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BERMUDA DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE Crime: Reactive Solution & Proactive Focus

The Bermuda Democratic Alliance unveiled their crime platform today as they shared with the community their vision for a Better Way. In the wake of the most recent shooting which has claimed the life of another young Bermudian, Mark Pettingill and the members of the Bermuda Democratic Alliance unveiled a multi-pronged approach which is not only reactive, addressing the current level of crime but also proactive in the prevention of crime.

Recent crime statistics show that crime has grown by 135% over the past seven years. The recent spate in gun violence only confirms this and increases the public's growing concern about the level of crime in Bermuda. Despite this dramatic increase in crime, budget financing for the police and the quota for the number of police officers has not increased during these time. Mark Pettingill noted,

“There is no doubt that the causes of crime are complex and that there is no ‘magic solution’ for the reduction of crime. However we don’t believe that progress can be made by simply responding to these issues on a piecemeal basis. There are actions we can take today to improve the safety of our communities and there are other long-term steps, which may take years before results are realized – but nevertheless we must act now.”

One of the Bermuda Democratic Alliance's core values is to provide the people of Bermuda with a modern justice system that is fair, sensible, cohesive, swift and accessible to all. With this in mind the Bermuda Democratic Alliance crime platform aims to:

- Modernize the Criminal Code Act of 1909 to provide a clear working piece of legislation, which covers all the laws relating to crime.
- Harness the use of technologies to among other things provide for the electronic monitoring of high risk offenders, videotape police interviews and increase CCTV monitoring
- Foster a working relationship with Government House to ensure efficient policing
- Introduce legislation for the establishment and maintenance of community crime watches and review drunk driving legislation
- Improve communication between police and the prosecution service
- Review the alternatives to traditional incarceration to expand the opportunities for rehabilitation and re-education
- Educate and maintain open dialogue with young people to deter gang involvement and increase social programs, for example, by expanding youth centers
- Implement anti-gang legislation
- Strengthen the provision of mental health services and the availability of crisis community mental health responders
- Improve the education system to tackle general deficiencies.

In closing Mr Pettingill explained that the Bermuda Democratic Alliance would continue to enhance its plan to reduce crime and gang-related violence in the community. “We know there are a number of groups that have been compelled to come together to try and tackle the increase in violence in Bermuda. We applaud their actions and encourage everyone to get involved. The Bermuda Democratic Alliance is looking for a Better Way for Bermuda, a way in which everyone is involved and invited to the table. It is only by coming together that we can succeed as a community in improving our Island home. The responsibility rests within all of us.”

The Bermuda Democratic Alliance is also hosting an open forum on crime prevention in St Georges tomorrow evening, Thursday, 10th December 2009 at 8pm at Penno’s Wharf. Mayor Kenneth Bascome, Chamber of Commerce President, Steven Todd, Kirby Braxton of the St. George’s Chamber of Commerce, along with representatives of the Bermuda

Police Service will participate in a panel discussion. The public is encouraged to attend and be part of the solution.