



# Bermuda Industrial Union

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March 11, 2012

## Press Statement

This Government has consulted with interested stakeholders and affected parties in connection with a range of matters such as school closures and consolidations and other matters where it was clear that any new policies or proposed legislation could adversely affect stakeholders or members of the community at large. Significantly, when the Government recently proposed policy changes on another immigration issue, Work Permits, the Government consulted with all stakeholders who could adversely be affected by the new policy. The consultation exercise ensured stakeholders and the community at large had their say on important policy changes that could affect them at a time when the current level of unemployment in Bermuda is having a disastrous and negative impact upon the social fabric of the country.

The Government of Bermuda has not consulted with stakeholders who represent a cross section of the Bermuda population in connection with the proposed implementation of the Bermuda Immigration and Protection Amendment Act 2016. There must be meaningful consultation that meets the legal standards set by the laws of this island on such an important issue. The Government is acting unlawfully by not consulting with all stakeholders affected by the proposed new legislation.

It is worthy of note that this change of policy proposed in the Bermuda Immigration and Protection Amendment Act was rolled out the day after a by-election in Constituency 13 which was held on February 4<sup>th</sup> 2016. The people of Bermuda expect this Government to not only abide by the letter of the law but to also abide by the spirit of the law and follow the settled practice they have adopted in consulting with the people on matters of major national importance. The people of Bermuda now demand this Government answers the following questions:

1. Do you really care what ALL the people of Bermuda have to say on this issue?
2. Have you consulted with ALL stakeholders in Bermuda on the Bermuda Immigration and Protection Amendment Act 2016?
3. Did the consultation with ALL stakeholders meet the legal standard for consultation in Bermuda?

We have met with the Government on two occasions to initiate a consultative process. While we were awaiting a response from the Government we were shocked to find a press release posted in the media with Government's intention to continue without consultation. They make the claim that we have negotiated with unclean hands yet it was the OBA Government that proceeded with unclean hands with this process by failing to consult with ALL stakeholders and thereby follow the law of Bermuda and a practice it has followed previously on immigration matters and other matters of national importance.

On behalf of the General Council of the BIU we are calling on the people of Bermuda to withdraw their labour in protest on Friday, March 11, 2016. In response to the most recent

statement by Premier Michael Dunkley which states in part “The Government proposes that the Bill will be debated this session, and should the Bill pass, the implementation date would be later in the summer” in regards to the Second Reading of the “Bermuda Immigration and Protection Amendment Act 2016”.

Under Section 10 of the Bermuda Constitution Order, come and exercise your political and democratic right of peaceful assembly and protest the failure of this Government to abide by the laws of the land.

**We are calling on the people of Bermuda to assemble at BIU Headquarters or the House of Assembly tomorrow morning, Friday, March 11, 2016 at 8:00 am**