



# Consultation meetings to discuss The Bahamas Freedom of Information Bill

The Government of The Bahamas has introduced the Freedom of Information Bill. The Government is encouraging all Bahamians to give their opinions on this important Bill before it moves forward.

Education campaigns are being held in New Providence, and various Family Islands, including: Grand Bahama, Abaco, Exuma and Eleuthera.

## **WHAT IS THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION BILL?**

The Freedom of Information Bill will give Bahamians more access to information held by the Government.

## **WHY DOES IT MATTER?**

Freedom of Information promotes greater accountability, transparency and democracy. It is also an important part of your fundamental right of Freedom of Expression.

## **HOW DOES IT WORK?**

With the Freedom of Information Bill, Bahamians can make requests to the government for any document, record, or information held by the government. Requests must be made in writing. Making an information request is free, with a small fee to cover the costs of reproducing the information.

## **WHO CAN REQUEST GOVERNMENT INFORMATION?**

All Bahamians, Permanent Residents, Companies registered in The Bahamas, Associations governed by the laws of The Bahamas, and any other person with a close connection to The Bahamas (for example, an office, branch, or agency) can make an information request.

## **WHAT CAN I ASK FOR?**

Generally speaking, all information held by the government can be requested, but of course, there are some limits. For example, the police will not be forced to reveal secrets that could damage an investigation and the private information of citizens will not be released.

## **WHAT IF I AM NOT HAPPY WITH THE DECISION MADE?**

If the decision is made to refuse the information or extend the response period, the government will provide all the reasons for doing so. If you are not happy with the decision made, the requester can apply for an internal review within 30 days. An appeal can also be made to the Information Commissioner.

## **WHAT IS THE OFFICE OF THE INFORMATION COMMISSIONER?**

The Information Commissioner holds an Independent Office and is responsible for implementation of the overall administration of Freedom of Information.

## **ARE ALL MY REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION ANSWERED?**

All requests for information must be answered/responded to within 30 days of the request.

We look forward to hearing the views of all Bahamians on this important legislation.

**[ministryofeducationbahamas.com](http://ministryofeducationbahamas.com)**

For more information, e-mail [foibahamas@gmail.com](mailto:foibahamas@gmail.com) or call 502 0496