

Remarks by Keenan Johnson
National Chairman
Progressive Young Liberals
Eastern Region Conclave

Introduction

The theme for this conclave is It's about you! I want to take you on a trip down memory lane for a few minutes. While I do that I would like for you to ask yourselves a question. For the past 4 years, has it really been about you?

Crime

It was 2007, and you heard the now Prime Minister and the Minister of National Security lambaste the PLP for what they deemed was a poor approach to crime. Yet, in 2006, the last full year of PLP governance, the murder count was 61!

Every year since 2007, there has been a new murder record. And today, only 7 months into the year, we have already passed the murder count for the whole of 2006.

In May of 2007 the Minister of National Security promised a visionary crime fighting plan for the country by the end of that year. PLPs, it is now 2011 and I have yet to see any plan!

They gutted Urban Renewal and dumped Swift Justice, and replaced these innovative, award-winning policies with....NOTHING.

So I ask you...has it really been about you?

Likewise, they were too proud to admit that the PLP initiative to put police in schools was a great idea. So they kept the police out of the schools while countless criminal acts were reported and dozens of students injured.

Finally, after the reports on student crime piled up so high that even this government couldn't ignore them, they agreed to put some police back in the schools.

So I ask you... has it really been about you?

Education

To tell you the truth, there is no shortage of times this FNM government has failed to put you first.

A few years ago the then Minister of Education traveled to Grand Bahama to visit Eight Mile Rock High School, where he found the Bahamas Union of Teachers waiting to meet with him. He disrespected the teachers, walking out on them simply because he did not have advance notice.

So I ask you...has it really been about you?

In the FNM 2007 Manifesto, it states, and I quote, "We will expand and simplify the Government Loan Guarantee Programme..."

2 years later, as many students were preparing to go abroad to school for the first time, this FNM government cancelled the same programme that they promised they would expand and simplify.

So I ask you...has it really been about you?

Civil Service

Just last year, this government had ZNS workers waiting inhumanely, wondering if the future would see them employed. Workers who were employed at ZNS for 20+ years were embarrassed because they were escorted off the premises by police officers.

Then this year they sold BTC to a company with one of the worst employee relationship records in the region. The Prime Minister of this country said that if Bahamians were to own BTC, it would be run down in 30 days.

So I ask you...has it really been about you? Is this a government that believes in you, a government that believes in the Bahamas?

DNA

With all these failures, Bahamians are understandably looking for change.

But Bahamians – be careful! There are those who describe themselves as change, but are really more of the same!

So Mr. McCartney I just have a few questions for you. Where have you been all these years, while the FNM has failed in such a big way? Why

did you just find your voice now, with elections close? Did your conscience not bother you as your government and your party failed time and again to fight crime? Where were you when your government was handing out favors to special interests but raising taxes on Bahamians?

We think that in your case Mr. McCartney, it isn't about US Bahamians so much as it is about YOU.

We aren't distracted by the DNA...we're focused on the real challenge, the battle for our nation's future.

Visionary Governance

Bahamians, a visionary government is one who implements programmes such as urban renewal to reach out to young Bahamians *before* they begin a life of crime!

A visionary government is one who puts in place anchor projects that would provide employment to Bahamians (not foreigners) for years to come and throughout all of the islands of the Bahamas.

A visionary government is one who is all about you!

And after that bell is rung, and it is all said and done, The PLP will once again provide that governance for you!

But I want now take this opportunity to speak to our honorable leader Mr. Christie. Mr. Christie, you have the full support of the Progressive Young Liberals as we go into this general election. We honor your service, your achievements, and your deep commitment to all Bahamians.

You have always kept your door open to us – and tonight we present you with a list of priorities for young Bahamians:

1. 10,000 publicly supported jobs for young Bahamians, both in the public and private sector;
2. specific set-asides in every project for youth workers;
3. more advanced training at BTVI;
4. restart the loan scholarship programme that the outgoing government saw fit to cancel;
5. provide FREE COB and UWI tuition for ALL Bahamian students;
6. ensure that COB is given University Status in a timely manner;
7. double the amount invested in Education in real terms over a five year term;
8. implement National Health Insurance; and
9. re-implement Urban Renewal.

Mr. Christie, we know you are ready to lead our young people to better and brighter days!

We know you're ready to lead a government that puts Bahamians First!

Conclusion

PLPs the time is drawing nigh to rid ourselves of this uncaring government.

And before I conclude I want to read a letter to the Prime Minister, paraphrased from a song composed by world renown artist, Pink.

Dear Mr. Prime Minister

Come take a walk with me,

Let's pretend we're just two people and

You're not better than me.

I'd like to ask you some questions if we can speak honestly.

What do you feel when you see all the homeless on the street?

Who do you pray for before you go to sleep?

What do you feel when you look in the mirror?

Are you proud?

How do you sleep while the rest of us cry?

How do you dream when a mother has no chance to say goodbye?

How do you walk with your head held high?

Can you even look me in the eye?

And tell me why?

How do you sleep at night?

How do you walk with your head held high?

Dear Mr. Prime Minister

You'd never take a walk with me,

Would you?

Bahamians -- for 4 LONG years it has been about everyone BUT you.

But I am here tonight to tell you that help and hope are on the way... and

our message is clear and simple. A vote for the PLP is a vote for:

- Proactive governance
- Visionary governance
- Caring governance

- Democratic governance
- Governance that is **ALL ABOUT YOU!!!**

So Hold on Bahamians...The PLP is coming!