

# BERMUDA PUBLIC SERVICES UNION

**2020 LABOUR DAY**  
**COLLECTIVELY WORKING THROUGH THE PANDEMIC:**  
*Workers' Lives Matter*  
*President Armell Thomas*

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As reflected in the theme, this year's Labour Day serves to emphasise the importance of working collaboratively through these unprecedented times. A collective effort will be required to tackle the devastating impact that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have both locally and internationally. The world of work here in Bermuda and around the world has changed dramatically over the past few months and Bermuda is now facing a new reality that has yet to be fully defined.



As President of the Bermuda Public Services Union (BPSU), I recognise the delicate balance required to address both the health and economic challenges currently facing Bermuda.

While the wellbeing of Bermuda's residents must always be our priority, the strict measures implemented have caused economic and social shockwaves throughout the community. With the prolonged lockdown, quarantine, physical distancing and other protective measures, the global economy is threatened to slide into a recession. In response, the Bermuda Government will have to carefully tailor policies in an effort to save businesses and jobs, prevent layoffs and protect incomes while also ensuring that no one is left behind.

The specific policies adopted by Bermuda during this crisis will be critical in determining what type of society will ultimately emerge from this crisis. At the center of these policies, and as highlighted in the theme of this year's Labour Day celebrations, there must be the recognition of the critical role that each worker plays in Bermuda's recovery. Without Bermuda's skilled, trained, dedicated workforce, there will be no recovery: **Workers Matter!**

The BPSU is actively engaged in helping to structure this new way forward while at the same time, ensuring that workers' hard-fought rights are protected.

To this end, the BPSU has been working with the Government throughout the pandemic to find solutions that embrace the principle of shared sacrifice while at the same time maintaining quality public services. The BPSU encourages the Government to continue its dialogue with the affiliate members of the Bermuda Trade Union Congress (BTUC). As key stakeholders, Government's collaboration with the BTUC will strengthen social inclusion, foster a sense of common purpose and promote buy-in on the way forward.

Throughout the pandemic, the BPSU has also been supporting the wider community by providing assistance through the Union's *Community Outreach Committee*. This Committee has been supporting various community-based initiatives including the Salvation Army's feeding programme.

Undoubtably, there will be more challenging times ahead for all workers and their families, and it is essential that the Government, Unions, employers and employees actively work together to ensure that WE emerge stronger. Be assured, the BPSU is committed to playing an active role in Bermuda's recovery and the protection of all workers.

**ONWARD & UPWARD TOGETHER as *Workers' Lives Matter***