Eleventh Meeting of the Second Session of the Thirteenth House

ANGUILLA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

22 SEPTEMBER 2026

(House Meetings)

Hon. Speaker

Speaker

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CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

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Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

We're going through the minutes, and I don't believe that there were any amendments. So hearing no amendments, do I have a motion to adopt and confirm the minutes as laid.

Hon.Jose Vanterpool:

Madam Speaker, good morning. I rise to move that the minutes be adopted as circulated.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Thank you.

Hon.Shellya Rogers-Webster:

I rise to second, Madam Speaker.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Thank you. It has been moved and seconded that the minutes circulated dated 25th August 2026 be confirmed as circulated. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say no. The ayes have it.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Joash Proctor:

Oath of Allegiance to new Members? None. Announcements by the direction of the Speaker?

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

I do have apologies for the absence of the Honourable Single Island Wide Electoral District Member Bryan and for the absence of the Leader of Opposition. There are no other announcements.

MOTIONS

MOTION 13 OF 2026: REPEAL OF THE UNIVERSAL SOCIAL LEVY

Joash Proctor:

Questions? None. Government statements and recent developments, none. Papers, none. Reports from Committees, none. Petitions, none. Government notices, none. Private Members' Notices, none. Motions. Motion 13 of 2026, 2/13 HOA, repeal of the Universal Social Levy.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

I call upon the Honourable Member for Road South to move a motion.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and good morning to the entire House. Today, Madam Speaker, I believe I'm presenting a motion that will be universally accepted. It's motion number 13/2026-2/13HOA. The motion is entitled the repeal of the Universal Social Levy. Should I move forward with the resolution?

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

You can. Is there a seconder? And then I'll allow you to read and make your contribution one time.

Hon.Merrick Richardson:

Madam Speaker, I rise to second.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Thank you. You may proceed, Member.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Thank you again, Madam Speaker. Whereas the Universal Social Levy Act, Revised Statutes of Anguilla, Chapter U12, imposes a levy on employees, employers, and self-employed persons in Anguilla And whereas employees are required to contribute a levy at a rate of 3% of their remuneration—employers are required to contribute a levy at a rate of 3% of their remuneration paid to employees up to the prescribed limit, and self-employed persons are required to contribute a levy at a rate of 6% of their remuneration. And whereas, households throughout Anguilla continue to face significant cost of living pressures Including increases in electricity and energy costs, food prices, consumer goods, housing, transportation, and essential services, reducing disposable income and increasing financial hardships for many residents. And whereas the government's own medium-term fiscal projections indicate that Anguilla's fiscal position is sound and continuing budget surpluses projected across the medium term, declining debt obligations, strong liquidity levels, and sufficient fiscal capacity to support public services and national development priorities.

And whereas, the universal social levy imposes additional costs to employees, employers, and self-employed persons, while government is exempted from employer contribution required under the Act, Thereby placing a greater share of the levy's impact on the private sector economic activity. And whereas, the Honourable House is of the view that increasing disposable income, encouraging investment and entrepreneurship, and reducing the cost of employment would support economic growth and improve the well-being of the people of Anguilla, be it resolved That this Honourable House calls upon the Government of Anguilla to bring before this Honourable House no later than December 31st, 2026, legislation to repeal the Universal Social Levy Act, Revised Statutes of Anguilla, Chapter U12, and any related enactments necessary to discontinue the collection of the Universal

Social Levy. Be it further resolved that the Government shall identify and implement any fiscal measures necessary to facilitate the repeal of the Universal Social Levy while maintaining the sustainable delivery of essential public services without imposing further economic burdens on the people of Anguilla. And be it further resolved, that this Honourable House affirms the principle that public revenue measures should promote economic opportunity, support businesses—supportbusinesscompetitiveness—sorry,Madam Speaker.

Encourage job creation and minimize unnecessary financial burdens on workers, employers, and the self-employed persons. Be it resolved.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Are there any contributions to the motion on the floor? I recognise Hon. Single Island Wide Electoral District Member Hodge.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

Good morning, Madam Speaker. And good morning to the House, and good morning to the people of Anguilla. Madam Speaker, I rise this morning to make my contribution to this motion.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

I crave your indulgence. Honourable Member has to step out, but he does have the right to reply, so he's going to get some water. Okay, if you could just hold for a few minutes.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

Continue.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

No, I'd rather hear what you say if he's going to reply rather than not hear it.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

So I appreciate your indulgence.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Unless Honorable Member for Road North will take the notes, but I don't know how accurate they will be, so let's allow him to have his water break. They won't be accurate? Just kidding. We'll wait. Okay, yes, you may proceed, Member Hodge.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

Madam Speaker, Thank you for that break, because indeed the mover of the motion should be listening to our debate in what we have to say today as it relates to this repeal, this motion that was brought forward by the Member for Road North— South. Proposing the repeal of the Universal Social Levy, a levy that was once called the Interim Stabilization Levy, a levy that was brought into place by the former AUM government that the Member was the Parliamentary Secretary, for within that, that administration. Madam Speaker, I really would have liked to hear some more details as it relates to this motion, because a motion is a very serious thing in this House, this Honorable House of Assembly of Anguilla.

In my mind, a motion of this magnitude which carries financial implications should not just be frivolously brought. It should be brought with substance, unless in his response there's substance to come. But if you're bringing a motion forward for the government's consideration, I believe some more thought could be put into it, Madam Speaker.

Now, I'm not opposed to reducing the burden that exists on the people of Anguilla. In fact, Madam Speaker, this administration has proven that we have been making people-centered decisions. In 2025, we got elected in March, and the first thing we did upon election was to give relief, was to remove the GST as we knew it in August of 2025. And our track record shows that we have consistently eased the burden on the people of Anguilla. So if this motion is intended to bring ease, we have been bringing ease so far this year.

We have given relief in many different areas. And the Premier, on her press conference yesterday, Madam Speaker, would have highlighted that by the end of 2026, December 31st, 2026, it is estimated that we would have given 59 million EC dollars in relief to the people of Anguilla. So I really stand on my feet,

Madam Speaker, to perhaps ask more questions than give comments and feedback, because I have to wonder, where did the idea come from to just repeal the Universal Social Levy? Did the Member wake up Thursday morning bright and early at 4 AM went to the gym, worked out, sat on his porch, and decided, I have till the close of day to put forward something for the House of Assembly today, Tuesday. Did he just wake up and submit a motion to the House without deep analysis and deep thought? Because, Madam Speaker, I was a part of the APM administration in 20— in December of 2021 when the budget for 2022 was brought to the House.

And in that budget, Madam Speaker, a guarantee was made to the people of Anguilla, a covenant, to use the exact words— the exact word of the former Premier, Dr. Ellis Lorenzo Webster. who happens to be the Leader of Opposition remotely in Florida. Madam Speaker, I want to quote what the former Premier would have said in 20— in December of 2021, and I quote,

Madam Speaker, in 2022 Let me look for the exact quote. In 2022, the former APM administration that I was a part of pledged to the people of Anguilla 2 covenants concerning the Universal Social Levy. The first was to make the levy permanent. Which they proudly announced that had been accomplished. The second was to reform an air market specifically to finance national health insurance.

So my other question this morning, Madam Speaker, has the APM abandoned the idea of the National Health Insurance Fund? Because the pledge was made, the covenant was made with the people in 2021 that the USL will be permanent and that it will be transitioned into a fund, a National Health Insurance Fund. Madam Speaker, it was not too long ago during the administration of 2020 to 2025, there were a few buzzwords that we kept hearing.

One of those buzzwords, Madam Speaker, is fiscal prudence. Fiscal prudence was one of the terms of the administration that they consistently used in press conferences and in interviews. Another one, Madam Speaker, was how will we close the gap? Whenever there was questions, whenever there were suggestions about reducing a tax or removing a tax between 2020 to 2025, all the way to the end of the administration, Madam Speaker, the question was there's a gap to be filled.

Any revenue measure, any, any measure that, that required government expenditure required the revenue, the gap to be filled. So, Madam Speaker, the question that I have today is, are these things completely out the door? Fiscal prudence, is it completely out the door? Is there a gap to be filled when we remove a tax? Isn't there a study that should be done? Madam Speaker, when we were in opposition— and they cannot say that they're in opposition, that they are in opposition, they don't have access to information, they don't have access to the finances.

When it's public, it's budgeted. In every, every few press conferences, the Premier is updating the public as it relates to how we stand financially. When we were in opposition, Madam Speaker, we had the mammoth task of coming up with a GST plan while in opposition. And we had to do the groundwork ourselves. And what we did, we put a— we had put a committee in place. We had a committee that met for 6 months studying government finances, studying the collection of revenue, studying the expenditure. We surrounded ourselves, Madam Speaker, with capable people, because we recognise that whether the government coffers have money or not, the responsible thing to do as elected members is to study the finances irrespective of government's financial position, because government's financial position can always change.

The world can shut down tomorrow quickly. So it is always prudent to study the finances and to come up with a comprehensive proposal. It's— it is not good enough to just say to the people, or to say to us, repeal the levy. It's not good enough. So, Madam Speaker, I really have more questions than answers.

And I hope that Mr. Richardson, Member for Road North, that he also have some answers. So, Madam Speaker, I would rest my case here and allow this motion to continue to be debated. And I look forward to the rest of the debate. Thank you.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Thank you, Honourable Member. Are there any other contributions to the motion on the floor? It is the Motion 13 of 2026, repeal of the Universal Social Levy. I recognise the Honourable Member for Sandy Hill.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Good morning to you, Madam Speaker. Good morning to the Members of this Honourable House and to the listening and viewing public. Madam Speaker, I hesitated a bit because I had expected the Member for Road North to rise and see if he could answer some of the questions that were posed by the Single Island Wide Member, Hon. Kyle Hodge.

And hopefully he'll be able to address some of those questions, or certainly the mover of the motion, during his response. Madam Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to this motion 13 of 2026. Repeal of the Universal Social Levy. Madam Speaker, the cost of living is a concern that deserves a full discussion in this House.

For a household managing electricity, groceries, transport, school expenses, and medical bills, the issue is about what remains available after the necessities have been paid. A reduction in the Universal Social Levy would provide a benefit to those who currently pay it. That belongs in this discussion as well. So too do the relief measures already introduced, the services being financed, and the implications of changing the underlying revenue base.

We have seen firsthand, Madam Speaker, between 2022 when the GST, the Goods and Services Tax, was implemented, and August 2025 when it was reformed, that a stronger Treasury does not automatically mean an easier month in every home. The payslip matters, the electricity bill matters, the medical bill matters, and this discussion has to hold all of them in view. And let me be clear, Every single elected member on this side of the House has long been concerned about the cost of living in this country.

In fact, when the APM implemented the Goods and Services Tax, the GST, in 2022, we voiced our concerns about its impact and the resulting increase in inflation and the cost of living. We presented to the previous APM administration in August of 2024 a proposal to reform the same GST so as to ease the cost of living pressures on the people of Anguilla.

That reform proposed removing GST at the port for importation of goods in the sectors of wholesale, retail, and manufacturing. The then Leader of the Government business, now Leader of the Opposition, the Member for District 1, publicly stated that the AUF's proposal to reform the GST was Disgusting. Nevertheless, in August of 2025, when being elected to government, that was one of the first priorities that this administration undertook— reforming the Goods and Services Tax, providing ease on the people of Anguilla.

Madam Speaker, let's begin with how we arrived here. The Interim Stabilization Levy came into effect in April of 2011 Under the Anguilla United Movement Administration, of which the Member for Road South was a Member of this Honourable House then constituted. It was introduced to help strengthen government's revenue position, but even at its introduction, the policy discussion looked beyond immediate stabilisation. The 2011 budget address described the levy as, quote unquote, a stepping stone to the National Health Fund. Healthcare financing was therefore part of that discussion from the very beginning.

A decade later, the law changed. The Universal Social Levy Act 2021 was passed by this House in December of 2021. It repealed the Interim Stabilisation Levy Act and came into force on the 1st of January, 2022. In his 2022 budget address, The then Premier, Dr. Ellis Webster, Member for Island Harbour, who now serves as Leader of the Opposition, explained that transition.

On page 25, he stated, We have taken the first step in this process by making the former interim stabilisation levy a permanent tax known as the Universal Social Levy. The next step will be ring-fencing these funds to provide for the healthcare needs of our people. This will have to be done in a considered manner when we can afford to do so.

My administration will continue to treat this as a top priority, end quote. The Member for Road South, the mover of this motion, was part of this administration. So under the previous administration, the levy was made permanent in law. The dedicated health financing arrangement was a further undertaking. And they were not the same step. That is the record. It explains the law we have today, and it places the present proposal in its proper context: a change to a recurring revenue measure alongside a healthcare financing question that remains before us.

Madam Speaker, the motion centers on the cost of living. Let us therefore put the figures for the existing response before the House. EC $22.5 million in electricity fuel surcharge support through September bills. An estimated $4.4 million in import duty foregone on gasoline and diesel through December 2026, the end of this year.

An estimated $5 million for the full-year excise exemption on gasoline in 2026. An estimated $7.5 million for the cost insurance-free to free-on-board measure over 9 months. Together, those measures have a combined estimated fiscal value of $39.4 million EC dollars. The published 2026 estimates provide approximately $26.05 million in the USL revenue for the year. The value of the measures I have identified is therefore approximately $13.35 million greater than one year's budget of the USL receipts.

That comparison tells us the scale of the intervention. Some of the support is expenditure, some is revenue government has chosen not to collect. It does not mean that every household receives the same benefit. But it means that every household has been able to have monies in hand that they would have otherwise have had to spend in cost of living increases, electricity, importation of goods which would have calculated— been calculated based on CIF, and significant increase in the

price of imported goods.

Revenue foregone is not relief without a cost. It is a cost met through the revenue side of the budget. The electricity arrangements have included households and businesses. The original approval expressly included hotels, villas, and guest houses alongside other customer classes. Further support is being developed. The next electricity support program through the end of 2026 is expected to cost at least $15 million, subject to its final design. The planned continuation of the gasoline excise exemption for the whole of 2027 carries an estimated value of a further $5 million. Together with the measures already identified, that brings the indicative package to $59.4 million.

Let me repeat that, Madam Speaker. Together with the measures already identified, that brings the package to EC$59.4 million or more across the respective periods, including the planned measures through the end of this year and into next year. A supplementary estimate will shortly come before this House seeking an additional $10 million for cost of living support in the current financial year. Its purpose and financing will be set out for Members' consideration.

The figures are substantial. The questions behind them are practical. Who receives the assistance? What pressure does it address? How long is it needed? And what does its continuation require of the budget? Those questions apply to the existing measures as well as to any additional proposal. Madam Speaker, all of this is supported by government's revenues in their totality, and so we have to read the whole budget, not one revenue line in isolation.

There are services already operating, debt payments already due, projects already underway, relief measures being financed, and provision to be made for unexpected demands. A change in revenue has to be considered against that entire picture. The fact that government has more revenue today is important. So is where that revenue comes from.

Madam Speaker, more revenue is not the same thing as more sources of revenue. The growth of that— .AI receipts has expanded what Anguilla can finance, but those receipts are concentrated in a single national asset. They are influenced by international demand, technological change, competition, pricing, and renewal patterns. Their future path is not entirely within our control, and we understand that.

That is not a prediction that, that AI will disappear. It is a description of the exposure that comes with relying heavily upon it, and the dependence can grow in more than one way. It can grow when permanent expenditure expands on the assumption that AI will continue to pay for it. It can also grow when other recurring revenues are removed while the commitments they help finance remain.

Government does not have to spend $1 more for its dependence on that AI to increase. Hold expenditure and other receipts unchanged, remove part of that AI revenue, and a larger share of the remaining financing rests on that AI. The budget may still show a surplus. The dependence has nevertheless increased.

That is the distinction at the centre of the Government's approach to maintaining core revenues while managing that AI carefully. Our planning brings together the collection of existing obligations fully and fairly, closer attention to compliance, scrutiny of concessions, control of continuing expenditure, and the investment and saving of a portion of exceptional receipts. Maintaining revenue capacity does not mean that every tax must remain unchanged. It means explaining what takes its place, what other allocations change, or what additional dependence the revised budget carries.

A smaller surplus, lower savings, different investment phasing, expenditure changes, or other revenues may accommodate a tax reduction. Those are different choices with different consequences. So repeal does not automatically cancel a particular service. Equally, its continuing revenue effect cannot be left outside the calculation. Government's responsibilities do not begin and end with the latest announcement. A school must operate after it opens. A clinic needs supplies after it's equipped.

An ambulance needs maintenance after it's purchased. The building can be completed, But the responsibility to run it continues. The approved 2026 estimates provide approximately $41.14 million for the Department of Health Services recurrent expenditure, including $6.99 million for medical supplies. Separately, $13 million is allocated to health services development on the capital side. Those are approved allocations. not claims that every dollar has already been spent. Behind the distinction between capital and recurrent expenditure is a simple reality: an operating theatre needs the team to operate it; equipment needs servicing; treatment needs supplies.

A functioning service needs all of those things together, not only on its opening day but throughout its working life. On the Ministry's current estimate, overseas medical assistance will approach EC$10 million in 2026. Let me repeat that: overseas medical assistance will approach EC$10 million in this year, 2026. That is a separate requirement from the EC$10 million supplementary provision for cost of living support. And so the figures must not be confused.

For the family facing overseas treatment, the concern is larger than the medical bill. There is travel, accommodation, time away from work, and the question of who can accompany the patient, to say the least. The financial entry records a payment. The family experiences the journey. The introduction of ophthalmology services during 2026 It's part of expanding the care available locally. The Wider Health Program seeks to bring more specialists and preventative care closer to home and reduce avoidable overseas referrals. The result will be measured in the care people actually obtain. How long is the wait? Is the service consistently available? Which conditions can be safely treated here? What does local provision cost, and what expenditure does it genuinely avoid? For the patient, the test is the appointment, the treatment, and the care that follows.

Madam Speaker, this brings us to the national health insurance conversation. Its place in the history of the levy is clear. The task ahead is to turn the objective into a costed and workable arrangement. Who will be covered? Which services

will be included? How will people unable to contribute be protected? How will care be purchased here and overseas? What administration, oversight, and financing will be needed? Those are the practical questions that give substance to the words national health insurance. They have to be answered together alongside the continuing role of existing medical assistance programs.

And so naming a revenue source does not answer all of them. Recalling the historical connection between the USL and healthcare does not by itself determine the financing model to be chosen now. Madam Speaker, work is underway to advance national health insurance. Government remains committed to strengthening access to healthcare and to putting in place a framework that is sustainable, fair, and capable of supporting the needs of the population over the long term. That work includes determining the benefits to be provided, the cost of those benefits, how the arrangements would operate in practice, and the most appropriate mix of financing to support them. The important point is that national health insurance must be designed as a complete system. It must work alongside the public health services already being funded and strengthened, and it must provide clarity and certainty for patients about the care available to them.

Government is already investing significantly in healthcare, both on the recurrent and capital sides, and is continuing to expand the range of services available locally. Our medium-term health strategy is focused on bringing more care closer to home, expanding specialist services, and reducing avoidable overseas referrals where this can be done safely and sustainably. The work on national health insurance is therefore part of that wider effort to strengthen the health system and improve financial protection for the people of Anguilla.

This work is underway. And Madam Speaker, the commitment is clear. Government intends to advance national health insurance and do so in a way that is properly designed, sustainably financed, and capable of serving the people of Anguilla for the long term. But the evidence before us shows something important. Government has already been using its fiscal space to provide substantial cost of living support, and it has done so at a scale that exceeds the annual yield of the USL.

We have supported electricity bills. We have removed import duties on gasoline and diesel. We have exempted gasoline from excise. We have introduced the CIF to FOB measure. We are designing a further phase of electricity support. And a supplementary estimate will shortly come before this House with additional provision for cost-of-living assistance in this financial year. This is a deliberate use of fiscal space to relieve pressure on households and businesses. Anguilla is fortunate to be in a stronger fiscal position today.

Strong revenues have given us room to act. They have allowed us to support families, protect businesses, invest in health, fund infrastructure, and rebuild fiscal buffers. But fiscal space is not an invitation to remove every recurring revenue source simply because the Treasury is presently strong. Our responsibility is to use that space wisely.

We must support people today, yes, We must also maintain the revenues that fund essential services. We must invest in healthcare, education, infrastructure, and national development. We must prepare for shocks, and we must avoid creating a public finance system that becomes increasingly dependent on one exceptional revenue source. Madam Speaker, prudent government is not about choosing between helping people now and preparing for the future.

It is about doing both. The lesson of the years of plenty and the years of famine is not to deny people relief in the good years. It is to ensure that while meeting today's needs, we do not leave ourselves exposed when conditions change. That is the balance government must maintain: relief for our people today, strong public services tomorrow, and a fiscal foundation that remains standing when the next challenge comes.

And, Madam Speaker, that is a broader responsibility before us. On the basis that this administration is committed to bringing into effect a national health insurance system for the people of Anguilla, I cannot support this motion. As I close, Madam Speaker, I'm obliged to ask the mover of the motion, the Member for Road

South, to explain to the people of Anguilla During his reply, why he would have supported the creation of the Interim Stabilisation Levy in 2011, as he was a member of the Honourable House at this time on the government side, and its eventual transition to a national health fund. 10 years later, supporting the changing of the Interim Stabilisation Levy to the Universal Social Levy, and he was a minister of government in that administration. Again with plans to transition to a national health fund. Yet today he seems to be suggesting that he no longer supports and indeed intends to abandon a national health system for the people of Anguilla.

Were those promises made by both the AUM and APM to make Interim Stabilisation Levy and then the Universal Social Levy made to— done to make it palatable for the people of Anguilla? We don't know, but we certainly hope that the Member for Road South will inform this House and the people of Anguilla in his reply. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Thank you, Honorable Member. Are there any other contributions to the motion on the floor, Motion 13 of 2026?

Hon.Merrick Richardson:

I recognise the Member for Road Thank you, Madam Speaker, and good morning to everyone listening in and to all Members on both sides of this Honorable House. Madam Speaker, I won't be long on my feet. I basically just wanted to stand and support my colleague with this motion. Now, Madam Speaker, We are not asking for every tax revenue to be changed, but we also need to recognise the fact that as the country moves in a particular direction and as things start to get better in terms of government finances, that should be

passed on to the people who bear the brunt.

Because I keep saying, whether we have .ai, or whatever we have God blessed us with in terms of finances coming into this island, it's still the taxpayers who are ultimately responsible for paying whatever budget we present in this, in this Honorable House. And the Honorable Member for Sandy Hill alluded to it— $26 million for this year projected, $26 million projected for next year, $28 million projected for 2028. That's what this tax is expected to bring in, Madam Speaker.

And this is one of those taxes, Madam Speaker, that comes directly from our pockets. Every working individual in Anguilla pays this tax. 3% comes from you, 3% comes from the employer. So that is one that you can't run from. You could stop buying a car, you could turn off all your lights, you could walk, you can do all of that and cut down on other taxes. But this one you cannot run from if you're a working individual. If you're a working individual, that 3% comes out every month before you even see it. And the same goes for the employer.

The employer has to pay this money. So if it's half-half, we're talking $14.5, $14, $13 million, $14 million by 2028. That businesses have to pay in this tax. That's $14 million, Madam Speaker. And we will not pretend that we are not grateful for the relief that has been provided thus far. We are not— we won't pretend that we are not grateful. But we also remember a time, Madam Speaker, when members who are now on government side, when they had issues with the fees at AASPA.

Nothing has been done to change those fees because I remember Lots of talk that they're going to be killing the people of Anguilla. Nothing has been done to change those fees, fees that were raised at the hospital and our other medical facilities. There was lots of talks, nothing has been done about them. As a matter of fact, Madam Speaker, in the 2024 budget, it was moved to, to remove the bulk petroleum levy, a tax that while Members were on this side, they said would keep increasing the cost of electricity.

I mean, of gas. And that is still there. So like I said, Madam Speaker, we are not asking for every single bill, every single tax to be removed, you know, but we are asking for as much because we— I said it from day one, we on this side of the House, this— the war is not going anywhere,

Madam Speaker. It is not going anywhere. We're going to continue for a while to see these rising costs, Madam Speaker. And when we think about the people of Anguilla, Madam Speaker, we want the best for them. Both sides want the best for them. But yet, on the other flip side of— Madam Speaker,

Madam Speaker, we can say to the people of Anguilla, we can't give you this relief, but we can go to the UK and purchase a house. Madam Speaker, you know, it's like we're speaking from both sides of our mouth when we say that we can't help you here, but we can spend money elsewhere.

You know, Madam Speaker, it's all about what we can do for our people, and it's not just fancy words, Madam Speaker. So again, Madam Speaker, I rise in support of my colleague on this motion. It is a motion that I think that is one of those that can definitely go right directly to the people's pockets. Persons will have $100, $200, $300 additional dollars every month to spend. Business will have collectively $14-15 million to do so many other things with,

Madam Speaker. So again, Madam Speaker, I support this motion. Thank you.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Thank you, Honourable Member. Are there any other contributions to the motion? I recognise the Honourable Member for West End.

Hon.Cardigan Connor:

Yep, thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, very early in my tenure In the House of Assembly, I made a statement that a tax is an investment in your country, and we like to see it that way. With the levy, Madam Speaker, initially it came at a time when it was needed, extra funds were needed, but it kept on rolling on and on.

But the bottom line in all of this, Madam Speaker, is that I do believe if you earn, you're in a position to contribute. And we could talk about the 3%, and that is up to $2,000 EC dollars. By all means, of course, businesses are paying X amount, but also, Madam Speaker, a number of businesses would have had concessions over a period of 25 years.

And if businesses are employing Anguillans or employing whoever, the chances are they are making some money, especially in the tourism industry over the last few years. Madam Speaker, I do believe that anybody who pays a tax, they want to see exactly where it's going. Without doubt, Madam Speaker, a tax that benefits or invested in health is a tax that affects every single Anguillian.

In fact, it affects every single person here in Anguilla. The fact that an outlay each year of millions and millions of dollars because of we could say that a number of people can do better to work on their health. But the fact is, it is a growing problem or challenge that we have. And if this motion was about moving it from one levy into a national health fund— in fact, that was a talk over the years— I would definitely be in support of that.

In fact, I'm against taking it off, but I'm definitely for putting it towards a national health fund, Madam Speaker. And the thing is, is that in most countries, Madam Speaker, there is a tax on earnings. But in Anguilla, in Anguilla, 3% up to a certain level, Madam Speaker, that is the least we could ask of our people.

The other question is how many Anguillans right now are working and paying that? How many Anguillans are in need? And when the Premier talks about the $59.4 million that the government, this government, have invested back into the people, Madam Speaker, by all means, we would love to

invest back even more.

We would love to invest even more. But I know that Any and everybody out there who's been given the opportunity to earn a dollar would see it fit that X amount is actually paid back into the system, especially when you know that is something that you or your family will definitely benefit from. So,

Madam Speaker, I'll be interested to hear as we go along as to exactly where our opposition, or the Member for Road South, where he intends to take this. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

I recognise the Honourable Member for Valley North.

Hon.Shellya Rogers-Webster:

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, substance matters, and this morning I'm afraid that there isn't much substance coming from the opposition side of the House. And I say this, Madam Speaker, because a motion was brought before this Honorable House to repeal the levy. A levy, Madam Speaker, that was originally put in place by the AUM administration and was later made permanent by the APM administration.

Yet here today, the same Members associated with those 2 political parties, Madam Speaker, are asking that this levy be removed. And they're not just asking that the levy be removed, Madam Speaker. They're asking for it to be removed with one, no idea of how the revenue should be replaced. They haven't acknowledged the promise they made to make a contribution, to make this contribution to the National Health Fund, Madam Speaker.

The Honourable Member from District 5 rose and said he won't be long, he's just standing, Madam Speaker, to lend support. Which is unfortunate, Madam Speaker, because I really thought that that Honourable Member would at least be bringing some additional substance to the motion, giving an idea of how these revenues would be replaced,

Madam Speaker. Because often you hear on the airwaves from these same individuals that the AUF administration is going to empty the treasury. They're not being prudent in managing the finances of the people of the Government of Angola. Yet, Madam Speaker, the opposition is bringing a motion that is going to take $26 million,

Madam Speaker, out of the treasury. A number of questions were raised by my honorable colleagues on the government side in relation to the previous promise made about a national health fund, Madam Speaker, yet they still remain unaddressed. My hope is, is that the mover will address some of those concerns, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the opposition is well within its rights to bring motions before this Honourable House. This is something that is afforded to any Member of this Honourable House, Madam Speaker, but I think the people don't just deserve Motions without substance. As my honorable colleague, the Single Island Wide Member, Mr. Kyle Hodge, indicated, when we went to the general public when we were in opposition on the relief of GST, Madam Speaker, we didn't just go to the public on a whim.

We went to the public with hard concrete facts and evidence. We used budgetary figures, Madam Speaker. We We use hard concrete evidence from business owners, persons who are in the industry sitting at the table, Madam Speaker, because a responsible opposition, Madam Speaker, recognises that you shouldn't just bring motions, you shouldn't just bring suggested responses to relief,

Madam Speaker, but it should be grounded in research. They should be— they should use public consultation, people who are actually in the space, in the industry, engaging with with whatever the mechanism is, Madam Speaker, so that whatever motion you bring is grounded in facts and substance, not just,

Madam Speaker, that you're trying to get a quick win with the public. Because the public needs to recognise and understand that for the last few years, this has been one of a consistent level of revenue streams for the government of Anguilla. That's one. But Madam Speaker, to say that when we were in opposition, we were talking about relief, but we are not giving relief,

Madam Speaker, is quite disingenuous, Madam Speaker, and actually dishonest. And you know why, Madam Speaker? Because by the end of this year, we would have spent $59 million, Madam Speaker, in relief. Relief on fuel, relief on electricity surcharge, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, you don't have to ask me. ANGLEC made an error with last month's bills. And you can look at your bill, Madam Speaker, and you can see the amount of money that was on that bill before that error was corrected and government's contribution was applied to the bill.

That has been happening since April of this year, Madam Speaker. There is no administration in the history of the Government of Anguilla that has done that level of relief, Madam Speaker. So to say that when you're doing better, you're expected to give to the people, as though this administration has not been doing that,

Madam Speaker, is quite disingenuous. But, Madam Speaker, the $59 million that we will pay by the end of the year, Madam Speaker, is only one measure that has nothing to do with the estimated $40 million EC dollars that we gave up when we implemented the GST relief plan in August of last year,

Madam Speaker. Imagine what the cost of goods would have been now had we not implemented that last year, Madam Speaker. So, Madam Speaker, $40 million in total for the year that we've given up. In addition to that, $59 million in direct relief measures, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, that's about $100 million.

So the Members of this Honourable House are here talking

about $26 million coming in from the levy and repealing that. But not recognising that this administration has— and its policies has contributed to relieving the people of over 100 million EC dollars. Madam Speaker, if that's not people-focused, I don't know what is.

But we didn't stop there, Madam Speaker. We just sent off 35 students, Madam Speaker, to go off and do undergraduate degrees, master's degrees, certification training in a variety of areas, Madam Speaker. Anguilla. Not coming to this Honourable House and advertising 200 small digital scholarships, Madam Speaker, that to this day we hardly know anybody that took up these scholarships.

These are concrete, solid Government of Anguilla-funded scholarships, Madam Speaker, to the tune of over 3 million EC dollars. Madam Speaker, when, when buses, school buses were breaking down And the technical staff at MICUH advised the former administration to buy all school buses one time, Madam Speaker. A decision was made to only acquire 2 school buses, not under this administration, Madam Speaker, because our children deserve reliable, safe transportation,

Madam Speaker, no matter where they're living on the— on this island. And that is why we said, you know what, We're going full speed ahead and we're acquiring 3 million EC dollars worth of brand new school buses. Those are people-focused policy decisions, Madam Speaker. And this is what this administration is about. Not short, quick wins, Madam Speaker, to say that we did something.

We are about putting in the work and making sure that we make decisions that have lasting effects, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, yet I recognise that none of the members have addressed the promise about monies going into a national health fund. And that's only one aspect of it, Madam Speaker, because funny enough, this morning I received a call before coming to this Honorable House from an individual who works in the hospitality industry, and he said, you know, the Members of the Opposition are coming to this Honorable House and they are bringing the levy to be repealed.

But he said, you know, I don't think it should be repealed. I think it should be set aside to go towards an overall pension fund for hospitality workers, Madam Speaker. Again, another option for how these funds can be used. But what that said to me, Madam Speaker, is that there is a large portion of this society that recognises the importance of that revenue stream and the importance of earmarking it for something that will benefit them in the long term,

Madam Speaker. And I appreciate that call, Madam Speaker, because that says that our constituents, the people we serve, are thinking. They're thinking outside of the box. They're not interested in just people coming to the House of Assembly for quick wins, Madam Speaker. That is critically important. So, Madam Speaker, I encourage the Honourable Members of the Opposition, because this is the second motion they brought to the House of Assembly with very little teeth to it,

Madam Speaker. The second motion— this motion is not grounded in any sort of research, Madam Speaker, any sort of alternative mechanisms for filling any gap. This is the same Loyal Opposition, Madam Speaker, that has indicated that the revenues from AI, they are— in the past they would have referred to them as windfall money.

They don't know how consistent They will be, Madam Speaker. We can't become totally reliant on AI, Madam Speaker. We agree. We agree, Madam Speaker. And that is why this administration is being responsible in the policy decisions that we make. We're not denying our people relief quite the opposite, Madam Speaker.

We have made temporary adjustments to the duties on freight and insurance, Madam Speaker, because we recognise that that was a significant challenge given the fact That the local public, the business community, has absolutely no control over shipping costs, Madam Speaker. So what this administration could do, we did,

Madam Speaker, because we recognise that it is important to make policy decisions that are responsive. They are grounded in research. However, they will not compromise the revenues of the Government of Anguilla. And this administration has consistently made policy-based decisions that are in the interest of the people of Anguilla without compromising our long-term fiscal responsibility and fiscal position, Madam Speaker.

So, Madam Speaker, I cannot, I cannot in good conscience support this motion, Madam Speaker, simply because, Madam Speaker, there is no substance, no alternative attached to this motion. As my honorable colleague said, it seemed as though this motion was just dreamt up one night on a whim. No research, no, no considerations for the fact that The move of this said motion played an instrumental part, Madam Speaker, in one, the implementation of the levy,

Madam Speaker, in its original form. But then, Madam Speaker, came back and doubled down on it, Madam Speaker, when they made it permanent. So originally he's the Parliamentary Secretary under the AUM administration, came back as a Minister of Government, Madam Speaker, Under the APM administration, Madam Speaker, brought many different bills and pieces of legislation to the House with financial implications, and not one point in time in his entire time in office for the last 4 and a half years was there ever any mention made of repealing the levy,

Madam Speaker. So, Madam Speaker, the hypocrisy is loud as usual, Madam Speaker. But I want the people of Anguilla to ask— no, I want them to demand substance. I want the people of Anguilla to question. I want the people of Anguilla to remember that there's a history, because oftentimes people will have you believe that the history of this island and governance started in 2020. That's not the case, Madam Speaker.

It started long before that, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, when this Interim Stabilisation Levy was originally put in place, it was there to fill a gap. There was a financial need. It was put in place to fill a gap. It was always supposed to be temporary, Madam Speaker. When the AUF administration came in place, they made a commitment to pay civil servants back, Madam Speaker, their back pay.

Eventually, Madam Speaker, this levy became permanent again under the APM administration. Madam Speaker, Madam Speaker, the facts are there. The facts are there. So I want the general listening public to question, to probe, to demand substance when these motions come to the House of Assembly, because they're well within their right to bring the motions.

But let's not be bringing motions, Madam Speaker, for cheap political gain. Let's bring motions that have substance, that are grounded in research, facts, Madam Speaker, and that are responsible. If you're asking for fiscal responsibility on one hand, you cannot be bringing motions, Madam Speaker, that are fiscally irresponsible.

But, but do not bring sensible alternatives to what you are suggesting, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to weigh in on this motion.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Thank you, Honourable Member. Are there any other contributions? I recognise Single Island Wide Electoral District Member, Rogers.

Hon.Evans McNiel Rogers:

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and a pleasant good morning to all the Members of this Honourable House and to those of you who are listening in or viewing us, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I think my colleagues on this side of the aisle would have laid out a very compelling case for not supporting this motion as is, and

Madam Speaker, listening to all of the contributions to this Honourable House. And having been in this Honourable House longer than anyone else, if my memory serves me correct, I would have been the Leader of the Opposition in 2011 when the initial Interim Stabilisation Levy was brought to this House, Madam Speaker, by my dear departed friend, the Hon. Hubert Benjamin Hughes, who was Minister of Finance and the Chief Minister of Anguilla at that particular time.

And I remember, Madam Speaker, the discussion from a financial standpoint. They were difficult times. Anyone who would have been in Anguilla during the years 2004 to the end of 2008, thereabout, from a financial standpoint, the country was doing pretty good. And they would also remember, Madam Speaker, That in the latter part of 2008, early 2009, with the global recession,

Madam Speaker, bottom fell out on us here in Anguilla. In 2008, 2009— 2008 budget, we would have brought a budget to this Honorable House I believe it was just under $400 million, $380-some million. It was called the big boys' budget at the time. And that was based, Madam Speaker, on the revenues that were collected the previous years, 2007, 2006, and so on.

And at the end of 2009, Madam Speaker, we would have on the revenue side We would have collected probably a third of what was anticipated. Devastating. In 2010, when the administration changed, and there's no doubt we've heard it on the political rustrums before, that the, the AUF administration, will spend and reckless spending and No fiscal prudence and so on and so forth,

Madam Speaker. But all of those things are directly related to what's happening outside of Anguilla and beyond our control. So hence the Interim Stabilisation Levy, Madam Speaker, was part of stabilising the economy at that time. And let's not forget, we are politicians, and from time to time, politicians grandstand. Every one of us in here who are elected, from time to time, would grandstand. But the facts remain the same. I supported the ISL, Madam Speaker, at that time under one condition, in that when the country's finances were stabilised, that it would be morphed into the National Health Fund/National Health Insurance.

So the National Health Insurance, Madam Speaker, isn't anything new. It has been around through administrations, Madam Speaker. So this motion for me, if it warranted my full support, it would have been a motion ring-fencing the revenues from the universal levy for the National Health Fund slash National Health Insurance rather than repealing it,

Madam Speaker. Because as most people would know, health is dear to my heart and is part of my DNA. National health insurance and healthcare costs, Madam Speaker, they are rising and rising exponentially. It's not cheap anymore. Madam Speaker, and as a result, as a responsible government, I believe that it is time,

Madam Speaker, bearing in mind what this motion is here to do, which I can't support at this particular point in time, is that the Minister of Finance and the Leader of Government business. She would have read from the 2022 budgetary address where the former Minister of Finance and former Premier would have declared that he will be ring-fencing— I think that's the terminology she used— the revenues that come in from the universal levy would go towards financing national health insurance. And Madam Speaker, I believe that this is where we need to go as a people, as a government, as elected representatives of the people of this country.

Madam Speaker, when I read the motion here I'm a bit confused, but it doesn't take a whole lot to confuse me, Madam Speaker. And with your permission, if I could go through a few of the whereases on this particular motion. It says, whereas households throughout Anguilla continue to face significant cost of living pressures Increasing— including increasing increases in electricity and energy costs, food prices, consumer goods, housing, transportation, and essential services, reducing disposable income and increasing fiscal hardship on many residents. And Madam Speaker, I believe that my colleagues would have indicated The Premier and all the Members who have spoken on this side would have indicated,

Madam Speaker, the amount of investment— I call it investment, some people call it relief— the amount of investment the people of Anguilla over the last 18 months, the amount of relief, Madam Speaker, to the people of this country

that was given under this administration and with the revenue sources that were coming in.

The Member for Valley North would have indicated the scholarships that took place. And Madam Speaker, The Member for District 2 would have indicated in her presentation that government continues to invest in the healthcare services of this country. And Madam Speaker, I can attest to that, and I would want to thank all the Members of this administration for their continued investment in healthcare.

And Madam Speaker, I will just— would want to name a few of them for ease of reference. Madam Speaker, we have invested in a brand new MRI helium-free machine. We would have invested, Madam Speaker, in a brand new hyperbaric chamber for the people of Anguilla. Madam Speaker, we would have invested in upgrading a new modern Well-equipped operating theatre at the Princess Alexandra Hospital.

It's not totally completed as yet. As a matter of fact, one of the mechanical engineers would be on island today to do some checking to make sure that everything is in place for its opening. Before the end of the year. And Madam Speaker, we intend to employ an orthopedic surgeon to be on island and an ophthalmologist also to be on island, because this,

Madam Speaker, is in an effort to reduce the medical treatment overseas. So we are working, Madam Speaker, to be able to provide some services, specialist services, Madam Speaker, to the people of our dear beloved country. And I'm saying this, Madam Speaker, because this would tie into, Madam Speaker, the whole notion of national health insurance.

We must, and we already— we are already working, Madam Speaker, on improving primary and secondary care that is available on island. Madam Speaker, while you have national health insurance, are we going to have national health insurance just for medical treatment overseas? No, we must be able to improve the quality of our primary and secondary health facilities and services here on Anguilla. In simple terms, Madam Speaker, if there is an accident on any of our roads, which lately there have been increasing accidents for one reason or another, it doesn't matter what type of insurance you have,

Madam Speaker, in healthcare time is of the essence. However, you can have all the bells and whistles in terms of air ambulance services. It's going to take some time to get them here, and there is no air ambulance service, Madam Speaker, that is going to get a patient from off the street or in their homes.

They still will have to go to the only 24-hour facility we have here, Madam Speaker, and that patient must have their medical matrix— matrixes applicable to fly. They will have to do their own assessment, as they do. before they can be airlifted out of Anguilla. So some of the folks, political folks— I'm talking about political points— will criticize the health system here, and in some cases rightfully so.

But at the end of the day, Madam Speaker, it is no one person Minister of Health, or those of us who are involved in health That will bear the burden, so to speak. But it is incumbent upon all of us to be able to improve what we have here so that we can move on to the next step and we'll be able to not only facilitate but accommodate the national health insurance and the relationships and arrangements that we would have outside of Anguilla.

Madam Speaker, there is work being done to improve the quality of our dental services here in Anguilla. Again, thanks to my colleagues and the Members of this administration for so ably Agreeing to equip, Madam Speaker, the equipment that is necessary and the instruments that is needed, with a few exceptions, are already in place and is being utilized.

Madam Speaker, there are a number of new ambulances that we intend to have completed and delivered to Anguilla sometime next year. For the first time, Madam Speaker, in the history of Anguilla, we've had a resident psychiatrist, and we're going to work with that psychiatrist along with the psychologists, the counselors, to develop,

Madam Speaker, a department, a unit whereby we can start to effectively and improve the quality of treatment, Madam Speaker, for our citizens in Anguilla, and to address some of the issues, Madam Speaker, through the counselors and the clinical and child psychologists, to address some of the issues that we have,

Madam Speaker, in our schools. And Madam Speaker, I'm saying all of this because the member for District 1, Leader of Government Business and the Minister of Finance, would have indicated in her address where government is investing in healthcare. In healthcare, this is through the human resources.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

District 2.

Hon.Evans McNiel Rogers:

District 2, sorry, because District 1 is abroad. District 2, because the Member for District 2 would have indicated in her presentation that in terms of investment, investment is not just in services or just not in equipment or instruments. It is also in the human resources. And that is why, Madam Speaker, It is relevant to this debate because it is an investment in healthcare.

And we go back because we want the public to know that under the previous administration, they were the ones, according to their presentation in 2022, spoke about ring-fencing, Madam Speaker, the revenues that come in through the USL. So I am just going through the list I jotted down here.

In terms of ophthalmologists, in terms of orthopedics, in terms of additional radiographers, in terms of additional medical technologists, nursing, pharmacists, operating theater

techniques, nursing, anesthesia, wound and foot care. The nurses that we would have sent off last year, nurses that we would have sent off this year again, Madam Speaker, is an investment,

Madam Speaker, in the people, and it has to be paid for. So if you're going to remove the, and repeal the universal levy, some of these things, Madam Speaker, we wouldn't be able, let's say, to afford all of them. Now, when you look at the— whereas again, the government's own medium-term fiscal projection indicate that Anguilla's fiscal position is sound, with continued— continuing budget surpluses projected across the medium term, declining debt obligations, strong liquidity levels, and sufficient fiscal capacity to support public service and national development priorities. And Madam Speaker, while that is the case, as I indicated, the 2008 and 2009 experience is one cannot control.

And with the click of a mouse, so to speak, this present situation and the sound situation, Madam Speaker, can disappear. So as the member for District 2 mentioned, we will have to be able to invest wisely. We'll have to put something aside for the rainy day. Madam Speaker, and continue to invest in our people.

And whereas the Universal Social Levy imposes additional costs on employees and employers and self-employed persons, while the government is exempted from the employer contribution required under the Act, thereby placing a greater share of the levy impact on the private sector economic activity. Madam Speaker, it was placed— it was put in place.

Nothing has changed in terms of what that whereas has stated. Nothing. And whereas the honorable— whereas this Honorable House is of the view that increasing disposable income, encouraging investment, and Entrepreneurship and reducing the cost of employment would support economic growth and improve the well-being of our people of Anguilla. The people of Anguilla.

Yes, Madam Speaker, we totally agree. And the Member for District 4— And I don't know if any of us on this side of the aisle are Members of this House is calling for the government. So it is as if though The Government of Anguilla is calling on the Government of Anguilla to bring before this Honourable House no later than the 31st December 2026 legislation to repeal the Universal

Social Levy Act, Revised Statutes of Anguilla, Chapter U12, and any related enactment necessary to this— necessary to discontinue the collection of the Universal Social Levy. So again, it seems as if though we are bringing this, the House— we're calling upon ourselves to do this. I stand to be corrected, as I mentioned earlier, but it seems like we are here. It would have been more appropriate for the Honourable Member for Road South, the Honourable Member for Road North, our Members of the opposition, call upon the House. As opposed to the Honourable House calling upon itself, or government calling upon itself. Madam Speaker, and be it further resolved that the government shall identify— let me stop there, because the Honourable Single Island Wide Member, along with the Member for District 2 and the member for District 3, would have indicated that if you're going to bring a motion to the House You should do some research and, at least, give some recommendations and our proposals, in terms of identifying.

Resolve that the government shall identify and implement any fiscal measure necessary to facilitate the repeal of the Universal Social Levy. While maintaining the sustainable delivery of essential public services and without imposing further economic burdens on the people of Anguilla. Again, Madam Speaker, I just read that and we can interpret that in several ways, but I find that

Madam Speaker, to be lacking in content, so to speak. You want to remove the social universal social levy, which will be morphed or should be morphed into the National Health Fund and national— and finance national health insurance. But you want the government to identify and implement any fiscal measures that without causing further economic hardship but if you take that away then you'll have to impose something else. That's what I believe, Madam Speaker.

So again, I just want to reiterate here that the ring-fencing of the revenues that are coming in from the universal social levy should be set aside because I believe in 2 years or 3 years, depending on the, the data that was given, there would be some seed money whereby with proper evaluation, compare the comparisons that would be needed, the groundwork that will need to take place.

Taking Anguilla's unique situation is something that we have already started to look at in terms of the National Health Fund, national health insurance that must be funded. Madam Speaker, to begin with some seed money would be one of the most responsible things to do. Because once the national health insurance is implemented, it has to be funded, and there will be capital calls on it immediately. And as I said, the cost of healthcare is increasing exponentially. We won't have a situation, Madam Speaker, like

Social Security, for instance, where there were contributions for a decade before the first check was written. When that national health insurance fund is put in place or national scheme is put in place, it must be funded continuously because there will be national calls on it immediately. So, Madam Speaker, I rise to, to say that I am not in support of repealing and replacing The repealing the U.S.— the universal social levy.

But I'm in total support of ring-fencing, Madam Speaker, those funds so that when we do implement the national health insurance, that there will be substantial funding there in order to get us through the initial phases. of National Health Fund. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Thank you, Honourable Member. Are there any other contributions? Before I invite the mover to reply, is it okay if we take a 5-minute break? Let's stand over 5 minutes, please. This Honourable House resumes its sitting. You may be seated, Members. I invite the mover of the motion to reply to the debate in respect of Motion 13 of 2026.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, this year marked 30 years since the passing of Tupac Amaru Shakur, and I could never forget his famous words: they have money for wars, but they can't feed the poor. We have money for London, But we can give this relief. Well, Madam Speaker, I am very surprised that we are here debating this motion in this manner because the opposition have brought 2 motions to this Honorable House before this particular motion, and for the most part they were supported unanimously.

And I anticipated that this too would have been supported unanimously. Given the historical situation regarding this particular tax measure, Madam Speaker, if we must give the history of this tax measure, we must never forget that, as the Honourable Single Island Wide member Mr. Neil Rogers said, that between 2004 and about 2008, Anguilla's financial position was strong.

Well, I would beg to differ. Between the years 2005 and 2007, Anguilla's financial position was strong. And during that time, Madam Speaker, investments were made. Nobody can deny that. But also, Madam Speaker, the government of Anguilla took it upon themselves to increase their salaries exponentially, not once Not twice, but many times.

The first go-around of the increase in the salaries were only for the political directorate, Madam Speaker, only for the political directorate. And members of the public service said, hey, what about us? In not so nice language. And they went back and they came back and they increased their salaries again, 25% at the top, 7.5% at the bottom, increasing the disparity between the haves and the have-nots and those who are making and those who are not. And then they came back again, Madam Speaker, in 2008 after the bottom has fallen out— had fallen out, according to the Single Island Wide Member Mr. Neil Rogers— and increased your salaries again only a few months later to cut it.

And Mr. Neil Rogers, the Single Island Wide Member, Madam Speaker, spoke about the fact that government revenues were robust during that period, and that is why they were able to increase— make these increases, Madam Speaker. And if history repeats itself, we can say that again today. But there's a fundamental difference, Madam Speaker.

The significant and drastic increases in the cost of living that was driven by the Anguilla United Front administration of 2005 to 2010 was on the back of something called the alien landholding license and another tax revenue measure that was called the work permit fees. And those fees were increased— not the alien landholding license, because the alien landholding license at the time was set at 5% stamp duty and 12.5% alien landholding license. It was Robert F.X.

Silliman who came with the suggestion that we can reduce the alien landholding license significantly and introduced a new measure called the Real Estate Residential Asset Levy, something that they never moved forward to either collect or implement as a legislative measure until the Anguilla Progressive Movement came to office. But, Madam Speaker, so the revenues were so robust that one Mr. Edison Baird said that it was like a pipeline running from the port in Sandy Ground up to the Treasury.

And on the back of unsustainable— two unsustainable revenue sources, those significant increases were made. But it didn't only impact government, it impacted Anguilla, because when government went ahead and increased their salaries and the expenditure in that manner, the banks acted, and the banks increased their salaries dramatically. And then the private sector had no choice but to increase their expenditure exponentially to compete, because everybody was now competing for these employees. But as was predictable by Squawk Box on MSNBC, the bubble, the real estate bubble, was going to pop, because all of this revenue that was being driven during that time was driven on something called prime mortgage, the real estate outside of Anguilla.

So much so that it almost collapsed the economy of Greece. It almost collapsed the economy of Cyprus. It almost collapsed the Russian economy, where they almost defaulted on their loan obligations. It almost collapsed the economy of Ireland. It almost collapsed the economy of the United Kingdom. It collapsed the economy of the great United States of America because during the election campaign of Barack Hussein Obama and John McCain, they had a run-in from their campaign to sit around the table to come up with plans to mitigate the fallout from the real estate bubble that was busting, that was popping. And it also collapsed the economy of Anguilla, so much so That the banks were under severe strain, with the National Bank of Anguilla declaring in 2007 assets of over $1 billion, only 2008— only in 2009 to realise that they were on the verge of collapse.

And it was so bad, Madam Speaker, that in Social Security, 2 members of the Social Security Board who also are members of the National Bank of Anguilla, together they created something called ASIDCO. The Anguilla Social Security Investment Company. And through that vehicle, they came up with a mechanism that the Single Island Wide Member, Mr. Neil Rogers, who was the Minister of Social Development, said it was being bought to create a hospitality school where they took a property out in Cinnamon Reef that was a Cinnamon Reef Hotel that became defunct under the Anguilla United Front stream, Madam Speaker.

And they decided to buy a property that was valued at the great times at $2.5 million for $7.5 million US dollars, $20 million, to inject liquidity in the National Bank of Anguilla to keep the bank afloat. But during that time, Madam Speaker, there was something called CIBC and NBA's, PB&T, which is the offshore divisions of those banks, that they were taking the funds from the offshore depositors, hundreds of millions of dollars. and injecting them on the domestic side to also keep the banks afloat.

Madam Speaker, this happened in 2009. Madam Speaker, Madam Speaker, the financial position had gotten so bad in Anguilla that the government of Anguilla was asking the British government for assistance. The government of Anguilla had gone to the Caribbean Development Bank to borrow $20 million after a business case was created to build a brand new

Blowing Point Ferry Terminal. It was a white Model was sitting in Blowing Point for many years, and the loan was approved by the Caribbean Development Bank, and the British government stepped in and said, oh, you can't borrow this money, even though the financial analysis was sound, and they could not move forward with that, Madam Speaker.

And the government of Anguilla was crying out so loud that Mr. Neil Rogers, Mr. Victor Banks, And Mr. Osbourne Fleming held a press conference where Mr. Fleming said, come for your country. Neil said, we need to move into independence because this stranglehold cannot work. Madam Speaker, it was so bad that the British government wrote to the Chief Minister at the time, 2009, asking him to implement the revenue measures that they had agreed in Executive Council in July of 2009, which was called the Fiscal Recovery Plan 2009 to 2011, that included a 5% payroll tax that would be levied on everybody's salaries, including a number of other measures, including the increase significantly of property tax.

A number of measures. So much so that the then Minister of Social Development, Mr. Neil Rogers, who was the elected Member for Valley North, said, and he boasted, this is our recovery plan. And on coming to office in 2009— 2010, Madam Speaker, because we must never forget that in 2009 there was no budget that was prepared for 2010.

And the said big boy's budget that came to the House in 2008 for 2009 that was agreed upon by the Executive Council and ministers of government, in which Mr. Neil Rogers was a part of, envisioned $100 million in capital expenditure. Not $1 could be spent because, as Mr. Rogers rightfully said now as a Single Island Wide member, not even a third of that revenue was realised. But it also goes to show you the incompetence of budgetary forecasting and revenue by the Anguilla United Front administration. Because how is it that you could have rising revenues in 2006, 2007, falling revenues in 2008 because everything had collapsed, including the Flag Luxury Property that had laid off almost 1,000 employees, including a significant number of Anguillans, in 2007?

And every week, Mr. Neil Rogers, Mr. Victor Banks, Mr. Osbourne Fleming, And Mr. Kenneth Harrigan going to be on the press conference saying next week it's going to open, next week it's going to open, next week it's going to open. It never reopened. But we must never forget that the Hodges family had signed an agreement to develop a hotel luxury property with some foreign developers, investors in Junk's Hole. And it was Mr. Robert F.X.

Silliman who said to the government of Mr. Neil Rogers, the Anguilla United Front administration, That if you— following the 2005 election, if you go ahead and allow for that development in the eastern side of the island, we will stop Flag. These are historical facts that are bared out in the public domain and the poor Hodge's family could not move forward with the development project, a local family. And less than 2 years later, the whole Flag had fallen apart, bringing significant hardships not only to those people who had lost jobs, but a lot of subcontractors who were left holding the bag. These are historical facts.

Madam Speaker, Chris Brayant— the British government wrote to the then Minister of Finance in the United Front administration in January of 2010 and said, listen, we understand you have an election coming up. So the measures that we have agreed upon to implement, you can hold off until after the election.

I'm paraphrasing him, Madam Speaker and we did it because they didn't bring a budget to the House, because Mr. Fleming, who was the outgoing Chief Minister and retired from politics, said whoever coming in got to deal with the mess. That's what he said. So as you know, the Anguilla United Movement was elected in 2012, February 15th. of 2010 and came to office.

I served as the Parliamentary Secretary responsible for tourism, Madam Speaker. And it's quite fascinating to hear them say, Madam Speaker, the Members of the government say that Hayden Hughes, a member for Road South, who was the then Parliamentary Secretary, got up in this Honourable House and voted for the levy in 2011. And the record will show, Madam Speaker, that in that particular debate, in that particular House, even though it was done under duress because Hubert Hughes, who was the then Minister of Finance, had gone to the public to try to get the public to protest against the British as it relates to these taxes.

And the governor at the time, Mr. William Alistair Harrison, said that these taxes— and it was published— if the customs surcharge is not increased to 6% from 1%, If this levy is not implemented, we will not assent to the budget. And they didn't assent to the budget. But the record will show, Madam Speaker, that when the levy, the Interim Stabilisation Levy, came to this Honorable House in 2011, the Members of the opposition, Mr. Evans McNiel Rogers, who served as the Leader of the Opposition, asked for a division.

Colloquially means he asked for a ballot vote, that every Member of the House must vote as it relates to whether they support or oppose this Interim Sabilisation Levy. And the record will show that 2 Members of the opposition opposed the implementation of the Interim Stabilization Levy. Those were Evan McNeil Rogers and Othlyn Olytimus Vanterpool. And the record could show—

Hon.Evans McNiel Rogers:

Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I wish that the member would be able to provide those records that he is talking about in terms of the divisional vote.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Remind me, I was just asking the clerk to pull up the record so that I could say which of those motions. Is it the motion in relation to interim stabilisation?

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

2011.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

2011?

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Yes, the first time they came to the House.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Okay, so the Honourable Member, I know you won't be able to provide it now, but if you can give an undertaking to provide the record of vote and this just for clarity, as to the 2 Members that you indicated voted against? Against, yes, against. Do we have your undertaking to provide it to the Clerk at some point this week? And then we'll share it with Member Rogers.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

And as you also asked for the Clerk to look for it as well, so that we can have a joint approach towards it, because—

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

No, look for it. It's your submission.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

No problem.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

The Clerk didn't have the benefit of our handset back then, so you'll bring the voting record for us and then we'll share it with Mr. Rogers.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Thank you very much. And I hope that the Member is not saying that he did not oppose it at the time.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

No, he said for clarification he would like to see the record. It was a long time ago. Most of us don't even know what we voted last week. So just bring it and so that we don't have to cross this again when it comes up. Thanks, Member.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Madam Speaker, Member, the only thing God blessed me with was a memory. And Madam Speaker, as I proceed, if you allow—

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Yes, proceed.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

The 2 Members of the opposition voted nay to the implementation of the levy, and there was one Member on the government side who voted nay And that Member was one Mr. Hayden Austin Port Hughes, voted nay. And Mr. Rogers, who was the then Leader of the Opposition, realising that not all the Members of the government had voted in support of the implementation of the Interim Stabilisation Levy, raised it as a concern on the principle of collective responsibility. I hope I'm bringing up his memory because I know he may be gray as I am, but his memory still works very well. And Madam Speaker, I rose and I showed my ballot and I said I was the one who voted opposed to it because I was not a Member of the Executive Council, so the principle of collective responsibility did not apply to me because I could vote my conscience.

And 2, I felt that we should not be implementing any tax under duress, and I said that. The British government was saying you got to do it, else we're going to do this and we're going to do that to you. And I say, well, do it. I'm going to vote nay.

That's what the records show. Now, to say whether I supported the Interim Stabilisation Levy or not is neither here nor there, because I only voted that way because I didn't want no British government, no colonial master telling me what to do. Because I think I was born free and I'm not a slave. But Madam Speaker, as you know, it was supposed to be interim.

So in 2011, it was approved in the House. In 2012, it was approved in the House in December. 2013, it was approved in the House by the Anguilla United Movement, Anguilla Progressive Movement. In 2014, was approved in the House. Meanwhile, the Members of the opposition at the time, including one Miss Cora Richardson-Hodge, who was not yet elected, was saying publicly that this interim stabilisation levy has to go because it's impacting businesses.

I'm not saying that she was wrong, but I'm saying that is what she was saying. Even on Women's Week, a national address was given when one Mrs Cora Richardson-Hodge made that address where she stated that the interim stabilisation levy was hurting homes. And in 2015, Madam Speaker, at a public rally, the leader of the Anguilla United Front rose and he spoke.

Madam Speaker, the reason why he rose and he spoke is because during the debate Between one Mr. Edison Alvair Baird and one Everlie Bradley and Patrick Hanley. Mrs. Bradley said— former Member of Parliament Mrs. Bradley said that she has already advised her son, Perin Bradley, who was the then Comptroller in Inland Revenue, that when they come to office, he need to find something to get rid of that levy. Because they're getting rid of that levy. And Mr. Baird said it seemed as if Mrs Bradley had gotten her degree in economics from the University of Dog Island. These are just historical facts, Madam Speaker.

And in that public rally, Mr. Banks came out, the leader of the Anguilla United Front, came out, and rightfully so, defending his colleague. And he said he does not care what the government said, he does not care what Mr. Baird have said about Mrs Bradley. That when they come to office that they will immediately get rid of the interim stabilisation levy because it's a bad tax, it's an unfair tax, and it needs to go. Madam Speaker, it was really campaigned against by the Anguilla Chamber of Commerce, and I can recall Miss Melinda Goddard writing significant articles speaking about how it's going to collapse the tourism economy and so forth.

Anyway, as you know, in April 22nd, on April 22nd, 2015, the Anguilla United Front was overwhelmingly elected to office. They came 16 votes short of all the seats. 16 votes. They won 6 of the 7 seats. Only government before— only party before had ever done that was Anguilla United Party led by Hubert Hughes and James Ronald Webster back in 1980. Sorry, in 1976, James Ronald Webster also did that incredible feat when only Sir Emil Gomes won his seat in Valley— in Road North. Sorry, Madam Speaker.

And Madam Speaker, in December, they continue to speak during press conferences that they're working on getting rid of the levy. But in December of 2015, Mrs. Cora Richardson-Hodge, Mr. Evans McNiel Rogers— Minister, sorry, my apologies— the Honourable Cora Richardson-Hodge, the Honourable Evans McNiel Rogers, the Honourable Curtis Richardson, the Honourable Victor Banks, the Honourable Cardigan Connor, the Honourable Everlie Bradley voted yea to extend the interim stabilisation levy. And in an interview on Radio Anguilla, Mrs Cora Richardson-Hodge, Minister Cora Richardson-Hodge, was being interviewed at the time, and the issue of the Interim Stabilisation Levy came up. And the Member, Mrs Cora Richardson-Hodge, she said to the interviewer, she said, we were in opposition, we did not understand the need for the interim stabilisation levy. The government of the time understood it but now that we are there, we understand it.

And year after year during the Anguilla United Front administration, even though they campaigned vehemently to remove the interim stabilisation levy, they went December after December and brought it up to the House. So during the campaign of 2020, myself and Honorable— now Honorable Kyle Hodge Said, if we get to office, we all said, if we get to office, we will make this tax permanent because it makes no sense going back to the House year after year after year after year to approve it.

And that was done, as you know, Madam Speaker. And Madam Speaker, it is quite extraordinary, Madam Speaker, to hear The government today opposing the levy and the opposition supporting the removal of the levy, the reversal of roles, and the government of the day saying that the opposition is being hypocritical by bringing forward this motion.

And I don't think we are hypocritical in any way because I really thought that this would have been something that would have been universally agreed by all sides of the divide. But how can you call us hypocrites for bringing a motion to remove this levy that is harming businesses, that businesses are talking to me about? Because everything else is now compounding, and people realize that the government of Anguilla and employees have gotten a significant uplift in their salaries, and the private sector have not gotten an uplift. So all they would have been getting is a 3% raise.

How are you calling us hypocrites, but it's not hypocritical for you who oppose implementation in the first place to now oppose repealing? That makes no sense to me. As Merrick Richardson, the Honourable Member for Road North, will say, make it make sense. How can we be hypocrites by bringing a motion to give this type of ease to the businesses of Anguilla? Because even The leader of government business, Mrs. Cora Richardson-Hodge, said that the plan, the relief that they are providing to the people of Anguilla is unsustainable. It cannot continue indefinitely.

But if you repeal this levy, this will be indefinite. This will be indefinite relief to the people of Anguilla. And Madam Speaker, I want to point to the fact that a Single Island Wide Member, Mr. Kyle Hodge, got up today and he spoke about the financial implications, but he said no thought went into this motion.

And he said, where did the idea come from to repeal this motion? But not to repeal the motion, he meant repeal this tax. He also said it's as if Hayden Hughes went to the gym, work out, which I do. And the reason why I do it so often, because

I want to ensure that The NCDs that we have so much in Anguilla will not befall me. I'm not saying that it will not, but as long as possible, I want to ensure that I am strong and healthy. And I admonish everybody in Anguilla to take up exercise, whatever fashion you— you don't have to necessarily come to the best gym in Anguilla, but you can go to other gyms. You can run, you can walk, you can sprint, you can change your diet so that we can reduce The cost of medical treatment overseas, reduce the 200 amputees that goes on at our hospital.

We can reduce the proliferation of NCDs. So I'm very proud to be going. I haven't had a day off. I'm feeling good about myself. Madam Speaker, and he said, wait, did he come wake up? He wake up, he went to the gym, and Thursday presented

the motion. Man, my good neighbor, my good neighbor, the Honorable Kyle Hodge. Oh yeah, how you treat me so, man?

It was last year July that the Honorable Member Mr. Kyle Hodge, Hayden Hughes, and the Honorable Member Mr. Merrick Richardson Had a discussion where I was talking about repealing of this particular tax, and Mr. Hodge said it's a good idea. And he asked me if I really support something like this. I said, if you bring it, trust me, you got my full support. And if I'm lying, get up on a point of order and say I'm lying.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

Speaker, on a point of order, just to get some clarity, if the Member can state where, when I don't need the time, but when and where, maybe that would help a lot.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Let me tell you when and where. It was during the debate of the repeal of the GST legislation. We were in the back. Both Merrick Richardson—

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Wait, hold on. This is a— hold on. It was last year, July, that the Honourable Member discussed repealing and if he would support it. I think for the purpose of the record, and I'm reading it in real time, I'd prefer if you not bring back house conversations unless you both discuss it first and then agree.

You said it was last July during the repeal. Do you want more details on where, what, and who said what? The witness? I don't know if it's necessary for the record. I think the point of order is if you don't remember it, you'll say you don't remember it and it's not true, or it's not true, or it is true. He doesn't remember it.

You can proceed.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

Just a minute, Speaker. We have discussions, we talk about everything. The Member is making it appear as if there was a commitment. You could have discussions, casual conversation, casual conversation. He's bringing as witness to this whole discussion about removing the USL, you can't use a casual discussion as a commitment. That's— yeah, I think that's the point.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

To both sides, and in terms of the way that we've been working behind the scenes, sometimes we all do have discussions on thoughts, ideas, and things. So what the Member is saying is don't represent it as if there was some ask to do something formal. If there's casual discussion about, well, what do you think about this, that's a little different. So couch it accurately is what the minister would want you to do.

Proceed.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

I understand his position and I acquiesce to your position, but Madam Speaker, the reason why I say that is because the member said that it's as if I went to the gym, woke up, went to the gym, the idea dropped in my head, and I just sent it in on Thursday to be presented to the House.

So what I'm trying to say is that this was a little more than a casual conversation because I believe the Member at the time, he did not commit to it, correct? Let me make that clear. He did not commit to anything. But what he did say is that if it is that the government will bring this to the House, if I would support it. And I said, of course, you have my commitment that I will support it and I know he went back and it was a conversation that was had at least at the Ministry of Finance level and whatever decision is made is fine. That's not my issue.

I'm not saying that. But what I'm saying is that it isn't as if this had not been said before, because on many radio programs— I know members of the government continue to cite our radio programs on a Monday— on many radio programs, we have said that at some point—

Hon.Shellya Rogers-Webster:

Madam Speaker, on a point of order, just for clarity, Madam Speaker, the Member indicated that there was a conversation had at the Ministry of Finance level.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

On the casual conversation. Do you want to specify? I did take note of it too. Do you want to specify just so that there's verification?

Hon.Shellya Rogers-Webster:

Yeah, about conversations with the Minister of Finance and who would have been the rep from the Ministry of Finance you would have had those conversations with.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

He said there was no commitment.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Yeah, sorry.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Yeah, there was no commitment. I'm just showing off because I can read it all. I heard what you said, but there was no commitment. But before you even answer, Honourable Member, I think it's for both. Last July was a long time ago. Things change and people's positions change. Similarly, on your side, government side, whenever there's the support for this bill would have done, things change. I think both sides are doing the same thing to each other.

Whether you have— life has gone on, things have changed. But I think the most specific point of order that you're raising is that you want confirmation on what those discussions were and with whom. Now, on the casual conversation about the ISL, So are you able, Member, to answer just that part of it, not the bigger issue of who changed your position?

And things are evolving, that's neither here nor there. The specific point of order and question for confirmation is who made the representations about the—

Hon.Shellya Rogers-Webster:

Yeah, essentially, because the member essentially said that he knows after that casual conversation there would have been discussions with the Minister of Finance on the matter. So I'm just trying to get a bit of clarity on that.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Member for Valley North, on that, I would say that with all due respect to protecting persons in the Ministry of Finance, but not only that, with all due respect to Kyle Hodge, a Single Island Wide Member, he did not just take the suggestion, the idea that we brought up. He actually went back and did some a little bit of analysis to see if it was doable, that is to be commendable. And if I'm not telling the truth, please indicate that I'm not telling the truth. And so I'm not going to speak about who Minister Hodge spoke to, the persons he spoke to in the Ministry of Finance, just as a casual conversation.

I'm not saying it was anything official. It was a casual conversation. Anyway, Madam Speaker, may I proceed?

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Then none of it should be on the record. Not the conversation, not the minister, ministry representative. Unless you're able to confirm for the Member who would have said that there was further discussion, then I don't think we should discuss any of it from the Ministry of Finance.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

All right, fair enough, Madam Speaker, and I will continue. And as I was saying earlier, that Members of the government continue to speak about things that the Members of the opposition have said on their radio programs. So I would assume that even if they're not listening themselves, that somebody is perhaps informing them and updating them, as they should, of what is being discussed on the radio programs.

And Madam Speaker, for over a year we have said that at some point in time we will bring this motion to the House. We have said that over and over. Member for Valley North and anybody who have listened to in no radio program that is held every Monday morning at 11 AM on 95.5 FM Radio Anguilla would know us saying that over and over. And the reason why we said at some point in time, because we figured that the best time to bring a motion of this nature, given the financial implications— the motions that we brought to the House before did not have financial implications.

This motion has financial implications, and the reason why we thought it would be best to bring this motion at this particular time, Madam Speaker, is because this is the time when Government of Anguilla is looking to build and develop their 2027 budget, or their budget for the next fiscal year that starts on January 1st.

This is the time when they are doing that. So we thought that we bring this motion that has financial implications at this time because it can be formulated into the national budget. If they can't do it on a permanent basis, maybe they can do it on a temporary basis, just how the levy was at some point. You give the relief on a temporary basis. I don't know. That is why we said that they formulated, because they are in the seats of power, they are the government, they have all the power and authority.

But we have said time and time again that we would bring in this. And another reason Why we have done so is because one of the motions that we brought to this Honorable House, it was said that it is as if somebody tipped us off that we were going to bring— that the government was going to bring a motion on the Legislators' Pension Act, and somebody tipped us off, so we forced them to it.

That was not the case. So we— what we have decided to do, Madam Speaker, is to preempt anything that we are bringing to the House. by giving the government sufficient notice that we will be bringing it to the House. And we also said that we will be bringing a motion to this Honorable House, Madam Speaker, to deal with property tax on commercial buildings with the exception to villas and hotels.

We have said that over and over and over again, and even through this medium we are saying it. So the government of Anguilla can do it, or we can bring the motion and they can oppose it. Is up to them. But Madam Speaker, the problem with the arguments by the government of Anguilla as it relates to funding and financing and so forth is that the same government recently boasted that up until July— I believe it, believe July of 2026— the government had collected $456.65 million,

Madam Speaker, and the reserves were sitting at almost $400 million. Madam Speaker, our government rich, and that is a good thing. Our government rich, and when our government is rich, then more can be done. Madam Speaker, to come to this Honorable House and say that Anguilla Progressive Movement implemented GST and did nothing to provide relief when several times we came back to this House over and over and over again with amendments to the GST Act to provide more and more relief to the people through that Act.

Madam Speaker, it would have gotten to a point where I truly believe that GST as we know it would have been gone altogether. The government fast-tracked that, and you cannot knock them because that's their policy decision. But how can you speak about giving up $40 million in revenue, Madam Speaker, of GST revenue, where businesses have given— have launched complaints about the way the GST, the new Goods tax and services tax are impacting them.

They are saying it. Shelves are empty. They are saying it. And you give up $40 million, but you don't want to give up $26 million that's going to put money in the hands of the people of Anguilla who have not received a raise similar to what we have received, Madam Speaker?

Where's the empathy? Where's the love for people? What did the slogan say again? Not all about you. What was it? Putting people first? Madam Speaker, you did say that. Sometimes we forget. Then we forget quickly, Madam Speaker. But Madam Speaker, sometimes we forget how we voted. Yes, Madam Speaker, sometimes we forget how we voted.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Bills. Yeah, let's be specific. Now that we're talking about careful conversations, Madam Speaker, I did not say such a thing. I said sometimes we don't remember how you would have voted on a particular bill from time to time. Okay, we have to be thorough and complete in representation.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Yes, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, you hear the talk over and over about the National Health Fund. You hear Dr. Lanny Hobson send out his voice notes all the time about the National Health Fund and the fact that the National Health Fund legislation has already been passed. In 2005, when I was an employee— or 2006, I believe, or 2005— when I was an employee of the Cap Juluca Hotel, a staff meeting was held and chaired by the Human Resources Director, Dr. Phyllis Fleming Banks, where she said that the Government of Anguilla was in the process of implementing a National Health Fund. 2005. There are children who were born and graduated university since then, Madam Speaker.

We heard all of this talk about where the money coming from and so forth, Madam Speaker. In all of this talk, Madam Speaker, Madam Speaker, we have something called a consolidated fund. Madam Speaker, and if the government of Anguilla does not know, then they will know today. We have something called a consolidated fund. When you go to the Treasury and pay your property tax on your apartments, it goes to the consolidated fund. When you go to Customs and you pay duties on your trucks and your importations, it goes to the consolidated fund. When .AI is remitted, it goes to the consolidated fund.

When you pay a dog license or your license for your electric bicycle, or your vehicular license, or your business license, it goes to the consolidated fund. Every dollar that comes into the government of Anguilla goes to one single fund called the Consolidated Fund. Every dollar. So what are you talking about?

And then the government, through their budget appropriations, will say we're putting this money for here, we're putting this money for this, we're putting this money for that, we're putting this money for elsewhere. Madam Speaker, to say that MICUH recommended that we buy all the school buses at once When I was a Minister of Infrastructure and we were working through the whole position of bringing in these school buses and failed procurements, budget appropriations based on Ministry of Infrastructure analysis on how much these school buses would be— will cost, and then you realise that the $2 million that was allocated in 2023 wasn't enough.

And then you put out a procurement based on a new budget appropriation, and you had a failed procurement, and then you have a successful procurement by Spark International. And the school buses came in after the administration left office, after we left office. Even the police vehicles that was budgeted under the Anguilla Progressive Movement came in most recently. How much failed procurements have we had, and how much failed procurements the Anguilla United Front administration will have? So to say that we did not follow these recommendations by this— by the, by the people in MICUH, it's a fallacy.

Why are you saying these things? And the Member for Valley North spoke about investments. He said for the first time in history We're gonna have a resident psychiatrist. Anguilla Progressive Movement initiative budgeted for. He spoke that we're going to be having an orthopedic surgeon. Anguilla United Front initiative budgeted for. But you know why we didn't have those folks, Madam Speaker?

Let me tell you why we didn't have those folks recruited and in place when Anguilla Progressive Movement were in place. And it also goes to the Attorney General position. When people applied for these positions, they realised that the remuneration, the salaries— it didn't make sense to move to Anguilla for the salaries that were being offered. So they

declined time and time again.

We've had a lot of these positions advertised, and Dr. Ellis Lorenzo Webster, both as a Premier of Anguilla and as the Leader of Opposition spoke to that fact, and we would go back and we would change the salaries upwards, and people would apply. And then when they found out what the salaries are, they still wouldn't come in. The salaries were way and above even the premier salary, but people would not apply because they say, where we are, this is what the cost of living is, this is what we're getting, and we're losing to move to Anguilla. Hyperbaric chamber, Madam Speaker, another initiative by the Anguilla Progressive Movement.

We went about working on a dive policy, and I'll give the divers of Anguilla the credit. People like Vanburn Brooks and even Mr. Carty, Madam Speaker, they came to me as a Minister of Tourism And they said they want to meet with me at Lit Lounge to discuss dive tourism.

And I went to the meeting and there was a number of Anguillans there, a number of Anguillans, including very young people, male, female, old, young, a number of Anguillans spoke, speaking about diving. And Carl Helliger and all of these guys who had great visuals of the great sites, they said, Mr. Hughes, Minister Hughes, we want you to work on a dive tourism policy. Because we need to start to promote dive tourism in Anguilla, because nowhere in the Caribbean have greater dive sites than Anguilla. Nowhere.

Not even Saba. And immediately, immediately, without hesitation, the next day I went back to the ministry and said, we're working on this. We went to executive council, bang, working on it. We had consultation. Even people like Davon Carty and the like came to the consultations to devise a dive tourism policy. that was then implemented by the Executive Council of Anguilla. And we went to market promoting dive tourism using persons like Douglas Carty and Matthew Billington and all of these folks. And we said one of the things that we can invest in that will make Anguilla even more attractive, Madam Speaker, is a hyperbaric chamber.

And it was budgeted for in the budget appropriation of the Anguilla Progressive Movement. So all you're bragging about today that you have done is a follow-on from the Anguilla Progressive Movement. And this is why sometimes I like when they say government is continuous. Well, it serves one purpose on one hand, and next hand, you know, we're gonna measure twice and cut once. That's why I say measure twice and cut once. So,

Madam Speaker, I know what you're talking about, giving the Trump gestures now right. And Madam Speaker, so when we talk about $3 million in scholarships, look at the budget of the Anguilla Progressive Movement. Almost $4 million was allocated for scholarships, and we're not talking about the 200 digital scholarships that the minister secured. And the Member for Valley North rightfully said very few people took up the scholarships. Well, whose fault is that if the government of Anguilla Whether the Anguilla Progressive Movement or the Anguilla United Front or any government provide significant opportunities in terms of scholarships and the like to the people of Anguilla, and the people of Anguilla do not take up these opportunities, you cannot blame Shellya Rogers-Webster. You cannot blame Deanne Kentish Rogers.

You cannot blame the Anguilla United Front. You cannot blame the Anguilla Progressive Movement. You cannot blame anyone. So then when you walk down the street and somebody say, oh, I see I have playing scholarships, but my daughter ain't get none, and then you ask them, did you apply?

No. Who you blaming? When opportunities are provided, whatever those opportunities are, we as the people of Anguilla got to do what we can to take advantage of those opportunities that have been provided. So we're not blaming anybody, but we're providing the facts, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, as I said, and

I want to wrap up, I don't want to respond to all of the things that were said by the Leader of Government Business. Leader of Government Business said a lot. I don't want to respond to all of this, but as I said the facts are that there was a point in time when the Anguilla Progressive Movement, Anguilla United Movement, moved forward with interim stabilisation levy, USL. There was a point in time when the Anguilla United Front opposed the levy and then supported the levy, and then who was silent on the levy and now is supporting the levy. So how do you call us hypocrites but you never looked in the mirror and see the reflection that is pointing back at you?

Then I would dare say, if we are hypocrites, then we all are hypocrites. It's not you, Madam Speaker, because you didn't offer opposition. But then we all are. Well, Mr. Jose Vanterpool and Mr. Cordel Richardson did not offer opposition, so, you know, but we all can be considered hypocrites if that be the case.

And the whole issue of the National Health Fund and this $26 million funding National Health Fund, Madam Speaker, don't make no sense to me. Because in one $10 million swoop, almost 50% of it is wiped out. And that is why when Dr. Ellis Lorenzo Webster became the Premier of this country, one of the first things he brought to Executive Council in, when was it, in July of 2020, was a paper to implement Senior Shield to provide our seniors with healthcare. And the financial position was bad, bad, bad, bad, bad, bad, bad. So bad that the then Member of Opposition, Mr. Evans McNiel Rogers, stood up and he said, in this House, we are in a stiff jacket mode financially and otherwise.

And I quote him word for word— sorry, financially, economically, and otherwise. And so we could not move forward with the senior shield at the time because they said, where is the funding for it? Government of Anguilla doesn't have any money. We are on subsidy from the British government with conditions. So we went back and eventually the financial position improved and the government of Anguilla under Dr. Ellis Lorenzo Webster could provide senior shield.

And then we went to junior shield. And then we said by 2026, we will bring down the age from 70 to 65. We will carry up the age from 5 to 10. And then by 2027, we'll be able to provide comprehensive healthcare to all citizens of this country coming from the consolidated fund financed by recurrent

revenue.

So when you say we don't have a plan to finance it, You may fool them who don't want to understand how government finances work, but those who do, you can't fool. How can we ring-fence money for a house in London, but we can't provide this, this relief? So since the government of Anguilla,

Madam Speaker, have opposed giving the people of Anguilla who did not benefit from the significant raises that we received. Since the Government of Anguilla cannot give them a little measly 3% raise, Madam Speaker, and since the Government of Anguilla cannot put some money back in the businesses of Anguilla, can we revisit the legislation at least to look at the penalties, to look at the burdens that businesses have to deal with, at least.

Now, this isn't hypocritical. I mean, I'm begging, I'm pleading that something can be done to help them because they're asking me. And the reason why I brought it is because, believe it or not, and this may not be believed, but I too was elected in one of the largest constituencies in Anguilla, receiving one of the largest vote tallies in Anguilla— 792 votes. Madam Speaker, so it means therefore that I elect— I am elected by 792 people, of which a lot of them, not only my constituency but across Anguilla, have come to me just like they go to government with different complaints.

You understand what I'm saying, Madam Speaker? I always listen to my people. And the Member for the Single Island Member showed across the aisle and he said I should have listened to them. Let me give you some examples of listening to them. And I gave one before about the dive policy. A gentleman by the name of DJ Gene, Patterson came to me and he said, Hayden, you know, government could raise some revenue and people can feel a little bit about themselves. Why you don't get a vanity plate? A vanity plate? I said, what that is? He said, when you could put your name on your license plate as opposed to numbers. I said, okay, that's a good idea.

And it's done today. Drive around Anguilla and you see it. They came to me about dive policy, it was done. They came to me about personalised watercraft, significant work was done in personalised watercraft, so much so that I'm sure that it's ready to come to the House by the Honorable Jose Vanterpool at any particular time.

Jose Vanterpool can attest to this fact that in 2020— Madam Speaker, persons who were involved in tint were talking about tint and how it needs to be addressed in Anguilla. And there was a picture in the newspaper. Standing in that picture was a couple people who were involved in tinting in Anguilla— Jose Vanterpool, the then Second-Nominated Member, and the Commissioner of Police, Mr. Paul Morrison— talking about tint. And when we came to office in 2020, again, persons came to us about 10, and we held a meeting at a commission, the police, Royal Anguilla Police Force conference room and Jose Vanterpool also came to that meeting, and he can tell you I gave the commitment. This is what you want, this is what you get, and listen to the people, and it was done.

People were complaining from 1973 about the Valley Main Road, and they keep on coming to us about Valley Main Road. I said, don't worry, we can get it done. Kenneth Harrigan came to me. He said, doo, you really think you can get that done? I said, why not, Mr. Harrigan? He said, because I tried.

I even had a boulevard design, and the people get on so bad after— even though they wanted the road, about the trees and the belfry and so forth. You can't— you don't get it done? I say, I will. He said, but if you do it, you won't get elected again. I said, the difference between you and I is that you wanted to be elected indefinitely. I know I'm only passing through.

And Madam Speaker, the noise became so loud that even

Hon.Jose Vanterpool:

— Madam Speaker, on a point of order, just for the sake of clarity of this Honourable House, I was the first nominated Member, not the second. And as the Member would have rightfully said, that government being continuous He is right that under his administration, the recreational watercraft bill would have been largely advanced and will be soon ready to come to this Honourable House. But as he shared his details regarding the tint and the meeting that did take place and I did attend, he failed to mention that when he came into office, a lot of this tint regulation was largely advanced. And I know, Madam Speaker, because I was largely involved in the research that led to that.

So while I do acknowledge being at that meeting, I think it's being understated how far progressed that process was. So if government being continuous the same way that I will continue to advance, I do think that for the sake of the listening public, it would be more genuine to say the advanced stage in which you found that proposal.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Your response to the My response is that they were drafting instructions, but it was not legislation. That's my response. And as it relates to personal watercraft, Madam Speaker, I'm very happy to hear Mr. Jose Vanderpool speaking about that, because as you know, I myself personally did a lot of work as it relates to that and I can't wait until Mr. Vanterpool brings that to the House, because you'll have my full support on that bill.

I don't vote yea or nay because of politics. If it's good, it's good and at that time, we'll be able to have some robust discussion as it relates to that. But the Member was asking about things that we didn't— that I didn't listen. And Madam Speaker, thank you for that interjection because it just reminded me The Member, Kyle Hodge, during the hullabaloo, the noise that was being made about the development of the Valley Main Road, at some point in time he said to me, he said, Hayden, boy, I think we should look to do this road next term because a

lot of people making noise.

This was in 2000.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

I'm anticipating what the question is going to be. When was this?

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

You want me tell you when it was? I'm not lying. I would not—

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

I'm not saying that, but I know that the member now is going to say, when did I have this discussion with you? I think the lesson to be learned is that nobody's going to be discussing with anybody from here on.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

The discussion was in 2021 because we started the surveying of the road on the 5th of December 2020. The 5th of December 2020. You can go and research. I tell you already, God give me one blessing. And that is a memory and I understood his position.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

But remember, your memory is sometimes different from the member's memory. So that's where the issue is. You're recapping things that he cannot verify from your memory, but he's saying he has no recollection. So if you're making an anecdote to make the point, you could just move on. I don't think anything turns on it, Member Hodge. Is it that you want to object and say you did not say that, or you just do not want him to be quoting things that he thinks that you said?

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

Madam Speaker, just for clarity, who would oppose the construction of the Valley Main Road? Okay, so then I put on record, not me.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Okay, so you can make your anecdote and move on.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Madam Speaker, I will say this. I'll say this. I'm not saying that he opposed the development of Valley Main Road. No, he did not. But what he said is based on the sentiment of a lot of people in Anguilla who was opposed the development of the Valley Main Road that he thought that it was politically prudent to wait until another future time and I said, a future time is not guaranteed.

The only time I have is now. And there was a lot of noise, a lot of opposition. As a matter of fact, the Chaplain of the House said I have a black heart. He said that publicly on Klass FM because I went ahead with the Valley Main Road in the manner I went about it.

So that's neither here nor there, Madam Speaker. But the point of the matter is—

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

The Chaplain isn't here either to answer to what you said.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

But he couldn't defend himself anyway. He can't hear you if he wants to, this is a matter of historical fact. It was publicly said, and I'm not saying things that are not publicly said. So I would have said, but he said I wasn't listening to the people. So I was just giving some short examples of listening to the people.

Now, even as it relates to listening to people, the member, Kyle Hodge would know that even as it relates to GST implementation, a lot of business people raise concerns and after the House, I'll show him some of those concerns that business people have raised, including hoteliers who spoke to the Member for West End about how this is going to impact them and impact them in a negative way. So all I'm saying is that there are times when you have to listen, and you should listen.

You should always listen. But there isn't everything that is suggested that can be done. Not everything that can be suggested that can be done. I was asked to build an air-conditioned unit over Anguilla, Madam Speaker. I gave my assurances, but we did not win the election, so I can't build the air-conditioned unit over Anguilla again because it's so hot.

But I admonish Jose Vanterpool, as the government is continuous to build that air-conditioned unit. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Members, it has been moved and seconded that Motion 13 of 2026, it has been debated. The question is that the motion repeal of universal social levy be approved. Those in favour say aye. Those opposed say no. I think the nos have it. The motion is—

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Madam Speaker, may I ask a question please?

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

You wish for a division?

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

How do I know that the nos have it?

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Because we can request a division. Do you want to call for division?

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Thank you.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Deputy Clerk, there's a call for division in respect of the votes. While a division is being called, your memory is good and my ears are well, but I'll have the— there's a call for division in respect of the votes.

Attorney General:

Yes.

Joash Proctor:

The Honourable Attorney General.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

The call is for a division to indicate the vote in respect of the motion 13 of 2026. Is it aye or no?

Attorney General:

I abstain. Abstain.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Proceed.

Joash Proctor:

The Honourable Single Island Wide Electoral District Member, Mr. Bryan— okay, he's absent. The Honourable Member for Valley South. Sorry, I didn't hear you.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Honourable Member, please indicate your vote, yeah or nay, in respect of the motion.

Hon.Jose Vanterpool:

Nay.

Joash Proctor:

The Honourable Single Island Wide Electoral District Member, Mr. Rogers. The Honourable Member for Valley North.

Hon.Shellya Rogers-Webster:

Nay.

Joash Proctor:

The Honourable Member for Road North.

Hon.Merrick Richardson:

Yes.

Joash Proctor:

The Honourable Member for Road South.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Yes.

Joash Proctor:

The Honourable Single Island Wide Electoral District Member, Mr. Hodge.

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

Nay.

Joash Proctor:

The Honourable Member The Honourable Single Island Wide Electoral District Member, Mr. Vanterpool.

Hon.Jose Vanterpool:

Nay.

Joash Proctor:

The Honourable Member for West End.

Hon.Cardigan Connor:

Nay.

Joash Proctor:

The Honourable Member for Sandy Hill.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Nay.

Hon.Merrick Richardson:

Report.

Joash Proctor:

So it's just 1 minute.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

The clerk will announce the outcome.

Joash Proctor:

So the vote is 2 aye, 2 aye, 6 nays, and 1 abstain.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

The motion is defeated. Please proceed.

MOTION 14 OF 2026: CUSTOMS EXEMPTION OF DUTY ON GASOLINE AND DIESEL IMPORTS NO. 3 REGULATIONS 2026

Joash Proctor:

Motion 14 of 2026, 2/13 HOA, Customs Exemption of Duty on Gasoline and Diesel, Number 3, Regulations 2026.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

I call upon the Honourable Minister of Finance and Member for Sandy Hill.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Thank you Madam Speaker, I move that the Bill shortly entitled the motion, motion number 14/2026, 2-13 HOA Customs Exemption of Duty on Gasoline and Diesel Imports Number 3 Duty Regulations, be approved in this Honorable House.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

A seconder?

Hon.Kyle Hodge:

Madam Speaker, I rise to second.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

I invite the mover to present the motion.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. By way of explanation of this motion, these regulations extend for a further temporary period. The exemption from the imposition of duty on gasoline, motor spirit, and diesel oil that was previously provided under the Customs Exemption of Duty on Gasoline and Diesel Imports No. 2, Regulations 2026. The exemption continues from the 18th of September, 2026 Immediately following the expiry of the previous Regulations in order to maintain uninterrupted relief from import duty on fuel while international energy markets remain volatile. The exemption is temporary and expires on the 31st of December 2026 unless further extended or earlier revoked.

Under Section 76(2) of the Customs Act, Regulations made under Section 76 (1) a or b are not valid unless they implement a budget item approved by an Act of the Legislature or approved by Resolution of the House of Assembly. Madam Speaker, if I may read the contents of the resolution. Motion number 14/2026-2-13, House of Assembly. Customs exemption of duty on gasoline and diesel imports number 3, Regulations 2026. Resolution. Whereas Section 76 (1) of the Customs Act, RSAC 169, empowers the Governor-in-Council to make Regulations exempting goods or classes of goods from the imposition of duty, and whereas Section 76 (2) of the Customs Act provides that a Regulation made under Section 76(1) a or b is not valid unless it implements an item in a budget approved by an Act of the Legislature or is approved by resolution of the House of Assembly, and whereas the Governing Council has made the Customs Exemption of Duty on Gasoline and Diesel Imports Regulations 2026 No. 3, set out in the schedule to this motion, temporarily exempting gasoline and diesel from the imposition of duty in order to continue the temporary fuel duty relief approved by Executive Council in response to continued volatility in international energy markets and the resulting impact on domestic fuel prices.

And whereas the regulations provide that they are deemed to have come into force on September 18th, 2026, being the day immediately following the expiry of the Customs Exemption of Duty on Gasoline and Diesel Imports No. 2, Regulations 2026, and it is the intention of the House that the approval granted by this resolution shall have effect from that day. Now therefore be it resolved That the House of Assembly, pursuant to Section 76(2) of the Customs Act, Revised Statutes of Anguilla, Chapter 169, approves the Customs Exemption of Duty on Gasoline and Diesel Imports Regulations 2026, No. 3, set out in the schedule to this motion, and that such approval shall have effect from the 18th of September, 2026.

Passed by resolution of the House of Assembly this 22nd day of September, 2026. Madam Speaker, attached to the resolution is a Custom Exemption of Duty on Gasoline and Diesel Imports No. 3, Regulations 2026. It says Regulations made by the Governing Council under Section 76 of the Customs Act, RSAC 169, exemptions from duty. The items specified in the schedule are exempt from the imposition of duty. Citation and commencement: these Regulations may be cited as a customs exemption of duty on Gasoline and Diesel Imports No. 3, Regulations 2026. These Regulations are deemed to have come into force on the 18th of September, 2026, and these Regulations expire on the 31st of December, 2026.

Schedule 1— Schedule Section 1, Items Temporarily Exempted from the Imposition of Duty. The following items are temporarily exempt from the imposition of duty. Items: gasoline, motor spirit, Tariff Code 2710.1220, and diesel oil, Tariff Code 2710.1930. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Thank you, Honourable Member. Are there any contributions to the Motion 14 of 2026? Having no contributions, would the mover wish to speak to anything further in reply? Notwithstanding that there hasn't been anything to reply to, is there anything that the Member would wish to contribute further? If not, we could put it to the floor.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would have touched on this earlier in the previous motion that came before this Honourable House, and I do think that it's fitting, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the Members of this Honourable House for their full support of this Regulation. This Regulation, as I would have indicated, seeks to, between the 18th of September 2026 and the 31st of December, continue the exemptions from the imposition of duty for gasoline and diesel oil. Madam Speaker, we are all aware as to the circumstances that are currently existing in terms of the conflict in the Middle East.

And as a result of that, this administration has stepped in since April of this year to provide the relief for the people of Anguilla. And it has specific implications, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, as I would have mentioned before, and I think it's worth repeating in this resolution, that $22.5 million in electricity fuel surcharge support through September has already been undertaken by this administration, benefiting the people of Anguilla.

An estimated $4.4 million in import duty on gasoline and diesel through December 2026, and $5 million for the full-year excise exemption on gasoline in 2026. And so, Madam Speaker, it is very clear that this administration has been focused on ensuring that the people of Anguilla are able to be able to withstand the issues that are currently existing, which have contributed to the cost of living increases that we are all under.

And so, Madam Speaker, it's important that the people of Anguilla understand that this administration has continued to look out for the best interests of the people. That the decisions that are being made in terms of the total relief package by the end of this year, which will total some $59 million, is all for the benefit and the interests of the people of Anguilla. And Madam Speaker, every dollar not having to be spent in fuel and electricity increases translates directly to savings for each and every person in our country.

And so on that basis, Madam Speaker, we have continued the customs exemption on duty on gasoline and diesel imports through the end of the year. We will continue to look to see what can be done by this government in order to ease the cost of living pressures on the people of Anguilla. And as we do so, we will continue to come to the public.

Now, Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to encourage the people of Anguilla to do what they can in terms of looking at the electricity usage in their homes, in the business places. And the reason why I say that, ma'am, is because we don't know how long the effects of the conflict are going to last. And so

I want to encourage the people of Anguilla to do what they can on their part to minimise usage. If you are not at home, turn off fans, turn off lights, turn off the air conditioning unit, etc. Conserve as much as possible because while the government has spent $59 million, or will by the end of this year spend $59 million EC dollars on fuel relief and on these various measures to assist with the cost of living, it cannot do so indefinitely.

And so I want to take this opportunity to encourage persons to be mindful as to how we're utilising our electricity, how we're the amount that we're using, how we can turn off appliances, etc., that are not in use, because at some point the Government of Anguilla will not be able to maintain to the full extent that we are currently doing so.

And so we want to thank God that we're in a position, more so than any other region, to be able to any other country, for the most part to be able to provide the kind of relief that we are providing. But, Madam Speaker, I encourage persons to do what they can, do their part, play a role in assisting the government in minimising the type of cost.

On our end, we are looking at different avenues that we need to address to be able to do so. But we want to encourage persons in Anguilla to do their part as well. Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Honourable Members, it has been moved and seconded, and the question is now put that Motion 14 of 2026, approving the Customs Exemption of Duty on Gasoline and Diesel Imports No. 3, Regulations 2026, be approved. Those in favour say aye. Those opposed say no. The ayes have it. The motion is carried.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Joash Proctor:

Personal explanations? None.

OTHER BUSINESS

CRIMINAL CODE (AMENDMENT) BILL 2026

Joash Proctor:

Other Business. Government Business. A Bill for Criminal Amendment Code 2026, second reading.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

I recogniSe the Honourable Attorney General.

Attorney General:

Good day to all the Members, and good day to you, Madam Speaker. I move that Bill shortly entitled the Criminal Amendment Code 2026 be read for a second time, please.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Thank you. Is there a seconder?

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Madam Speaker, I rise to second.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

I invite the Honourable Attorney General to present the objects and reasons.

Attorney General:

Madam Speaker, the objects and reasons for this Bill are to amend Part 14 of the Criminal Code to clarify the law relating to rape, to repeal the offences relating to sexual assault and clarify in relation to sex within marriage, and to remove the gender-specific references to adopt gender-neutral language to ensure that the statutory language applies equally to all persons and regardless of their gender, and for all related persons to be consistent.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Thank you, Honourable Attorney General. Honourable Members, it is now open for debate in respect of the Criminal Amendment Code 2026. Are there any contributions?

Hon.Shellya Rogers-Webster:

Madam Speaker.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

I recognise the Honourable Member for Valley North.

Hon.Shellya Rogers-Webster:

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I wish to put on record my support of this amendment that would have been prompted by the work of the Gender Affairs Unit. Late last year, we had extensive consultations on the adjustments to the Bill. They were held here at the House of Assembly. We also had specific single meetings that were requested by other members of the public to engage. In addition to that, Madam Speaker, the Gender Affairs Unit prepared an extensive brochure that outlined things to consider in relation to the amendments, what the amendments do, what the amendments don't do, to give the general public additional information,

Madam Speaker. So I think we would have had some extensive consultation. And coming out of those consultations, actually, Madam Speaker, some amendments came. And one of the amendments was to ensure that the amendment ensured that there was gender neutrality So if a male could be convicted of something, a female could also be, and again, that came out of the consultation.

So we think that the consultations were quite successful. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Thank you, Honourable Member. Are there any other contributions to the amendment on the floor? Hearing no other contributions, I invite the mover to reply if necessary.

Attorney General:

Madam Speaker, I'm grateful for the support of the House. This Bill is an important reflection for society in Anguilla. It's ensuring the equality with gender neutrality, recognising that the law should apply both equally to men and women, but also to safeguard against sexual harm and violence. These amendments seek to protect women and girls and ensure that there is clarity that rape is rape regardless of a relationship between persons. And the Bill also amends safeguarding for vulnerable persons to ensure that if there are persons with mental incapacity or capacity issues of impairment, that these for these reasons, the law must clearly relate to all when considering consent.

It must be truly and freely given. These amendments are also important to protect greater safeguards for those who may be trafficked and for harm to people who could be seeking to exploit their sexual use or cause them to be married. So, Madam Speaker, I'm very grateful for the united support from the House for these amendments and propose that the bill be considered further.

Thank you.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Well, Attorney General, you would have seen a dialogue between the clerk and I. We were just ensuring that we had covered off having you present all of the objects and reasons. You were able to present all of them, I'm just looking to make sure that they were all covered since we am at the 16 to 22. We talked about— we've heard the presentation as it relates to gender neutrality.

Just ensuring that you did cover off all of the objects and reasons.

Attorney General:

Clarifying the law relating to rape, repealing the offence of sexual assault by a husband, removing gender-specific references, adopting gender-neutral language, ensuring that the statutory language applies equally to all persons regardless of gender, and therefore for all related persons throughout this Bill. Madam Speaker, I'm happy to go through each and every amendment if that would assist.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

No, the objects are now complete. We can go through those now at the committee stage. That's fine. Honorable Members, it has been moved and seconded and presented in respect of this amendment. I therefore put the question that the Bill be read a second time. Those in favor say aye. Those opposed say no. The ayes have it. I call upon the clerk to read the Bill a second time.

Joash Proctor:

An Act to amend Part 14 of the Criminal Code to clarify the law relating to rape, repeal the offense of sexual assault by a husband, remove gender-specific references, and adopt gender-neutral language to ensure that the statutory language applies equally to all persons regardless of gender and for related purposes.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Honourable Members, this Bill has been read a second time and is now committed to a Committee of the whole Assembly pursuant to Section 45 of the rules of this House. We are now in committee stage. I invite the Clerk to put the question as it relates to each clause.

Hon.Merrick Richardson:

Madam Speaker, can I just make a request? because yes, there was public consultation on the husband-wife rape aspect of it, but it wasn't really no consultation that I know of on the other, on the other amendments. It might be a bit time-consuming, but I always am conscious of the fact that we are not doing it just for us here, but this affects everyone in society if the Honourable Attorney General would do an explanation. And I know most of them, from reading the amendments, are gender-specific but it would—I think it will serve the public good. Might get a little bit tedious, but it might serve the public good for an explanation to be given on each of the amendments, if that's possible, Madam Chair.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Yes, Honourable Attorney General. So before we put the question as it relates to each amendment clause The Honourable Member thought that it would do us some good if we could just assist the public with clarification or explanation. Just expound a bit on what the various amendments relate to, I guess, just to enlarge a bit of the objects and reasons just for public understanding. And then we can put the clauses. I wonder if we want to stand down for a few minutes though before we do this and then go through the exercise? Do you wish for a quick break? I am mindful that it is 1:11. Honorable AG, would you wish for a quick break, or do you want to plow through?

Attorney General:

I'm in your hands, Madam Speaker and the rest of the Honorable Members. I'm happy to plow through if others are.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

You have questions too? Okay, sure. So let us proceed.

Attorney General:

So, Madam Speaker— Madam Chair, forgive me. The first interpretation simply refers to the principal codes. That obviously comes back to the Act for which these amendments relate. The second amendment is in relation to Section 142, which is a linguistic amending to substitute they for gender neutrality, equally applying to men as well as women. And the basis of that, recognising that women as well as men may commit offenses, and therefore it opens the applicability to gender-neutral terms.

Amendment to Section 147 is a replacement of the codes of Section 147(3), and it is to replace it with a new subsection 3 to confirm that where marriage is invalid under the Marriage Act— and these are scenarios where a marriage may have taken place but it would be invalid by reason of statutory provisions not applying— in these circumstances, it's because an individual was underage or is underage. It provides clarity that in those circumstances there of course may be good reason where a person should understand or believe that their spouse was of over that age, and therefore it is clarifying and ensuring that this is not simply a strict liability offence, but where a person does have reasonable cause for belief that that is the case, that a defence in those circumstances or reasonable circumstances can be considered factually.

Hon.Merrick Richardson:

Madam Chair, just a quick question on that. You would have to provide ID if you're applying for a marriage license, am I correct? Trying to understand the last part of the clause, if they have reasonable cause for the belief. I'm assuming you have to produce Valid ID?

Attorney General:

This is not in applying for licenses. It's a scenario where a marriage could be scrutinised for reason of being invalid under the Marriage Act. These terms specifically apply to a person being under the age of 16, so where you would have evidence that a person has been married And that they are under the age of 16, which is the minimum age for permitting a lawful

marriage, so therefore the marriage would be unlawful because they're not of 16 years and over and the circumstances of, or that minor's incapacity, so for example where a person has, or maybe in a marriage but did not have the capacity to consent to that marriage.

An individual who was a party to that marriage and had reasonable belief that they did consent, or that they were capacitous, or that they were over the age of 16 at the time, is entitled to a reasonable defence for that. So there is not a simple strict liability of where a case is presented, that person is not over the age of 16, and therefore a person is strictly liable and guilty of that offence.

It affords a person an opportunity to provide clarification or a defence in those circumstances. I hope that assists the Honourable Member. Amendment to Section 150.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Honourable Attorney General, I believe the Honourable Member for Road South had a question. Is it in relation to that section, or do you want to wait until the section in general? Just in general or pertaining to a section? Okay, so when it comes to the section, you can indicate and I'll have the Honourable Attorney General answer.

Attorney General:

So the next is the amendment to Section 150, which is the substitution with a person who is knowingly infected with an HIV virus who has sexual intercourse with a minor between the ages of 16 and 18 of years of age, with the consent of that minor, but without disclosing the fact that they are the bearer of an infection, and therefore there is a strict liability offence in circumstances where a person would be exposed to what may be described as—

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

I have a question, Madam Chair, as it relates to that. Is this only related to minors? It shouldn't relate to everyone?

Attorney General:

This particular—

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Other jurisdictions, this legislation, even in the US and the UK, if someone is infected with HIV and knowingly pass that on to someone else, regardless of age, that person is prosecuted. So, is this only for minors, or is it for everyone?

Attorney General:

This particular section, Member, relates to those at the age of 16 to 18, young persons. It relates to the Predication of that risk to that young cohort. I'm aware of the legislation in the UK. I'm aware of the legislation for adults, the World Health Organization data, and the data of grievous bodily harm offences in the UK.

Those conviction rates, Member, are very, very low, and there are counter-prevailing arguments to the risks to society in those circumstances where criminalising such behaviour can actually lead to an impediment with disclosure and risks to public health and the public health intervention schemes for those long-term living with such conditions. So that is my understanding of why there is more limitation insofar as these provisions are concerned.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

So correct me if I'm wrong, because I'm not a lawyer and I don't propose to be one, but what I interpret you saying is that this legislation that makes it a criminal offense for someone who has HIV, knowingly has HIV, and give it to someone outside of the ages of 16 to 18, whether under 16 or over 18, It's not a good idea to extend it beyond that because the conviction rates are low and it has more complications than not.

Is that what you're saying?

Attorney General:

It's a difficult offense to prove what the intervention and what the—

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

the intervention—

Attorney General:

what the intervention, whether the intervention with the complexity of medical interventions and the transmission of harm in a longer, longitudinal scenarios where adults who have been taking barrier medication, and the successful transmission to others.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

Okay, let me—

Attorney General:

It is, if you just let me finish, please. So it is limited to safeguarding younger risks member, in those, in this scenario.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

I don't quite agree with that position, because you could have someone who may not be using— whether or not they're using drugs to prevent onward transmission, it's not 100% fully safe that they will not— they will prevent onward transmission. And if someone a male or female is infected with HIV and decide that they want to catch John, Peter, and Paul, or Simone, Charlene, and knowingly go out there and do so, there should be some legal recourse that can be taken.

And it is just subjected to 16 because people under the age of 16 do engage in these type of activities and people over the age of 18 do engage in these type of activities, it cannot be just narrowed to a 2-year span in terms of 16 to 18. The age of consent isn't 16? The age of consent is 16 in Anguilla. So if the age of consent is 16, why can't it be 16 and above?

Or why can't it just be everybody? Whether or not you can convict someone of this offense. This devious, malicious, and wicked offense is irrelevant. It should be some recourse for someone who engages in that type of activity. Next thing you know, you have Peter who believed that Simone gave him HIV, so he should infect everybody in the world, everybody in Anguilla, and he goes out on that mission.

But because the law does not take into consideration The persons that he is infecting, then he is free to do what he please. I don't quite agree with that. Whether or not the conviction rate, we'll have to deal with the court to decide if the court decide whether or not someone can be convicted. So I'm not sure if amendment can be made.

I know what the government of the day think about it, whether they agree or they disagree. But I think we can agree on, on things. We support a lot of the things that the government proposed. So I don't see we should have any disagreement on something like this, Madam Chair.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Yes, are there any responses from the government side as well in terms of this anomalous—

Attorney General:

Madam Speaker, may I just address one significant point that the Honourable Member has very importantly raised, and that is the perpetration of harm. So whether an individual experiences harm and the conveyance of that harm, the transfer of malice and harm, whether that is through an act, whether that is through a weapon, whether that is through with an intentional act that a third party is harmed, whether that is through a sexual act, or whether that is through using a vehicle and driving at people, or having a gun and shooting at persons.

The law and the common laws exist, Member, to take those steps and to protect individuals and bring criminal offenses in circumstances such as that. So there would not be, in my opinion, lacuna where that situation arose.

Hon.Mr. Haydn Hughes:

I guess we're going to have to end up agreeing to disagree because this is a total different type of situation, Madam Chair, because grievous bodily harm is one thing, but this is a different type of act in terms of a sexual act, let's say the persons are consenting adults, but one of the consenting adults is not aware that this person is infected. We should be able to do something about that, Madam Speaker.

If they know, if they are aware, and we can prove that someone is aware, let us say that it happens to someone and they sue them or whatever it is, you can prove because that person would have been aware only through testing, and they would have gone to a facility to be tested, and the results would have been given to the person who have been tested positive. So if the government is fine with it, they are the majority.

Hon.Shellya Rogers-Webster:

Madam Speaker, given the concerns raised by the Member, I will ask for that Clause 4 of the amendment to be looked at more closely and then you can tell me what provisions are there. For us to be able to do that.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Yeah, I actually was consulting the rules because based on where I see the Member going, I think it might be suggested if both sides agree that you suspend the committee phase at this stage. If it's something so you don't have to give up at all. If there's something you think fundamental that would bridge the gap, you suspend it and come back maybe with a proposed amendment if you're not able to do it on your feet. Because I never believe in rushing legislation. We end up stuck with bad legislation when we do that. If you need time, we're coming back hopefully next Tuesday if it gives the Honourable Attorney General some time.

What I can also suggest is that we should complete the exercise so that if there's anything else, let's deal with it in one go as well and propose suspending committee phase. So let's continue the exercise. Raise if there's anything else. This is just my suggestion. Of course, someone has to move the motion to go with my suggestion, but I think that might be a wise thing to do. Honourable Premier.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. If I may weigh in on this conversation, it appears to me that the issue is not with the existing amendment, but rather that the provision should be expanded to cater for more issues and concerns that may impact us, well, that do impact us here in society. And I take on board what the Member for Road South is saying is that whether or not enforcement or proof, etc., is able to be obtained is one thing, but at least we ought to have the provision on the books, but I think that this conversation is a wider conversation that we won't be able to come back with in 2 weeks or so, because with any amendment of— especially of that nature— it ought to properly go to consultation.

We have to go back to Executive Council before it can come back to the House. So I am proposing that we do move ahead unless there are other issues in this amendment that we do go ahead and approve. We can always come back and make a further amendment to that particular provision later on because of course laws are living documents, etc. But I would hate to— for us not to be able to put into effect the existing draft and the repercussions of that if we delay this much further than we need to.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

The Honourable Member for Sandy Hill has weighed in, and I think it may be premature to take that position when we haven't gone through everything because there may be other matters. Honourable Premier, I'm thinking it out loud, but I'll hear from the opposition.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Sorry, Madam Chair, there is also a proposal to pull that clause and come back later on. Of course, it will result in a further amendment but let me have a few seconds to consult with the Attorney General.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Let's stand down for a few minutes because I— what I was suggesting before you spoke, Honourable Premier, is that if we continue the exercise and if there were other sections that were troubling, unless Members are on their feet ready to make the proposed amendment It really would do us no good to actually pass it and then come back following. So let's stand down for a few minutes, stand the Committee down, and then let's come to a position.

I'd encourage the Opposition to have a word as well while we are standing down to see if there's anything else that you have identified. We'll stand down for 10 minutes.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

1:40, but I will allow for a very short period for orders of the day. Hearing no orders of the day, I will invite the—

Joash Proctor:

Sorry, just send you a message.

TRIBUTES TO EUDINE ROMNEY AND COLVILLE PETTY

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Recognise the Honourable Member for Sandy Hill.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, since the last sitting of this Honourable House, we have had 2 members of our community who have passed away. Persons who have received the Anguilla Badge of Honor Mrs. Eudine Romney and Mr. Colville Petty. And if I could ask if we could have a moment of silence for these 2 individuals. Thank you.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Thank you Honourable Member. We will observe a moment of silence for the passing of 2 stalwarts of our community that were recipients of the Badge of Honor, Mrs. Eudine Romney and Mr. Colville Petty. Thank you, Honourable Members and as we reflect on their work, may it be an inspiration to all of us to continue to do our good work for our country as well. I will invite any other Members to make their contributions.

If there are no other contributions, I just want to thank the Administration Committee publicly. We dedicated an entire Saturday last weekend for our annual retreat. Our annual retreat is a working retreat. We spent several hours into the wee hours of the evening, and we focused on several of our reform projects as it relates to the management and operation of the House.

So I'd like to thank those members publicly. I'd like to thank the staff Because they were here bright and early. We had good laughs, but we had very good outcomes for the work, for the actual management of the House, separate from their duty as Members on this floor. We will implore you to continue to follow our website so that you'll see the developments as we unveil those.

I don't believe there are any other announcements at this stage. I invite the Honourable Member for Sandy Hill to move a motion for the adjournment.

ADJOURNMENT

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I move that this Honourable House be adjourned to Tuesday, 29th September 2026 at 9 AM. Thank you. 10 AM.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

Thank you. Is there a seconder?

Hon.Jose Vanterpool:

Madam Speaker, I rise to second.

Hon.Premier Cora Richardson Hodge:

Thank you.

Hon.Tara Carter (Speaker of the House):

It has been moved and seconded that this Honourable House stands adjourned until Tuesday, 29th September at 10 AM. Those in favour say aye. Those opposed say no. The ayes have it.