

REMARKS BY MELANIE S. GRIFFIN, M.P.
YAMACRAW CONSTITUENCY
ON THE OCCASION OF THE
EASTERN REGION CONCLAVE
THURSDAY, JULY 21ST, 2011
NEW LIFE [CHRISTIAN CENTER](#) AUDITORIUM

Session Moderator, Mr. Dwight Ambrister
Party Leader
Deputy Leader
Chairman
Officers, Councilors
Parliamentary Colleagues and Candidates
PLPs Everywhere, especially those tonight from the Eastern Region

Introduction

Tonight I am grateful for the opportunity as a part of this mighty eastern block of constituencies to be able to stop by just long enough to make my report on behalf of the Constituency of Yamacraw and to encourage you and Bahamians everywhere, as we move rapidly towards the general elections, to be strong and to stay focused. You have endured hardship like bold soldiers, but you can rest assured tonight that the light is at the end of the tunnel beckoning us to a brighter day once again in this country when Bahamians can feel and know beyond the shadow of a doubt that "It's about You!"

I wish to commend the hardworking organizers for forging ahead amidst time constraints and other challenges to bring this Regional Conclave to fruition and allow us this opportunity to report to our constituents and to the Nation. It is also an occasion to remind those of us who have chosen a life of service to country that we serve at the pleasure of the people and our service must not be about self-aggrandizement or self-enrichment. It must not be about the interests of who gives the biggest check to our political campaigns to the detriment of every one else, it must be about providing equal opportunity for all regardless of race, colour or creed. Our service must be about people first, Bahamians first. It must be about you!

It's About You!

So for these three days as we gather in conclave under the theme, "It's about You!" The eastern region team will put the case to you on behalf of the PLP, the Party that has always been about people and about Bahamians first. For the PLP it has always been about you. We were born out of the belly of a disenfranchised, dispossessed and down trodden majority, denied an identity and equal opportunities by a minority. The very existence of the PLP was out of you, because of you and for you. It was about you that our forefathers, led by Sir Lynden fought for and gained Majority Rule. It was about your freedoms that they created an Independent [Bahamas](#). It was about your empowerment that they provided universal education. It was about your health care that they established National Insurance. It was about your security that they established the Royal Bahamas Defence Force. It was about your ability to provide a better quality of life for your family that the Hotel Corporation was established and Tourism was expanded. It was about your continued advancement that the College of [The Bahamas](#) was established. It was about you that they awakened a sleeping fishing village and with the help of God created this vibrant modern metropolis called the [Commonwealth of The Bahamas](#) and all its foundational institutions. For the PLP it has always been about you. It was about you then and it's about you now.

It's about your pain, your hurt, your suffering, your cry for social justice, your cry for economic

empowerment, your cry for a level playing field, your cry for a safe, violent, murder and crime free environment. It's about your ill health and loss of loved ones because you can't afford health insurance. It's about your inability to pay your rent and your mortgage. It's about your inability to pay your bills, to keep your lights on, to put food on the table, to pay school fees. It's about your inability to find a job. It's about your cry for good governance, a government that cares, one you can trust and one that puts you first. It's about you!

Now when we say, "It's about you!" It's not meant to be taken in a selfish sort of way, because we are well aware that the Bible tells us that we are our brother's keepers. It is just so unfortunate that at this time in the life of our country and the development of our Nation there are those who seem hell-bent on dismantling the freedoms and rights for which we have fought so hard. Instead of "forward, upward and onward", they seem to want to take us "backward, downward and backward" some more. By their actions they seem to be saying, "it's about every one else, but you" and as they journey to the end of this term in office, along the trail they leave a people with shattered dreams and broken spirits, full of hopelessness and despair, afraid to trust anyone. We have come this week to remind you that for the PLP, "It's about you!" The fact is our legacy is looking out for you. You are the reason for our existence and an assignment we have been mandated to continue until "we have wiped every tear from every eye".

Yamacraw Constituency

My brothers and sisters, tonight I have a confession to make, in 1996, after 13 years of marriage to a man I love dearly, I took on another love, one that has been sharing my life and love ever since, the great Constituency of Yamacraw. Now you know, at first Yamacraw was playing hard to get. She "dissed" me in 1997, but by time as 2002 came around it was all she wrote. By 2007 our relationship was solid and together over the years we have been working to improve the quality of life for all who dwell within Yamacraw's gates and even its immediate surroundings. Yamacraw are you out there? You know that for me, it has always been about you. We have shared in each others joys and pains. We have overcome many challenges together and in spite of my imperfections, I believe my record speaks for itself.

Although, I have found a level of satisfaction in being able to improve the general environment in Yamacraw, my greatest joy has been in being able to touch and improve the quality of life for so many of you and helping you to address and find solutions for those issues that cause you concern. Like many communities throughout the country, we are now plagued with high unemployment, increased crime and the inability to meet our financial commitments resulting in eviction from homes, adjustments in lifestyles and many other social and healthcare problems. In addition to meeting you in your homes, I continue to make myself available to you at the Constituency Office on Antigua Street where together we try to get through these difficult times. Tonight, I want to encourage you though, in the midst of adversity, God is still in control and better days are ahead. Just continue to do right and stay out of trouble, particularly our young people. Together we will ride out the economic and political storms and return to visionary, caring governance under the PLP where it's about you.

I must mention the establishment of the PYL Yamacraw Branch a vibrant group of young people who you will hear from on closing night. I encourage all young people in the area to get involved with group which will focus on you concerns and work with me to provide wholesome positive activities in the area. Congratulations on your re-launch in Yamacraw President Toni Ingraham and your executives.

50th Anniversary of Women Suffrage

Before I close, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate women throughout our country as we begin to celebrate 50 years of women's right to vote in this country. A right that did not come easy, the fight was hard and long, but our foremothers persevered. On behalf of Bahamian women, I recognize and salute their efforts and those of the Women's Suffrage Movement, which was able to garner the

support of the fledgling PLP and Labour Party. Women for the PLP it has always been about you!

It is also my pleasure to recognize and highlight the first woman to register to vote who is also the first PLP woman to be elected to the halls of the House of Assembly, Mrs. Ruby Anne Cooper-Darling. I invite Mrs. Darling to come and Dame Marguerite to oblige us by presenting her with a token of our appreciation.

Thank you Dame Marguerite and Mrs. Darling, who I recommend should be knighted by the next PLP Government at the earliest opportunity in recognition of her contributions to this Country and this Party.

Conclusion

Finally, my friends, I admonish you to stay focused as we move into what many call "the silly season". We know that everything will be thrown at us, even the kitchen sink, in fact it has already started, and the signs are everywhere. Our job is to continue to stay focused, continue to do what is right and continue to work in our constituencies. God will take care of the rest.

Mr. Leader, we promise you that we will give up no ground in the east; in fact we will be adding to our numbers. We are by no means easy and we take no prisoners. Our people know that for us it's about them, meeting their needs and serving them to the best of our ability. They know that like every organization, we have our weaknesses, but we are still the Party that has their best interest at heart. We believe in them and their ability to continue to build this young Nation. They deserve the opportunity to do it, instead of standing on the side twiddling their thumbs, unable to provide for their families while foreigners are given their jobs and being allowed to expand into areas that have always been preserved for Bahamians.

[Bahamas](#) you need Perry [Gladstone](#) Christie and the PLP, for us, IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU!

Thank you and goodnight!