

Your Half-Term

Report



I. Chester Cooper, MP

Exuma, Exuma Cays & Ragged Island

#team
COOPER

“I came here
to empower the
Bahamian
People”

Scholarship
and Education

Sustainable Economic
Development

Youth
Development

Jobs and
Job Readiness

Community
Development

Hospital, Healthcare
and Wellness

Land Reform

Entrepreneurship
and Empowerment

Infrastructural
Update

Safety and
Protection

Message from Chester Cooper, MP

Dear Residents:

It has been an honour and a privilege to serve you, inside and outside the halls of Parliament, as your Member of Parliament, over the past two and a half years.

It has not been easy, to say the least, considering the unnecessary burden placed on the backs of Bahamians, but know that I am committed to doing all that I can to make The Exumas and Ragged Island the model of excellence for The Bahamas.

Ragged Islanders, we have faced many challenges, since the devastation caused by Hurricane Irma and the ineffective response by the current administration. Still, we pulled together and found a solution, albeit temporary, to ensure basic survival of our fishing industry. The journey continues, and I am with you every step of the way.

To all residents, these islands are ours and you must be able to receive the benefits of what God has blessed us with. We will continue to soldier on with new projects that align with the '10-Point Plan' of eVision 2030 for sustained economic growth and development. We will continue to collaborate with central and local government, the business community, and charitable organisations to bring about the change that is necessary, as we work toward eVision 2030.



We are Family



The Exumas

Ragged
Island

I am so excited by the work done through the Exuma Pride Project; the plans for the Exuma Youth Empowerment Center and the Forbes Hill Cultural Center and the enormous strides made to support a long list of important initiatives for the island that aligns with our master plan for sustained economic development.

Our office doors are always open to you. Over the last two and a half years, we have held numerous town hall meetings, group forums, island empowerment visits, kids and community events, youth and education programs, and supported many community development initiatives. Rest assured that as your Member of Parliament, I will continue to advocate, to engage, to collaborate, and to represent the people of The Exumas and Ragged Island to ensure that we reach our full potential.

I am grateful for the opportunity to represent you.

Respectfully yours,

Chester Cooper

● Leadership

● Empowerment

● Integrity

Working toward eVision 2030



1. Jobs and Job Readiness
2. Entrepreneurship and Empowerment
3. Youth Development
4. Hospital, Healthcare and Wellness
5. Infrastructural Update
6. Safety and Protection
7. Scholarship and Education
8. Community Development
9. Land Reform
10. Sustainable Economic Development



Advocacy - In Parliament

As your Member of Parliament, I have been advocating on behalf of The Exumas and Ragged Island inside and outside the halls of Parliament, raising issues of concern of the residents. From the Black Point School repairs to the unfair treatment of local tour operators to the need for a new hospital, this native-son refuses to sit idly and allow our communities and our people to suffer.

The needs of constituents will continue to be vigorously addressed, no matter which administration is in power, as we work toward a better, safer, more prosperous Exumas and Ragged Island. These steps are clear:

Your Voice “Fighting for you”

1. We must work together!
2. Dock Repairs: Needed Now!
3. Black Point School Repairs
4. Water sports for Bahamians
5. Road Works Demand
6. Proposed New Hospital
7. Improvements for Fish Fry Vendors
8. Decriminalization of Medical Marijuana
9. Need for Land Reform
10. Negative Impact of Commercial Enterprises Bill
11. We need our Hospital
12. Regatta: National Festivals Important
13. Water is a basic necessity
14. Sailing as a National Sport

Advocacy - In the News

BAHAMAS CHRONICLE

THE LATEST BAHAMIAN, CARIBBEAN AND INTERNATIONAL NEWS



MP: RAGGED ISLAND 'DESPERATE' FOR NORMALCY

Cooper to DPM: 'Rally's over, let's work together'

Home / News / Cooper to DPM: 'Rally's over, let's work together'



Cooper: FNM's "brute force" will be its downfall

Government, Local, Politics, The Big Story | December 13, 2018 | Royston Jones Jr.

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'It's Time To Relax The Rules On Cannabis'



Cooper: PM owes Ragged Islanders an apology

Local, The Big Story | May 22, 2019 | Matthew Moxey

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Cooper: Disney Deal Leaves Crumbs For The Small Man



EXUMA & Ragged Island MP Chester Cooper.



Cooper: Ensure watersports industry reserved for Bahamians



Cooper: Lack of airlift holding Exumas back



THE NASSAU Guardian

Home News

Cooper on Ragged Island: I'll believe it when I see it



Cooper: Govt GDP boasts are drivel



Cooper: Govt has admitted failure



Cooper: No need for \$130 million in loans

Cooper slams govt. failure to repair Black Point All-Age School

Education, Government, Local, Politics, The Big Story | January 28, 2019 | Tamara McKenzie

THE NASSAU Guardian

Editorials

Chester's caustic critique of the budget



Advocacy

Rebuilding Ragged Island



As we all know, our beloved Ragged Island and its people, suffered tremendous loss and devastation from Hurricane Irma in September 2017. This current government administration's response to getting Ragged Island where it needs to be has been an absolute failure, and progress has remained at an unacceptably snail-slow pace.

Ragged Island deserves better! Infrastructure and communities need to not only be restored, but should be developed to create an economic engine that presents opportunities for the people of Ragged Island. I have consistently advocated on your behalf, and will continue to do so, as we work to bring about sustained economic development for Ragged Island. We have donated supplies to repair the Anglican Church which was used as a hurricane shelter as well as the Mission house. In addition, we have donated two freezer trailers to support the expansion of the fishing industry.

 Community Development



Outreach

Project - Town Meeting

Numerous town meetings were held throughout the island to keep residents abreast of ongoing developments for our 10-Point Plan toward eVision 2030. Special meetings were also held to discuss national issues, such as WTO, the decriminalization of marijuana, and responsible gaming.



Project - Focus Group

At times, issues will arise that require focus group intervention. Team Cooper has held many of these meetings including, but not limited to, the fair treatment of local tour operators, condition of facilities for fish fry vendors, and matters related to youth development.



Project - Collaboration

In order to obtain the results desired, working together is key. We continuously engage central and local government, through meetings, correspondence and in the House of Assembly. Once it is in the best interest of The Exumas and Ragged Island, we will continue to support these initiatives.





Outreach

Project- Island Visits and Empowerment Tours

These tours are designed to reach the people of Exuma and Ragged Island where they are to provide community updates, receive questions and give answers, discuss concerns, and obtain input for the development of the master plan for our communities. The tours come in the form of a town hall, a focus group, or walkabouts. To date the settlements of Rolleville, Forbes Hill, Black Point, Staniel Cay and Ragged Island have participated, with additional visits and walkabouts planned.



Community
Development



Entrepreneurship
and Empowerment

Projects

Project- Exuma Pride

The Exuma Pride Project (EPP) is designed to have a visible impact on the island in terms of cleanliness and pride; to make Exuma Island and Cays the model of excellence for The Bahamas; and to deliver a comprehensive, sustainable programme that greatly impacts the growth and development of Exuma Island and Cays. The plan was launched late 2018 and has received significant publicity and momentum. The poster essay competition at the schools was also a hit. To kick start the initiative, I donated my entire MP salary of \$28,000 towards the EPP. We thank Mr. Reg Smith and the countless number of volunteers that have joined the movement.



Community
Development

Project -

Louise Cooper Scholarship Fund



The Louise Cooper Memorial Scholarship Fund assists deserving students from low income families to receive tertiary education. The Fund was inspired by my personal upbringing and named in honor of my dear mother. Over the past four (4) years, the Fund has assisted nine (9) Exumians with a total of \$100,000 to attend The University of The Bahamas, Bahamas Technical Vocational Institute, and universities abroad.



Project -

Bahamas Entrepreneur Fund



Exuma is receiving significant growth mainly through foreign direct investments. In order to encourage harmonious, socio-economic balance Bahamas Empowerment Fund was formed as a venture capital vehicle to assist small and medium sized businesses. Over the past 24 months, I have personally invested more than \$75,000 for technical support to 25 entrepreneurs for business planning and to fund two (2) home-based businesses. Access to funding is a major impediment to locals seizing the opportunities that spin off from the island's economic growth.

Project -

Entrepreneurial Workshop



In working toward the Entrepreneurship and Empowerment component of the 10-Point Plan of eVision 2030, two Business Plan Training sessions were held in Exuma in 2017 and 2018. Another session is scheduled for the third quarter of 2019. These sessions are designed to ensure that residents are given every opportunity to be able to become the actual owners of businesses, and receive a greater share of the economic pie.

Project -

Fire Fighting Equipment



When we all focus on doing the best for Exuma, big things can happen. Four fire fighting water trailers arrived on Exuma, courtesy of Team Cooper, the Exuma Foundation and local government. The equipment was placed in strategic locations across Exuma for quick responses to fires and blazes. These were commissioned with trained volunteers under the command of Bradwin Hall, and makes for a safer, stronger, more empowered Exuma!

On the
Move

#team
COOPER242

FOCUSED ON OUR YOUTH

Project -

Summer Camp

In partnership with BAF Financial, Mrs. Cecillia Cooper has spearheaded summer camps in Exuma since 2014. The camps are designed to give kids the opportunity to engage in fun, meaningful exchange during the summer-break.



Youth
Development

Project -

Back-to-School

It is my firm belief that education is indeed the key to success, and I make it a priority to engage with young people as they return to school. Team Cooper's Back-to-School give-away and school visits both provide an opportunity for this to happen. Each child is treated with a gift.



Scholarship
and Education

Project -

Easter

Easter is a special time of celebration and a time that kids enjoy Easter treats. Team Cooper's Easter Egg Hunt and basket distribution in the Cays, continue to be a welcomed treat for the young people in the community.



Youth
Development

Project -

Christmas

After supporting Thanksgiving dinners, the year culminates with a Christmas party for the community. This is a time for residents, throughout the islands to come together for a party on the park as they make plans to celebrate the Holiday Season and set goals for the New Year. Each child is treated with a gift.



Community
Development

Project -

Junior Achievement

We launched the Aspire Junior Achievement Program with L.N. Coakley and St. Andrew's School to teach entrepreneurship and leadership at an early age.



Youth
Development



FOCUSED ON OUR YOUTH

Project -

Basketball Programs

We have spent more than \$75,000 on basketball programs, including the refurbishment of basketball courts and equipment in The Forest, Rolleville, Roker's Point and George Town. The Progressive Young Liberals (PYL) has conducted successful basketball tournaments in Ramsey, Exuma. This will continue in other communities.



Project -

Study Night

PYL introduced 'Study Night', a program designed to assist young people in their quest for academic excellence. During the event, tutors and trained teachers are on-hand to assist students.



Project -

Team Cooper Cares

Throughout the community, a group of Team Cooper volunteers also known as 'Team Cooper Cares', have been busy bringing smiles to some faces who have had a hard time recovering from damages suffered, during various storms, with roof and home repairs.



Project-

Playgrounds

Team Cooper is committed to creating an environment where children can play safely. To date, playgrounds have been erected in Rolle Town, Black Point and The Forest with Curtis underway and others to be developed shortly.



Project-

Youth Symposium

Since 2017, the annual Youth Symposium was held in Mt. Thompson, Exuma. It provides an opportunity for youth to enhance life-improving, communication and leadership skills through workshops, motivational sessions and fun activities.



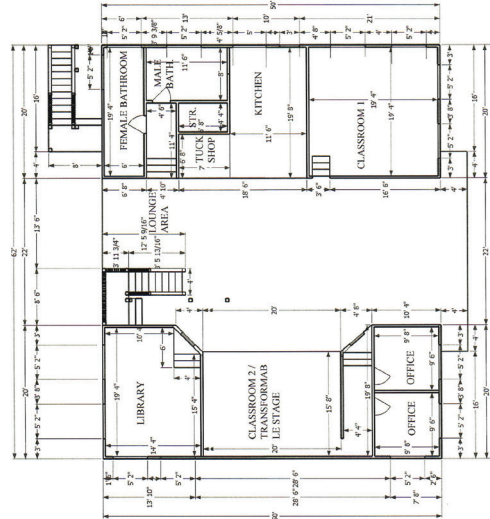
Major Upcoming Projects

Project -

Exuma Youth Empowerment Center:



The first phase will include a 5,000 sq. ft. multipurpose center that will be a retreat for the youth of the island, including a 250 seat auditorium, library, class rooms, indoor-outdoor cafe, kitchen, game room and a green house for agriculture. There will also be a computer room equipped with the latest technology for training in audio-video and music production as well as graphic design. As the island is within the hurricane belt the building will be erected with back-up generator and mini clinic to also serve as a hurricane shelter. I have kick-started the project with a personal donation of \$10,000. Total investment projected to be \$600,000 for Phase I.



Project -

Forbes Hill Cultural Center:



The Cultural Center will be a renovation of the historic Forbes Hill All Age School. Forbes Hill, The Ferry, Harry Cay and the surrounding communities will utilize the multi-purpose venue for a variety of reasons, including:

- Weddings, meetings and other social events.
- Youth empowerment center
- Hurricane Shelter and post-hurricane relief distribution
- The Housing of a small museum to showcase the history of the area
- Craft center and small business booths

I have kick-started the project with a personal donation \$5,000.

Total investment by the Forbes Hill Association is projected to be \$150,000.

UPCOMING PROJECTS



- Crime Stoppers
- Legal Aid
- Mentorship
- Jobs Skills Bank
- Entrepreneurs Lab



UPCOMING EVENTS

- College & Scholarship Fair
- Family Fun Day
- Innovative Entrepreneur Competition
- Creative Arts Competition
- DJ Competition



SUPPORTED PROJECTS



Supported Causes

- | | | | |
|----|--|----|---|
| 1 | BAARK Spay & Neuter | 28 | L.N. Coakley Pop Band |
| 2 | Bahamas Technical & Vocational Institute | 29 | L.N. Coakley High School |
| 3 | Barrattere Association & Regatta | 30 | Louise Cooper Memorial Scholarship Fund |
| 4 | Black Point Regatta | 31 | Moriah Harbor Park Project |
| 5 | Black Point School | 32 | Moss Town School |
| 6 | Bul Reg Regatta | 33 | Mt. Olive Baptist Church |
| 7 | Church of God Exuma District | 34 | Mt. Royal Lodge |
| 8 | Church of God of Prophecy | 35 | Mt. Sanai Union Baptist Church |
| 9 | Crusaders Junkanoo Group | 36 | Mt. Thompson Commonage Association |
| 10 | Exuma Baptist District Council | 37 | Musical Youth Junkanoo Group |
| 11 | Exuma Cancer Society | 38 | National Family Island Regatta |
| 12 | Exuma Chamber of Commerce | 39 | Operation Restore Ragged Island |
| 13 | Exuma Christian Academy | 40 | Palestine Baptist Church |
| 14 | Exuma Farmers' Association | 41 | Ramsey Homecoming |
| 15 | Exuma Fire Brigade | 42 | Rolle Town Association |
| 16 | Exuma Marathon | 43 | Rolleville Association & Regatta |
| 17 | Exuma Marching Band | 44 | Run for Pompey Scholarship |
| 18 | Exuma Pride Project | 45 | St. Andrew's Anglican School |
| 19 | Exuma Sailing Club | 46 | St. Margaret's Baptist Church |
| 20 | Exuma Youth Empowerment Center | 47 | St. Peter's Union Baptist Church |
| 21 | Exuma Youth Marching Band | 48 | St. Theresa's Catholic Church |
| 22 | Farmer's Cay Regatta & Homecoming | 49 | Staniel Cay School |
| 23 | Farmer's Cay School | 50 | Stuart Manor, Curtis, Alexander Association |
| 24 | Farmer's Hill Association | 51 | Team Cooper Cares |
| 25 | Forbes Hill Association | 52 | The Forest Association |
| 26 | George Town Basketball | 53 | Warriors Junkanoo Group |
| 27 | Junior Achievement Program | 54 | Williams Town School |

*Some projects/donations have not been listed



FUTURE SUPPORTED PROJECTS:

- Lake Victoria Restoration
- Elizabeth Harbour Management
- Potable Water SE Exuma
- Forbes Hill Cultural Center
- Exuma Youth Empowerment Center
- Recycling Project

Community Development

THE FUTURE:

Snapshot: A Plan for a Prosperous and Sustainable Exuma and Ragged Island

Jobs and Job Readiness

The goal is to get projects that create employment opportunities on track, identify skills throughout The Exumas and Ragged Island for the Job Skills Bank, and ensure that focused effort is made to train our people for the opportunities that new development will create. Job seekers and providers will meet in this online marketplace, along with skilled self-employed persons such as plumbers, electricians, etc.

Entrepreneurship and Empowerment

Team Cooper is focused on ownership and a greater piece of the economic pie for the islands. We will vigorously promote and support initiatives that strengthen Bahamian ownership, through entrepreneurship and empowerment workshops, including access to consultation on business ownership and business plan development.

Youth Development

We are on track to introduce youth development programs with the ground-breaking for the Exuma Youth Empowerment Center. This, along with the many programs aimed at ensuring the young people of The Exumas and Ragged Island have the resources to thrive, will develop a progressive environment for youth excellence.

Working toward eVision 2030

FOCUSED ON PEOPLE

Hospital, Healthcare and Wellness

Exuma is in desperate need of our new hospital that was opened by the previous government administration. This, along with the opportunity for Medical Tourism and other health and wellness initiatives, will create an environment that is fully prepared for the sustained economic development that we are fighting for. We are encouraging the outsource of the management of the facility to speed up this development.

Infrastructural Update

We must not only fix existing infrastructure, but move to a more environmentally-friendly and cutting-edge methods for development. We will continue to push for completion of the Barrattere Dock, the new airport, roads, and relocation of the shipping port. With sun shining 365 days of the year, we must focus on solar energy. The Exumas and Ragged Island will lead the way. We will encourage and support businesses in this space.

Safety and Protection

The Exumas and Ragged Island are relatively safe, but there is always room for improvement. As we look to the future, we will continuously improve the fire fighting equipment in all communities, as well as launch the 'Crime Stoppers' initiative to ensure the safety of our people and those who visit us.

Scholarship and Education

The Louise Cooper Scholarship Fund will continue to expand as it identifies more needs that align with the development of The Exumas and Ragged Island. Education is always the key to success and the great equalizer, and we will ensure that resources are available for our young people to reach their potential.

Community Development

So many programs and initiatives are a part of the fabric of community development. Team Cooper will continue to reach those in need, develop programs that empower our people to thrive, and through projects like Exuma Pride, build communities that provide inspiration for all Bahamians.

Sustainable Economic Development

With the rapid growth of the island of Exuma and the rebuilding of Ragged Island, a master plan will be created and adopted by the people of Exuma and Ragged Island through engagement and focus groups. The design will forecast the future growth of the island over the next 30 years and receive cross sector support from all stakeholders. The plan will engage appropriate consultants to crystallize and finalize previous work done by the Government and others, including Harvard University.

Land Reform

Land reform is badly needed! In order to achieve what we have set out in eVision 2030, land reform is a critical matter being addressed, and ties into our push for empowerment. Your Member of Parliament will continue to advocate for land reform and access to crown land for Exumians and Ragged Islanders.



www.teamcooper242.com

Schedule an Office Visit:

Louise Cooper Center, George Town, Exuma

Office Hours:

9:00am – 5:00pm Monday – Friday

Set a time for office
or home visit.

Contact Us:

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PLP

PROGRESSIVE LIBERAL PARTY

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**#team
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