



Office of the Leader
of the Opposition
Cayman Islands Government

Hon. Wayne Panton, JP, MP.
Premier of the Cayman Islands
Government Administration Building
George Town, Grand Cayman

Via email: wayne.panton@gov.ky
Copied to jana.pouchie-bush@gov.ky

June 16, 2022

Dear Premier Panton,

Re: Assisting families and businesses ease the impact of the cost of living crisis.

I am writing to plead for additional assistance to families and businesses who are increasingly hurting from the cost-of-living crisis now facing us and, as you correctly noted, will get much worse in the coming months.

Your Government's ending of the pension holiday and the health insurance assistance given to small businesses are of particular concern. The pension holiday programme assists every family and small business on these islands. The health insurance programme assists qualifying small businesses in affording their employees' health insurance costs and helps secure working families' health care plans. Both programmes will expire at the end of June. Increasingly, my colleagues and I are hearing from constituents about the hardship this will present as they are unprepared for this cost at a time of rising prices and with key parts of the economy still struggling to recover.

As a matter of urgency, I urge you and your colleagues to reconsider the decision to end these two programmes and instead extend them to the end of the year.

You will recall last week in Parliament that I offered up suggestions to assist families and the country during this critical time. These were:

- To introduce a COLA for all the public service.
- Increase the stipend paid to retired seamen, veterans, pensioners and those dependent on financial assistance from the Government.
- Reduce the Import Duties on gasoline and diesel for six months to help ease the cost at the gas pump.

Roy M. McTaggart JP MP
Leader of the Opposition
D. +1 (345) 916-2330
E. roy.mctaggart@parliament.ky
roy@mctaggart.ky

294 Crewe Road
PO Box 10526
Grand Cayman KY1-1005



Office of the Leader
of the Opposition
Cayman Islands Government

- Continue the Covid Stipends.
- And yes, to defer the reinstatement of the pension contributions to the end of the year.

I said at the time that these recommendations were not exhaustive, and there are others that I have since mentioned publicly. I will highlight one of these here as it is within the ability of the Government to do. I would require the Government-owned Water Authority to defer any proposed increase in water rates for at least six months. I am sure that the civil service will also have ideas of their own for temporary relief to consumers that the Government could consider. I would immediately ask Chief Officers to propose their ideas for consideration.

In closing, having made the suggestion of the need of a Cost of Living increase for public servants, I was pleased to hear you confirm that Government will provide a COLA, and other assistance, to the civil service. But this falls short as it does not address the need of those in the broader public service (Statutory Authorities and Government owned companies) who are left out. The electricity assistance also seems helpful as it will provide, given what you have said to date, about **\$75** monthly per qualifying family over the three months.

But none of the suggestions I offered are seemingly being considered, and indeed the Government does not seem to appreciate the need for a broader set of relief measures – this is unsatisfactory. I ask that your Government consider these and any other helpful measures, including extending the pension holiday and insurance programmes, that can assist families and businesses in keeping afloat over the rest of this year.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

Hon Roy McTaggart
Leader of the Opposition

Roy M. McTaggart JP MP
Leader of the Opposition
D. +1 (345) 916-2330
E. roy.mctaggart@parliament.ky
roy@mctaggart.ky

294 Crewe Road
PO Box 10526
Grand Cayman KY1-1005