

**ADDRESS GIVEN BY LESLIE O. MILLER  
AT PLP JOB CREATION AND EMPLOYMENT SUMMIT  
SEPTEMBER 29, 2011**

Never in the history of the Bahamas.....

Have so few

Screwed up so much.....

For so many.....

So quickly...

Who's ready for a change?!

Who's ready for a government that puts Bahamians first?!

Who's ready for a government that believes in The Bahamas?!

Party Leader - Rt. Hon. Perry Christie and Mrs. Christie

Deputy Leader - Hon. Philip "Brave" Davis and Mrs. Davis

Party Chairman – Hon. Bradley Roberts

Stalwart Councilors

Colleagues

Ladies and Gentlemen gathered here tonight

The wonderful Bahamians listening in radio land

And last but never least, the great people of the Blue Hills Constituency...

Good Evening!

We have a lot to talk about tonight. The people of The Bahamas are ready for new ideas and new hope.

But I want us to pause for a moment.

I would like to express my deepest and sincerest sympathy to the families of Marco Archer and the young boy who was knocked down on Cowpen Road yesterday. I know your pain for I have been there, so on behalf of the Bahamian people, I would like to express our deepest sympathy.

I ask that we pause for a moment of silence in their honour.

My Brothers and Sisters, our national debt now exceeds 4 billion dollars which means that every Bahamian owes approximately 12 thousand dollars, and that includes babies and everyone else.

Tonight is a very special night for me, as I stand on this podium not only as "YOUR POTCAKE", but I stand in the middle of a mixture of new and seasoned PLP candidates who have recognized that the time to save our Bahamaland is now.

Not tomorrow!  
Not next week!  
Not under the FNM!  
Not under any new party which is not prepared to take over in tough times!

But right now with your PLP – core Bahamian values, a legacy of fighting for you, old seasoned hands, and a smart new generation bursting with ideas – who can ask for anything more!

In 2007 I was sent home by the good people of Blue Hills, and at that time I could not understand why. But I trusted them so I went without complaining – no Election Court, no big debates, no nothing. I decided to go and concentrate on other things that I wanted to do, whilst still assist my people in Blue Hills.

Following the 2007 election, the good people of Blue Hills quickly realized that the new fellow did not know what to do with the keys to Blue Hills, and worse than that, he forgot to recognize who gave him those keys. I understand that he has started looking for those keys again, but it is too late my friend, much too late. Too little, too late!

What has he done for Blue Hills in the last 4 years?

The answer is simple – Nothing, absolutely nothing.

So I believe that the real reason Blue Hills sent me home in 2007 was because they knew I would need a lot of rest to assist the new PLP Government in cleaning up the mess that this incompetent FNM Administration has left us!

In 4 short years under the FNM, our country has seen:

- Crime at the highest level it has ever been in our nation.
- Unemployment at the highest it has been in the history of our Country.
- Thousands of Bahamians losing their homes on a weekly basis as you can see in the local newspapers, and the middle class is being wiped out day after day. The misery index in the Bahamas is at an all-time high.
- Many Bahamians cannot keep their lights on or put gas in their vehicles.
- Educational grades remain at a D average
- And here is another first for the FNM – The most roads ever dug up and impassable at any time in our history. This is one achievement that I believe no Government will ever be able to surpass. Everybody wants new roads – but this

government didn't plan and didn't consult with anybody and made a mess on a scale that can barely be believed.

As you are fully aware, job creation and economic empowerment is near and dear to me. I have struggled along with many other Bahamians to create business opportunities in this country. I am a firm believer that the strength of any economy is in the Small and Medium Size Business.

Too many young Bahamians do not see a way forward. We must create meaningful job opportunities for them. It starts with a government that believes they have the capacity to achieve, if given the right opportunities.

I believe young Bahamians can and should be entrepreneurs, can start their own businesses, can become skilled craftspeople, can make meaningful contributions to their families and to the nation....don't you?

**The PLP proposes to implement Career Path Academies** -- to expand technical and vocational training and apprenticeship opportunities for 15,000 young people annually.

Here are a few highlights from the program:

- We will identify the needs of the labour market, and provide these students with the skills to fill those positions.
- Establish a proper screening program to identify remedial students in all schools from grade 10 [age 15] and move them into technical classes where they concentrate on two (2) core subjects – English and Mathematics and more technical training. All students will be required to pass the 2 core subjects in order to graduate.
- The process of identifying and streamlining the students will be a combined effort of trained guidance counselors, teachers, parents and the students themselves.
- These changes will cause improvement in the student's behavior as they will be motivated to learn new skills.
- We will see improved morale and building of self confidence in students who have not excelled in the traditional classroom setting.
- Reduction in crime as the potential to drop out of school will be reduced i.e. less idle young person's sitting on the blocks.

- Reduced demands on parents for financial support, as the apprenticeship program will provide minimal wages to participants.
- Guarantee of jobs as certain fields e.g. vehicle mechanics cannot be outsourced overseas.
- Opportunity to implement an exchange program where students can work overseas at affiliated institutes and vice-versa.

The Career Path Academies will offer a diverse range of vocational and technical studies, from surveying to design to building and more. We will strengthen the relationship between the government and the private sector to ensure young people are receiving the skills they need to enter the workforce as quickly and as successfully as possible.

Giving our young people the education and skills and training they need is not a luxury – it’s a necessity. Investing in this generation is something we *must* do as a nation.

And we want to extend training as well, to those unemployed Bahamians – with our new Skills Upgrade Requirement, all persons receiving unemployment benefits will be required to attend a technical and vocational course.

We need to be a nation of productive citizens; all of us should have the dignity of work, the honor of supporting ourselves and our families.

And we **MUST** train Bahamians to replace the thousands of foreign workers across the length and breadth of The Bahamas.

In closing, I leave you with this quote “the wise man does not expect to find life worth living, he makes it that way...” With God’s help and your support, together we will transform our Bahamaland and indeed make life worth living for all of our people.

THANK YOU!