page 7 of our *Jobs and Economic Turnaround Plan*.

11. What can the OBA do to fix our roads, and when, for safety reasons? They are in the worst condition that I have ever seen and causing more wear and tear to our vehicles faster.

See page 5 of our *Jobs and Economic Turnaround Plan* (at the end of this document) for our promise to implement an island-wide road improvement programme.

In addition to fixing our roads, which have been neglected for far too long, this initiative will also create jobs for Bermudian workers in the construction industry.

12. We need more lights on the public streets, in the city and in neighborhoods for the safety and security of the public.

See page 11 of our *Jobs and Economic Turnaround Plan* (at the end of this document) for a full discussion of our plan to Strengthen Critical Government Services.

We agree about the need for more lights on public streets, in Hamilton and in neighbourhoods across the island, for the safety and security of our citizens. Our candidates have heard those comments repeatedly during their canvassing visits to homes across the island.

An OBA government will address this issue on an urgent basis. The safety and security of Bermudians is our greatest concern.

ENDS