



# DOMINICA PUBLIC SERVICE UNION

(Formerly Dominica Civil Service Association)

Founded 1939- Registered Trade Union 1960

Affiliate of CCL., CPSA., PSI., ITE, UNI.

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## **STATEMENT ON ELECTORAL REFORM**

**January 3, 2019**

A recent call by the Catholic Church of Dominica for electoral reform is a welcome one. Some individuals and organisations like Concern Citizens Movement and opposition political parties have all in the past joined in the campaign. The Dominica Public Service Union (DPSU) has not hesitated in being part of that campaign. In July of 2018 the General Secretary of the DPSU who is also General Secretary of the Caribbean Public Services Association (CPSA) wrote an article entitled "A Cry for Electoral Reform" in which he called for consensus by both Government and opposition to arrive at a resolution to this matter in Dominica.

The continuing delay in adhering to the request for electoral reform does not reflect responsible Governance nor an effective Electoral Commission. It contributes adversely to peace and national unity. No Christmas message or independence address which calls for unity will result in any sustained positive outcome until there is electoral reform. This is so because of the large part of our citizenry who are interested in such reform. Their call simply should not be ignored.

In speaking to the issue of electoral reform we wish to quote the following from the said article written by Bro Thomas Letang for the CPSA. "Electoral reform in our view is one of the biggest demonstrations of democracy because it facilitates free and fair elections. It sets the foundation for all who are eligible and qualified to vote, to do so. It sets a level playing field for all who are participating or offering themselves as candidates. It ensures that we will have an electoral list which is sanitized – and one that allows those who have departed this life to be removed from the list and be allowed to rest in peace.

Trade unions stand for justice, equality, equity and fraternity. One way of demonstrating this is by identifying with the call for electoral reform."

In looking beyond the boundaries of industrial relations we have empowered our members through advocacy, through representation and through negotiation. The DPSU has accepted the responsibility to stand up in defense of democracy and against injustice and unfairness.

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*Address all correspondences to the General Secretary*

We recognize that a system which places any one group far above another simply because of who sits in office cannot be fair and needs to be reviewed, and to be reviewed promptly.

**The report of the Organization of American States (OAS) Election Observation Mission (EOM) in December 2014 stated:**

*Quote*

" EOM/OAS notes that the electoral laws establish a continuous registration process and the right of persons who are registered is guaranteed until such time as their names are removed from the list in accordance with the provisions established under section 7 of the Registration of Electors Act. The Mission heard concerns expressed by different actors on the number of people registered in the voters list, which exceeds the country's population. While there are currently 72,484 registered voters; the country's population is 71,293, according to the 2011 census..... In light of this, the OAS/EOM once again **recommends that the voter registry be reviewed and updated according to the provisions established by the electoral laws**, ensuring that the electors on the list are only those eligible to vote.

Additionally the EOM/OAS also said the following "There is a consensus across party lines and Dominican society that a **voter identification system should be implemented**, but insufficient action has been taken on this issue. The Mission reiterates the recommendation of the 2009 OAS/EOM on the introduction of voter identification cards. The OAS/EOM further recommends that, following provisions of Section 19 of the Registration of Electors Act, electoral authorities **issue identification cards before the next electoral process.**" *end quote*

A society where the electoral system denies citizens equal rights and freedom cannot be accepted as being truly democratic. This is enough reason for electoral reform.

The many issues which will be addressed through electoral reform cannot be brushed aside as not being important in the development of Dominica. Indeed they are an integral part to our national development.

The DPSU calls on all who are responsible in one way or the other to heed to the citizens call for electoral reform. These include the Electoral Commission and Central Government. Any further delay is an injustice to democracy and a (possible cause) for civil disobedience.

  
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**THOMAS LETANG**  
**GENERAL SECRETARY**