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## THE BAHAMAS UNION OF TEACHERS

Acting President: Joan Knowles-Turnquest

Secretary General: John Musgrove

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Affiliation: Education International (EI), Caribbean Union of Teachers (CUT) & National Congress of Trade Unions (NCTU)

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## MEMBERS UPDATE

*November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016*

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**TO:** All Members  
**FROM:** The Executive Committee

**Dear Members,**

**Please be advised of the following:**

### **HURRICANE**

In September, the Union began earnestly with plans for World Teachers' Day. With the visitation of Hurricane Matthew, however, our efforts to celebrate teachers were thwarted. Once landed and within hours Hurricane Matthew left devastation in its wake. Four of our islands were tremendously devastated, namely **New Providence, Grand Bahama, North Andros, and to a lesser extent, The Berry Islands.**

Visits were conducted by AVP New Providence Vernon Rodgers, AVP Grand Bahama Quintin Laroda and AVP Northern Bahamas, Eldeicia Thompson and other executives throughout the islands to ascertain the extent to which damages occurred. What we saw during those visits to the affected islands was heart-wrenching, depressing and horrific. The site of what once was thriving communities and sound structured buildings metamorphosed into only foundations, toppled homes. There were smashed structures or bare grounds where people once lived. Added to this was the look of desperation and suffering on the faces of our teachers, colleagues and the community at large. Total destruction, for the most part, especially in the Eight Mile Rock, and West End settlements of Grand Bahama and in Lowe Sound Andros would be the most appropriate words to use for the sites we saw. So many of our members have been displaced and have lost everything, but we are resilient as a people and we know that with a level head and a spirit of togetherness we will overcome and this too will pass. Indeed, this is the time for us to become our brothers' keeper. Although we have not visited all of the schools in New Providence, plans are still underway to continue with our visits.

To date the Union has distributed almost one hundred care packages, facilitated five teachers, who lost their homes, with hotel stay in New Providence, and have started the distribution of funds to others. Special mention must be given to The Kiwanis Club of Over the Hill, Kiwanis Club of Cable Beach and Squires of Square Table #201 for the amount of clothes and other items given to us for our teachers. May God continue to bless them for their sacrifice. We held a clothing distribution at Walker's Hall and the

remaining items will be sent to Andros and Grand Bahama. Additionally, we are in talks with corporate Bahamas seeking additional aid to our members. We are looking forward to favorable responses in short order.

For those who are still in need of clothing items or who are still traumatized by this catastrophic event, we ask that you contact the Union for additional assistance.

The Executives of BUT want to offer sincere thanks to all of you for your understanding, patience and empathy throughout this ordeal. Let us continue to pray for each other as we continue to strive to resume a life of normalcy.

### **COURT ACTIONS**

The Bahamas Union of Teachers MUST return to Court on Thursday, December 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 at 2:00p.m. The Plaintiff's are: Belinda Wilson, Lorraine Knowles and Mizpah Pintard-Munroe. The Defendants are: John Musgrove, Quintin Laroda, Pamela Lewis and Kendal Campbell according to **Supreme Court Document 2016 CLE/gen/00742** filed October 14<sup>th</sup> 2016.

The **First Plaintiff, Belinda Wilson**, is seeking the following relief through the Supreme Court;

(i) The sum of \$26,500.50 which represents the amount of salary retained during the period July 2015 to June 2016 (suspension period);

(ii) The sum of \$12,650.25 which represent accrued vacation pay for the suspension period;

(iii) Salary in the amount of \$4,416.75 from September 15, 2016 the hearing and determination of this matter;

(iv) To pay the sum of \$6,375.12 which represents Christmas Bonuses paid during the suspension period;

(v) The sum of \$3,500.00 which represents the lump sum payment paid by the Government during the suspension period as per the collective bargaining Agreement signed by the Defendants;

(vi) The sum of \$7,560.00 which represents the vehicle allowance accrued during the suspension period and to continue to pay the vehicle allowance until the hearing and determination of this matter.

(vii) The sum of \$3,000.00 which represents gas allowance accrued during the suspension period and to continue to pay the gas allowance until the hearing and determination of this matter;

(viii) The sum of \$1,800.00 which represents telephone allowance accrued during the suspension period and to continue to pay the telephone allowance until the hearing and determination of this matter;

(ix) the sum of \$533.04 which represents the Credit Card payments made by the Plaintiff to Scotiabank during the suspension period and to continue to pay the monthly Credit Card payments until the hearing and determination of this matter; and

(x) The sum of \$300.00 which represents the balance of the per diem owed to the Plaintiff for the Annual General Meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

The **Second Plaintiff, Lorraine Knowles**, seeks the following relief through the Supreme Court:

(i) The sum of \$32,000.64 which represents the amount of salary during the suspension period;

(ii) The sum of \$12,312.75 which represents accrued vacation pay for the suspension period;

- (iii) The reinstatement of salary in the amount of \$4,208.42 from September 15<sup>th</sup> 2016 to the hearing and determination of this matter;
- (iv) The sum of \$6,000.12 which represents Christmas Bonuses during the suspension period;
- (v) the sum of \$3,500.00 which represents the lump sum paid by the Government during the suspension period as per the Collective Bargaining Agreement signed by the Defendants;
- (vi) The sum of \$6,800.00 which represents gas allowance accrued during the suspension period and to continue to pay the gas allowance until the hearing and determination of this matter;
- (vii) The sum of \$1,600.00 which represents telephone allowance accrued during the suspension period and to continue to pay the telephone allowance until the hearing and determination of this matter;
- (viii) the sum of \$1,769.15 which represents the Credit Card payments made by Lorraine Knowles to Scotiabank during the suspension period and continue to pay the monthly Credit Card payments until the hearing and determination of this matter; and
- (ix) The sum of \$600.00 which represents the balance of per diem owed to Lorraine Knowles for the Annual General Meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

The **Third Plaintiff, Mizpah Pintard-Munroe**, seeks the following relief through the Supreme Court:

- (i) The sum of \$4,500.00 which represents the amount of stipend retained during the suspension period and reinstate the stipend of Mizpah Pintard-Munroe from September 15<sup>th</sup> 2016 to the hearing and determination of this matter;
- (ii) the sum of \$3,000.00 which represents the amount of allowance for property management retained during the suspension period and reinstatement of Mizpah Pintard-Munroe's allowance for property management from September 15<sup>th</sup> 2016 to the hearing and determination of this matter;
- (iii) The sum of \$750.00 which represents telephone allowance accrued during the suspension period;
- (iv) The sum of \$2,000.00 which represents Christmas Bonuses paid during the suspension period;
- (v) The sum of \$600.00 which represents the balance of the per diem owed to Mizpah Pintard-Munroe for the Annual General Meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

The three Plaintiffs are seeking to have the Bahamas Union of Teachers bear the cost of and occasion of the application. In total, the three Plaintiffs are seeking: **Wilson \$66,635.66, Lorraine Knowles \$39,991.08, Mizpah Pintard-Munroe \$10,850.00** plus cost.

While we are confident that we will win this case, we are amazed at the audacity of the Plaintiffs. The Bahamas Union of Teachers made Belinda Wilson. It is because of the Bahamas Union of Teachers; Belinda Wilson travelled the world and became a national figure and a household name. Instead of being thankful to the organization and members who gave her so much, she has embarked on a journey of ill will and contempt for educators and the Union. The question remains that after her term is up (2013-2016) and after her contract is up, who could support the union giving her the teachers' money for sitting home?

Please note that Belinda Wilson and Lorraine Knowles were given letters of thank you for their tenure in their respected position. However, they refused to be placed by the Director of Education at any workplace; instead they requested extended unpaid leave and now is requiring the teachers to pay them salaries, vacation, vehicle allowance, phone allowances, gas allowances while they sit home on unpaid leave by their legitimate bosses **THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.**

### **HOUSING FOR TEACHERS**

The Bahamas Union of Teachers is embarking once again on a Housing Programme for its members in need of affordable houses. We are in consultation with developers who are very interested in this venture.

It is hoped that **500 hundred homes** are constructed during the initial phase; **300 in New Providence, 100 in Grand Bahama and 100 in other Family Islands.** Interested persons/members are asked to submit their names and contacts to the National Secretariat for further action.

### **B.U.T. CONFERENCE**

The Bahamas Union of Teachers will host an Education Conference for its members in the first quarter of 2017. The objective is to offer topics that you, the members are interested in. It is hoped that topics can be given to Acting President/Vice President Joan Knowles ([ejoanknowles@yahoo.com](mailto:ejoanknowles@yahoo.com)) by the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2016 in order to finalize plans for this Conference.

### **CRAFT SHOW**

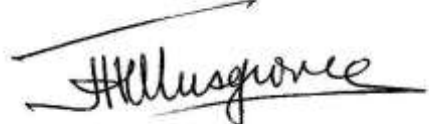
The Bahamas Union of Teachers will host a Craft Show during the Easter Break 2017. This is hoped to be an event that celebrated and showcase the talents and skills of teachers. It is hoped to be held at the Bahamas National Trust reserve on Village Road. Interested persons can contact the National Secretariat for further information.

### **HAPPY THANKSGIVING DAY!**



***Solidarity Forever!***  
***Long live the B.U.T.!!!!***

Sincerely,  
**THE BAHAMAS UNION OF TEACHERS**



John Musgrove (Mr.)  
Secretary General

***JM/kf***