

**COVID19 Update**  
**REMARKS BY THE PREMIER**  
**The Hon David Burt, JP, MP**  
**16 July, 2020**

Good afternoon Bermuda.

I hope all of you are doing well and enjoying the blissful Bermuda Summer. This afternoon I am joined by the Minister of Health and the Minister of Public Works.

As a country we have, for the most part, followed the rules, behaved appropriately, and contributed to our success in battling this pandemic. We could not have made it this far without unity, hard work and dedication.

It has not been easy . . . sheltering in place, curbside shopping, grocery days by last name, curfews, social distancing, face coverings and economic hardship. This has taken a tremendous toll on all of us. But as I have said before, collectively as a country Bermuda rose to the occasion, and we have shown ourselves to be an example to the world of how to manage and live with this virus.

While most of us have done well, by following the guidelines – we must remember that it only takes 1 undetected case to set us back. So while we have earned the changes that will be announced today – we must remain ever vigilant.

We will begin with the latest update from Minister Wilson on COVID 19 testing.

**MINISTER WILSON READS HER REMARKS**

Thank you Minister and thank you for the hard work that your team continues to put in.

It is important to note that out of the 6 imported cases that have arrived in the last 2 weeks since we have opened the airport all of them have been returning residents.

The story just shared by the Minister of Health is disturbing – as it means that our own don't care about the impact that their reckless actions may have on ALL of our hard work over the past 4 months. We have been successful because we have not been selfish and have thought of the collective over our own needs. That must continue.

As the Minister of Health has indicated, the matter has been reported to the Bermuda Police Service for the violations of law. No one wants to punish anyone, but the rules in place must be followed for the safety of our country and for our economy.

As I have intimated, and as the Minister of Health has also said, due to the fact that we have been faced with returning residents not following the rules, the cabinet will consider revisions to requirements for residents returning to the country and may introduce quarantine requirements for returning residents who do not possess a valid pre-test. We must keep our country safe – and if we do not hear that sadly we may all have to feel.

Traveling to the United States is something that, given the situation over there, should not be done for pleasure, but should only be done in urgent situations. We will be revising the guidance to make sure that we minimize the amounts of imported cases which may be coming from returning residents. As the Minister said, the introduction of quarantine bracelets for persons who do not have valid pre-test to ensure that we can enforce the quarantine.

What I must say, is that is a responsibility of all of us Bermudians to do our job to protect our country. Visitors are coming in, and are following the rules, it is us that are breaking them and putting our country at risk.

I will now turn the mic over to Minister Burch who will provide the latest update on regulations and changes to restrictions, most notably the time when the curfew will come to an end.

**MINISTER BURCH READS HIS REMARKS**

Thank you Col.

The ending of the curfew represents not just a major landmark in the reopening of our economy, but it also will create more opportunities for employment.

Pre-COVID-19, few Bermudians under 50 had ever experienced a curfew and we had long taken for granted the freedom to move about the country when we want, and how we want. This is something that many of us will welcome but it must not be taken as a license to lose our minds. Simply put, DON'T TEAR IT! We have come too far to go back now!

Earlier today, I had the pleasure to announce two new appointments to the Cabinet. I would like to thank MP Renee Ming for accepting the role of Minister of National Security and thank MP Neville Tyrrell for taking on the role of Transport.

Over the years they have demonstrated the commitment, dedication and wisdom that will hold them in good stead as they take over two high profile and key Ministries. I'd like to again thank the former Ministers Wayne Caines and Zane Desilva for the excellent place they left their former Ministries enabling their successors to hit the ground running.

Tomorrow the House of Assembly will meet and we will be debating the following Bills:

- Amendments to the Parliamentary Elections Act 2020
- Riddell's Bay (Warwick Parish) Special Development Order
- Amendments to the National Pensions Scheme (Occupational Pensions) and Related Regulations
- Registrar of Companies (Supervision and Regulation) Act 2020
- Ministers and Members of the Legislature (Salaries and Pensions) Amendment Act 2020
- Public Service Superannuation Temporary Amendment Act 2020

We will also be tabling:

- Trusts Special Provisions #2 Act 2020
- Gaming (Transfer of Functions) Bill
- Government Loans Amendment (#2) Act
- Amendments to the Tourism Investment Act 2017
- Tourism Investment (St. George's Club) 2020

Over the next 2 weeks over 11 Bills will be debated and passed into law with the support of Members of Parliament. This extensive work load speaks to the hard work and dedication of the Government team in continuing to deliver – and doing what is necessary to rebuild our economy; for the people of Bermuda.

Despite the restrictions and challenges posed by COVID-19, our government has remained active outside of the management of the pandemic and we remain focused on the job at hand. We work tirelessly to keep Bermuda safe, and we will work equally as hard to ensure a strong economic recovery.

One key goal our government has had throughout the pandemic has been to support local and international businesses and ensure our companies can continue to conduct their operations while fully adhering to safety protocols to meet the COVID-19 regulations.

We were recently able to demonstrate our ability to drive a business-friendly environment despite the restrictions posed by the pandemic.

Key leaders of Athene, one of Bermuda's largest reinsurance companies, needed to travel to Bermuda to conduct certain meetings. Together, the Bermuda Business Development Agency, the Bermuda Airport Authority, and the L.F. Wade International Airport worked to enable Athene to come to Bermuda and meet on the island in June, while ensuring full compliance with COVID-19 regulations.

The Bermuda Airport Authority, and Cedar Aviation implemented strict measures and protocols to ensure the meeting could take place safely and successfully.

Before the L.F. Wade International Airport opened to international flights on July 1, the Bermuda Government adapted swiftly and pragmatically to address the individual requirements of companies that required on-island meetings.

Athene sent us a statement of thanks from its President Bill Wheeler, which stated, "We are grateful for the support we received from the Bermuda Government, the BDA and local agencies. Bermuda's swift action allowed us to conduct local business while prioritizing the health and safety of all those involved and ensuring full compliance with all Bermuda laws and regulations. Thank you to Bermuda's continued exemplary business friendly approach – even during these unprecedented times."

The Bermuda Government is grateful for the support and commitment of our local and international business partners who continue to work with us during this period of global economic challenge.

I would also, as I close, like to again thank everyone in Bermuda for your words of encouragement, your emails of support and your prayers for our health, our success and the well-being of our families. It remains an honor and a privilege to serve our country during this time, and we thank you for all that you have done over the past few months to make our burdens lighter and this work rewarding.

Thank you