



PARLIAMENT

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

FIRST SESSION OF THE TWELFTH PARLIAMENT (2020/2021)

FIRST INTERIM REPORT OF
THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE
APPOINTED TO CONSIDER AND REPORT ON THE CONSTITUTION
(AMENDMENT) (TOBAGO SELF-GOVERNMENT) BILL, 2020

PARL:

HOR PAPER NO:

SENATE PAPER NO:

MANDATE

Pursuant to resolutions of the House of Representatives on Monday November 09, 2020, and of the Senate on Tuesday November 17, 2020, a Joint Select Committee was established:

“to consider and report on a Bill entitled “The Constitution (Amendment) (Tobago Self Government) Bill, 2020 and to report by December 31, 2020”.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

2. The following persons were appointed to serve on the Committee:
- **Mrs. Camille Robinson-Regis MP**
 - **Mr. Foster Cummings, MP**
 - **Mr. Faris Al-Rawi, MP**
 - **Ms. Shamfa Cudjoe, MP**
 - **Mr. Rudranath Indarsingh MP**
 - **Mr. Dinesh Rambally, MP**
 - **Mr. Nigel De Freitas**
 - **Mr. Clarence Rambharat**
 - **Dr. Maria Dillon-Remy**
 - **Mrs. Renuka Sagramsingh-Sooklal**
 - **Dr. Varma Deyalsingh**
 - **Ms. Jearlean John**

CHAIRMANSHIP

3. At its First Meeting held on Wednesday November 18, 2020, the Committee elected Mrs. Camille Robinson-Regis, MP to be its Chair, in accordance with House of Representatives Standing Order 97(3) and Senate Standing Order 87(3).

SECRETARIAT AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

4. The following persons were assigned to provide Secretariat support to the Committee:
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| ▪ Mrs. Jacqui Sampson-Meiguel, Clerk of the House | Secretary |
| ▪ Ms. Keiba Jacob, Procedural Clerk | Assistant Secretary |
| ▪ Mrs. Angelique Massiah | Parliamentary Legal Officer |
| ▪ Mr. Justin Jarrette | Graduate Research Assistant |
| ▪ Ms. Ria Rampersad | Graduate Research Assistant |

MEETINGS

5. Since the Committee's appointment, five (5) meetings were held on the following dates:
- **Wednesday November 18, 2020;**
 - **Friday November 20, 2020;**
 - **Tuesday November 24, 2020;**
 - **Friday December 04, 2020; and**
 - **Friday December 11, 2020.**

WORK TO DATE

6. At its Second Meeting held on Friday November 10, 2020, the Committee considered an overview of the work done by the previous Committee during the Eleventh (11th) Parliament and agreed that this work would constitute resource material for its deliberations in the Twelfth (12th) Parliament.

7. The following points were noted with respect to the previous Committee's deliberations:
- The Constitution (Amendment) (Tobago Self-Government) Bill, 2020 seeks to give Tobago autonomy status whilst maintaining the unitary State of Trinidad and Tobago;
 - The previous Committee held 20 meetings, received submissions from stakeholders both in Trinidad and Tobago and synthesised the five (5) key policy areas of the Bill. These were identified as:
 - i. the Division of Powers between the Tobago Island Government and Central Government;
 - ii. the Financial Provisions;
 - iii. the Tobago Legislature;
 - iv. Dispute Resolution; and
 - v. A Tobago Civil Service and Tobago Service Commission.

8. At its Third Meeting held on Tuesday November 24, 2020, the Committee commenced its clause by clause examination of the Bill with initial focus on the Division of Powers as well as the proposed responsibilities to be devolved to the Tobago Island Government.

9. At its Fourth Meeting held on Friday December 4, 2020, the Committee continued its consideration of the Division of Powers.

10. At its Fifth Meeting held on December 11, 2020, the Committee commenced its examinations of the clauses regarding the financial provisions of the Bill and, in this regard, was assisted by officials of the Ministry of Finance who were in attendance.

11. The Committee agreed to continue its clause by clause examination of the Bill. The Committee further agreed to seek the input of interested stakeholders, particularly in Tobago, once Members have an appreciation of the provisions contained in the Bill. A decision on when the Committee will invite stakeholder engagement is to be taken at a subsequent meeting.

REPORT

13. The Committee wishes to report that, as its extensive discussions were still ongoing, it was not able to conclude its clause by clause examination of the Bill. Additional time is required by the Committee to continue and complete its in depth review the Bill and to compile proposed amendments. As such, the Committee is unable to submit its final report by the deadline of December 31, 2020.

RECOMMENDATION

14. The Committee therefore recommends that it be allotted a further period of four (4) months to complete its work and to submit a final report to Parliament by May 31, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,

Camille Robinson-Regis, MP
Chairman

January 21, 2021