



Concern Citizens Movement

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Mr. Gerald Burton
Chairman
Electoral Commission of Dominica
Roseau
Commonwealth of Dominica.

Dear Mr. Burton,

We have the honour to write you in respect of our review of the work of the Commission from 2008. As you are well aware, the Commission under your stewardship, has yielded very few positive outcomes directed at comprehensive electoral reform that would ensure that our electoral machinery can foster future general elections that are free and fair.

In 2009, the Organization of American States (OAS) Electoral Observer Missions made clear and unambiguous recommendations which they determined were critically needed to ensure that general elections were elections of integrity. In 2014 the Electoral Observer Missions of both the OAS, and the Commonwealth Secretariat Electoral Observer Mission again made recommendations to reform the comatose electoral machinery. Ten years has passed, the Commission has taken no reforms as recommended by international organizations, and is mired in partisan divisions which militate against consensus decision-making and makes it difficult for the Commission to get anything done.

One of the key steps in cleansing the bloated voter's registry is the Verification Process which the Commission said publicly would have been commenced on July 01st, 2018. The general public is still waiting for actions to be taken in this venture, and to date, no explanation, not even an apology has been issued by the commission in this regard, which is a level of insolence to the people of Dominica.

The recent draft amendment to the Registration of Electors Act, recommended to Government by the Electoral Commission, is indeed a sad commentary on what the Electoral Commission accords highest priority for electoral reform;

this focus on ending the residency requirement, and putting in its place a provision for re-confirming names of electors who are in the diaspora has sinister designs. It is abundantly clear from this draft amendment that the majority members of the Commission are not acting independently, and in the best interests of Dominica as mandated by the Constitution. There is clear bias on the part of the majority members as they openly promote the political agenda of the Dominica Labour Party and its strategy for the next general elections.

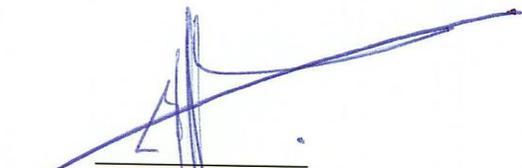
All of this bad governance of Dominica's electoral machinery has been the hallmark of your stewardship as Chairman of the Electoral Commission. We believe that for the Electoral Commission to best serve the interests of the Dominican people a number of policy actions will need to be undertaken if there is to be effective electoral governance. Well before the general elections constitutionally due between December 2019 and May 2020, and there is adequate time for a reform process to be put in place before the election and further, the following recommendations yet to be enacted, must be enacted:

1. Implementation of a Voter Identification system.
2. A comprehensive update of the Electors List. Only re-registration of all eligible electors currently living on Dominica is the most conducive element to free and fair elections.
3. Eligibility for voting must continue to be based on residency, as stipulated by the current legislation.
4. Enactment of campaign finance regulations.
5. A review of the legislation governing the validity of votes. There must be greater accountability in the counting of the votes. The intent of electors must never be second-guessed by returning officers.
6. Enactment by Parliament of just and fair legislation, recommended by the Electoral Commission, for overhauling Dominica's electoral machinery

Further, and critically important, is our loud and unwavering call, on behalf of the people of Dominica, for your resignation as Chairman of the Electoral Commission with immediate effect. For clarity, you have lost the confidence and respect of the people of Dominica for your gross failure and lack of commitment to lead the indispensable process for comprehensive electoral reform. In tandem with our call for you to resign in the public interest, for not satisfying our democracy obligations under the Inter-American Democracy Charter, we are writing to H.E. Mr. Charles A. Savarin, President of Dominica advising of his prompt action to end your tenure as Chairman of the Electoral Commission.

We wish you well in your future endeavours, and we hopeful that with your impending departure a new era will be ushered at the Commission whereby comprehensive electoral reform will be the highest objective to be pursued without fear or favour.

Sincerely yours,



Loftus Durand
President

Cc: H.E. Mr. Charles A. Savarin, President of the Commonwealth of
Dominica

Hon. Roosevelt Skerrit, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of
Dominica

Hon. Lennox Linton, Leader of the Parliamentary Opposition

Mr. Kent Vital, Political Leader, Dominica Freedom Party

The Media: National, Regional and International