

Julian Robinson MP – South East St. Andrew

Presentation in the State of the Constituency Debate

October 25, 2023

Madam Speaker,

I stand before this Honourable House in gratitude, first and foremost to the Almighty for continuing to bless me with health and strength to carry out my duties to my constituents and to my country. For the third time, I have been elected by the people of South East St. Andrew to continue to represent their interests, the weight of that responsibility is one that I bear with pride. I am grateful to my constituents for the confidence reposed in me, and I today recommit to represent them and their interests with integrity, dignity and accountability.

I wish to thank my family for their continued love and support, my constituency leadership team, who are represented here today and the wider family of members of the Party and the society generally.

When I was first elected to this House on December 29, 2011, I made a commitment to serve my constituents on the principles of accountability, transparency and participatory democracy. Every year since first being elected, I have done an annual constituency report, even though there is no requirement to do so. My reports detail the expenditures and associated impact of projects from the Constituency Development Fund as well as other projects and programmes implemented.

I have also consistently hosted annual Constituency Development Fund consultations to explain how the CDF process works and to get feedback from my constituents on their specific needs, wants and issues. Madam Speaker, I am proud to say that in terms of accountability, transparency, and participatory democracy, I haven't just talked the talk on this issue, I have walked the walk and will continue to do so.

It is not my intention this afternoon to go through all the work I have done in and for my constituency, as these are detailed in my annual reports. Every annual report since 2011 is available on my website julianjayrobinson.com.

On becoming an MP, I reflected on how best I could serve my constituents, given the multiplicity of needs and the limited resources available through the CDF. Given that it is impossible for an MP to undertake any large-scale infrastructure project without direct central Government support, I decided to use the majority of the resources available to me in the areas of education and training.

I have partnered with the HEART Trust NTA under a European Union funded, Youth at Risk Training Program to deliver training and certification to constituents at Excelsior Community College and the International University of the Caribbean. The eight-week program consist of two weeks of core skills, which includes conflict management, self-development, family life management and career development and then six weeks in a technical skill area. Participants are assessed and then certified at the end of the period. The program is available to persons aged 17 to 29 years old, is free of cost to the participants and provides a daily stipend of \$500 to assist with transportation and lunch.

Institution: Excelsior Community College

Skills Offerings

Cohort One July- September 2023

- Cosmetology- Hair braider and weaver - Job Cert Level 2
- Electrical- Conduit, trucking and cable trays installer - Level 2
- Construction- Mason - Level 2
- Construction- Tiler - Level 2

Skills	Enrollment	Certification
Hair braider and weaver	60	Pending assessment
Conduit, trucking and cable trays installer	36	30
Mason	31	Pending results
Tiler	30	Pending results
Total	157	30

Cohort Two October- December 2023

- Cosmetology- Hair braider and weaver - Job Cert Level 2
- Electrical- Conduit, trucking and cable trays installer - Level 2
- Auto Mechanics- Braking system technician - Level 3

Skills	Enrollment	Training start date
Hair braider and weaver	20	October 30
Conduit, trucking and cable trays installer	40	October 30
Braking system technician	40	October 30
Total	100	

Total number of trainees engaged is 257 at EXED.

Institution: International University of the Caribbean

Skills Offerings

Cohort One October- December 2023

- Customer Service- Admin Assistance Level 2
- House Keeping- Guestroom Attendant Level 2

Skills	Enrollment	Training start date
Customer Service –Admin assistance	41	October 30
Guestroom Attendant	46	October 30
Total	87	

Progress with the Nannyville Field Development

Madam Speaker, I am pleased that we have made progress on installing a turf field at the Nannyville football field.

This is the first phase in the transformation of a dirt field into the premier multipurpose sports and entertainment complex in the eastern section of the Corporate Area. We have already secured commitments from private players to construct commercial shops around the complex

A contract has been signed between TPDCO and the designated contractor. A kick off meeting is scheduled for November 6, 2023.



Madam Speaker, I want to turn my attention to a number of issues affecting my constituents and others in the Corporate Area.

Ensuring infrastructure keeps apace with development

Traffic congestion

It currently takes over an hour to travel from one section of my constituency, Matilda's Corner, down Hope Road to Half Way Tree each evening. That is a journey that would take 10 mins on a clear day. This congestion is having a negative impact on productivity and quality of life as residents spend hours on the road commuting to and from school and work.

This congestion is directly related to Government policy on public transportation. The deinvestment in JUTC has resulted in the state-owned entity operating at 40% of its capacity. At the same time, the Government has doubled the number of licenses issued to private passenger vehicles. What this means is that persons must wait hours at a bus stop for a JUTC bus and invariably will be forced to take a taxi to ensure they reach school or work on time. This is done at an increased cost to the commuter, who pays more for the taxi than the bus. It also means increased competition among taxis to get commuters, which leads to the indiscipline on the roads.

Time come for the Government to properly invest in JUTC and put professional management in place to ensure more buses are on the road.

Time come for us to engage in out of the box thinking to solve the public transportation problems.

I am recommending that the Government commissions a study to determine the feasibility of installing light rail in the Kingston Metropolitan Region as a way of reducing traffic congestion and improving public transportation.

Madam Speaker, I want to give an example of the impact development is having on our traffic infrastructure. When a ¼ acre single family home is converted to a 10 storey, 50-unit apartment building, we have moved from 2 cars to approximately 75 cars (1 ½ cars per unit) coming from the same location. Who is thinking about these issues and what plans are in place to manage it?

Water Infrastructure

I want to use the same example of the single-family home being converted to a 50-unit apartment building. We are moving from a single household of 5 persons using water to approximately 100 persons in multiple dwellings.

How will our water provision keep apace with this growth and development. As I speak now, there are sections of my constituency still under daily water restrictions, where water is locked off at 2pm, inspite of the recent increase in rainfall.

Time come now for NWC to lift some of these restrictions and ease the burden being faced by residents. As at yesterday's date, based on NWC's data, the Mona Reservoir is operating at 90% capacity and the Hermitage Dam is at 100%.

If we are struggling now to meet the current needs, how will we meet the increased usage when all these developments are completed. While I acknowledge that some new capacity is being brought on stream, it is nowhere near enough to address the burgeoning problem.

Garbage Pile Up

Madam Speaker, it is simply unacceptable and inexcusable that residents in my constituency have to wait 3 -4 weeks for their garbage to be collected. This should not exist in any civilized society. What is worse is that this is taking place after the recent acquisition of 50 new garbage trucks.

The inability of the NSWMA to collect garbage in a timely manner is forcing residents to dispose of their garbage in ways that are harmful to the environment. They either dump the garbage in gullies, which ultimately ends up in the Kingston Harbour or they burn it.

Time come for us to get garbage collection right.

There is a very specific garbage disposal issue in my constituency that needs addressing. Along Old Hope Road, from Chambers Lane down to Swallowfield, residents bring their garbage from the lanes onto the main road for it be collected by the NSWMA truck. The problem is that the garbage is often not containerized and left on the side of the road. Once a garbage heap emerges, everyone dumps there and that includes construction waste material and bulky items like old fridges and stoves. As soon as the garbage is picked up, more is dumped there.

I am proposing that the NSWMA utilize its smaller trucks and go into the communities directly and collect the garbage from the homes.

Composting

Madam Speaker, much of what we dispose of in the garbage can be composted. This could reduce household waste by anywhere between a third (1/3) to a half (1/2) of what the trucks have to collect.

Given that this works and is environmentally friendly, why is there is no aggressive public education campaign around composting.

Time come for a program, where the Government partners with industrial companies, who use drums for storage, to donate them and go into communities and demonstrate how composting can be done.

While we are talking about the solution, we are not doing enough to influence behaviour change nor are we empowering persons who may want to take that first step.

Make it easier for pensioners to drop off life certificates

The Accountant General Department recently relocated its offices from the Ministry of Finance at Heroes Circle to 21 Dominica Drive in New Kingston.

Finding somewhere to park in New Kingston is always difficult and will become more challenging as thousands of pensioners are required to drop off their life certificates.

I am recommending that a drive through drop off system being implemented to facilitate pensioners being able to drop off their life certificates without having to leave their cars.

It takes too long to get things done

To much fanfare, desk banging and heightened expectations, the Government announced that the sum of \$40M would be allocated to each constituency to undertake road repairs. MPs were asked to identify roads to be repaired under this program.

Once an announcement is made, our constituents start to make requests for their roads to be repaired.

Madam Speaker, I have done all that is required of me as an MP.

Immediately after the announcement, I identified the roads for repair and communicated to NWA. Estimates were done and signed off, shortly thereafter.

A list of contractors was submitted for the bid documents to be sent to them. For reasons beyond my control, the procurement process to begin the road repairs has not been completed.

I know I am not alone. Members on both sides are complaining of the same problem.

Time come for us to get our roads fixed.

Similarly, a couple weeks ago, the Prime Minister announced an emergency allocation of \$2M to address bulky waste clean up in response to the dengue outbreak. We were promised letters outlining how the funds should be used. To date, we have received nothing. Dengue not waiting on us to clean up.

Time come, Prime Minister, for us to begin this cleanup process.

Conclusion

Madam Speaker, as I close, I end where I started, with gratitude. While there is much left to be done, I am grateful for the opportunity to share some of the things we have done, and to highlight the issues affecting my constituents. I thank all present today for your attention, and with humility, I invite all Jamaicans to visit my website julianjayrobinson.com to see first-hand our commitment to the Accountability, Transparency and Participatory Democracy which defines my representation in South East St Andrew.

I thank you