

Former Exuma MP joins calls for national debate

LENDING his support to the calls for a national debate between all party leaders, former member of parliament for Exuma, George Smith, encouraged Bahamians to choose their representatives "wisely" as the 2012 general election draws near.

In a statement issued to the press yesterday, Mr Smith claimed any objective individual would acknowledge that the Bahamas is in "deep trouble" given the difficult economic times.

He said Bahamians expect and demand that the major political parties put forward candidates of character and commitment who are capable of offering "ideas for growth."

"These are perilous economic times. Many Bahamians are hurting. Our communities are engulfed in criminal activity; a serious fear is pervasive among citizens for

their personal safety; the overall quality of education is in decline; inadequate health care is offered; a high and growing poverty level lowers the standard of living; illegal migration still afflicts our shores; and, sadly, a tragic lack of confidence and proper investment in Bahamians seems to be the order of the day.

"If we are to come out of this malaise, all thinking and patriotic Bahamians must demand that political parties offer candidates of a high standard – in ability, character and commitment – capable of advancing new ideas for growth.

"They must have a clear vision of a better Bahamas. At the end of the day, these are who the people ought to elect. Any 20 members of a party's candidates list ought to be able to form a credible

government. To offer less is to insult the citizenry," Mr Smith said.

This proposed national debate has already been agreed to by the PLP's leader Perry Christie and the DNA's leader Branville McCartney.

The governing Free National Movement's leader, Hubert Ingraham, while not outright declining, said he does not "talk foolishness" and that he debates every day.

Such a debate would not be the first of its kind – PLP leader Perry Christie, then BDM leader Cassius Stuart, and then FNM leader-elect Tommy Turnquest took part in two debates before the election in 2002.

Mr Smith said the upcoming election must be about issues which impact the lives of the Bahamian people and not about the inflated ego of any party leader or the aggrandisement of any individual or privileged class.

"People must be put first," Mr Smith said. "The general election should be about electing a government dedicated to working for the good of the Bahamian people and the Bahamas."



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Matthew 7:21-23

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

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