



July 1, 2021

Bermuda, let's turn down the volume just a bit

As a member of our community, I am acutely aware of the discontent being spread on social media and otherwise regarding the mandatory hotel quarantine for unvaccinated passengers. I get why people are upset and why they are fatigued. I get that people want to move forward with less restrictions. I also get that people don't like the idea of some people having to abide by more restrictions than others.

As a Member of Parliament, I understand our deep and solemn responsibility to protect and ensure the safety of our entire community. These are not fly by night decisions, made to hurt or inconvenience our own people. Every decision made by Bermuda's legislators is in the best interest of all Bermudians. The restrictions of the past year have applied to your elected Members of Parliament and Senators. The mandatory quarantine regulations apply to us as well. The "us versus them" doesn't apply to people like me. The Government is not enacting legislation, implementing policies or enforcing restrictions on the direction from any one person or based on any grand conspiracy theory. We have a collective responsibility.

In the past year, the Government has taken advice and guidance from local and international medical professionals, scientists and health organizations. We have had long intense discussions regarding the best decisions to protect our citizens, our country and our economy. It has not been easy.

The narrative being perpetuated by some that we take some sort of pleasure in the suffering of others is unfortunate and disheartening. We have all had to endure a massive burden - elected and unelected officials, workers, volunteers etc.

Our focus is to PROTECT, not to punish. Vaccines have been made available for free to residents. We are thankful for the 35,000 plus Bermuda residents that have accepted this offer moving us closer to community immunity . For those who are unwilling or unable to take the vaccine, we also have the responsibility of ensuring your protection, and that is why our Government implemented the mandatory hotel quarantine regulations.

As a government, we cannot allow people to put themselves or others at risk of transmitting this highly contagious Covid-19 virus that has caused so much destruction and loss of life worldwide. We understand there is nothing ideal about this. There is nothing ideal about COVID-19. But we are learning to adjust around it. We are moving beyond it...with caution. The reality is, we cannot afford to shut the island down yet again due to any unfortunate transgressions.

There is a lot of chatter out there. We understand the angst in the community. We ask for your patience, and your cooperation. There is light at the end of the tunnel and we have a plan to move beyond the pandemic. Do not allow our plan to protect our people, to divide us, as the damage may be irreparable.

Let's be more conscious of the words we are using, and the comments we are making. Let's be quick to listen and slow to speak. Let's turn down the volume a bit Bermuda, and pull back. When we feel ourselves about to write something offensive or send a forward , maybe we can step away from the computer or phone and do an alternative activity. We cannot become so consumed with hatred and frustration that we jeopardize our own health and safety.

We can do this. We WILL move beyond this pandemic.

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