Commonwealth of The Bahamas
Office of The Leader of
His Majesty's Loyal Opposition

November 25th, 2026

Public Vouchers, Party Distribution: What the PAC Found in Recent Probe

Today, as chairman of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), I tabled a report from the PAC following our investigation into the voucher and small-home repair programs conducted under the Davis Administration.

Put plainly, the report paints a picture of political misuse and abuse of the Treasury to support an election campaign.

The central finding is severe: public money moved into political party-controlled channels without the records and safeguards needed to ensure that assistance was fairly distributed and used only for its lawful purpose.

The Government must hand the evidence to independent investigators, open every supplier's books, recover every dollar used without authority, and never again let a political party hand out state assistance.

Hon. Michael C. Pintard, M.P.
Leader of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition
Chairman, Public Accounts Committee

Bay & Parliament Street
P.O. BoxN-10713 • Nassau, New Providence
Tel: (242) 322.3116 • (242) 322.3120

What we investigated:

The Public Accounts Committee examined how the Government managed building-material vouchers and other assistance intended to help families repair their homes.

The programme was supposed to help legitimate needy families with home repairs through a proper process.

However, the PAC found that the programme was horribly mismanaged, leading up to the general election earlier this year. The Ministry of Finance approved seven awards worth $ 1.56 million. Yet the Ministry failed to set up or keep proper records showing who got the assistance, how much each person received, whether they qualified, and whether the materials were actually used for home repairs—all of which are necessary when spending public taxpayer funds.

What went seriously wrong:

1. *The Government issued the money but lost control of what happened next*

   The Ministry of Finance could show that suppliers were approved and paid. But the Ministry could not produce proper Government records showing who received the vouchers and who benefited.

   Blank vouchers passed from suppliers through a Government consultant and into other channels involving other people and entities. Complete custody records were not maintained. Recipients did not sign for what they received, and the Ministry did not complete a beneficiary-level reconciliation. It was a fundamental breakdown in the control of public money.

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The PAC therefore found systemic mismanagement and maladministration by the Ministry of Finance. It also found that Mr Simon Wilson, Financial Secretary, as the Principal Accounting Officer, failed to ensure proper control from approval of the spending through to the final use of the assistance, as his job requires. It is a serious management failure on his part.

2. *Political Party actors were allowed to control public taxpayer funds*

The program moved out of a public-service system and was instead controlled by political officers and PLP candidates.

Mr. Jerome Fitzgerald, the PLP's National Election Coordinator, received and helped to hand out large quantities of publicly funded vouchers. His office did not maintain records of the vouchers received or of the people who received them.

The funds provided to Pinder Enterprises were divided into allocations given only to PLP candidates and Members of Parliament. One allocation of $25,000 was associated with Keno Wong, a private citizen who was a governing-party candidate but held no Government office.

No mechanism was provided for the general public to apply—no set rules defined who was eligible. PLP candidates gave out the vouchers during an election to whoever they decided to give them to – regardless of whether the people needed the items or not.

Because the Ministry of Finance failed to do the required oversight, there is no way of telling how the monies were spent or how the vouchers were used.

Public assistance from taxpayer funds belongs to the people. It must never be treated as a gift from a political candidate or placed under the control of political actors.

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3. *Programme resources were used for signs and billboards*

   Vendor records identified materials charged against the Government-funded Small Home Repairs account and marked "FOR SIGNS" and "Billboards/Elizabeth." Related messages also referred to flags, signage, and motorcade signage.

   The amount identified is small compared with the full programme, but its meaning is serious. Signs, billboards, flags, and motorcade materials are clearly related to a political campaign. They are not for a public purpose as the law and the Constitution require.

   This kind of use is illegal, and there must be a follow-up investigation into this and into how other monies could have been used in the same way.

4. *The full scale of the problem is still unknown*

   Pinder Enterprises produced detailed records that exposed political allocations to PLP candidates and spending on campaign materials. Other suppliers did not provide records of this level of detail.

   The PAC therefore could not yet determine the full extent of the potential abuse across the $1.56 million programme. It also identified an unusual Customs-bond arrangement involving Our Island Maritime, a company with family ties to the PLP candidate for Marco City.

Now what?

We call on the government to:

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1. Refer the evidence for independent investigation, including an examination of possible public-finance, procurement and electoral offences.

2. Require every supplier to produce its complete records so the entire $1.56 million can be traced transaction by transaction.

3. Support an independent audit to identify every beneficiary, purchase, unused balance, and amount that may be recoverable.

4. Recover public money shown to have been used without authority or for private or partisan purposes.

5. Review the accountability of senior officials responsible for the programme.

6. Ban candidates and party officials from controlling or distributing State-funded assistance.

7. Introduce binding controls requiring numbered or electronically traceable vouchers, verified beneficiaries, signed receipts and final reconciliation.

8. Strengthen election-period safeguards so public assistance cannot be presented as assistance from a political party or candidate.

9. Give Parliament a formal response within three months, followed by an implementation update within six months.

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FIVE KEY QUOTATIONS FROM THE EVIDENCE & REPORT

1. The Financial Secretary: the actual voucher recipients were not assessed

   Question: "Were assessments conducted for the persons that received vouchers in 2026?"
   Simon Wilson, Financial Secretary: "No."

   This may be the single most damaging admission on programme integrity. The Government relied on assessments to justify the spending, yet the Financial Secretary acknowledged that those assessments were not conducted for the people who actually received the vouchers. The final report consequently finds no established documentary link between assessed need and a substantial portion of the eventual recipients. The Financial Secretary is the Principal Accounting Officer for the Ministry of Finance and has legal responsibility for the use of these funds that came from his Ministry.

2. The National Election Coordinator: extensive distribution, but no record of who received the vouchers

   Jerome Fitzgerald: "I can't say what the amount is, but I know I would have distributed quite a bit to several contractors throughout various constituencies throughout the country."
   Question: "But unfortunately, there was no record of who you distributed the vouchers to."
   Jerome Fitzgerald: "No."

   The person who was simultaneously a senior Government adviser and the governing party's National Election Coordinator acknowledged distributing substantial

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quantities of publicly funded vouchers across constituencies while keeping no record of the recipients.

3. Fitzgerald concedes that an audit would have no written evidence supporting his distribution

   Question: "If an audit had taken place in reference to this voucher distribution program, there would be no written evidence to substantiate your distribution."
   Jerome Fitzgerald: "Yes, that's fair enough."

   This goes beyond poor record keeping—The principal political distributor expressly accepts that an auditor examining the documentary record would lack written evidence substantiating his distribution of the vouchers.

4. The Ministry's own Finance and Accounting Officer: Accounts did not reconcile where the vouchers went
   Question: "He [Ministry of Finance Programme Coordinator] then delivers the vouchers to the Prime Minister's office. This is his testimony. How do you reconcile where those vouchers go once they are delivered to an office?"
   Dwayne Michael Ellis, Finance and Accounting Officer: "It's not reconciled by me."

   Earlier in the same evidence, the officer responsible for the Ministry's Accounts Section said that his "first time hearing of the voucher system is when you actually brought it up" and that the voucher system "does not have anything to do with accounts at the Ministry of Finance."

   For a Ministry of Finance programme involving approximately $1.56 million in public resources, those admissions go directly to the Committee's finding of systemic financial-control failure.

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5. The report: the failures did not merely risk diversion. The records show that diversion occurred

"The significance of the evidence is therefore clear: the programme's deficient controls did not merely create a risk that public resources might be diverted from their authorized purpose. The Pinder records demonstrate that such diversion actually occurred. The timing and circumstances surrounding the identified transactions provide strong evidence that at least some of that diversion entered the sphere of political party-related campaign activity."

This is perhaps the report's most powerful quotation. It moves the issue beyond incompetent administration or theoretical risk. It is anchored to primary vendor records for materials marked "FOR SIGNS" and "Billboards/Elizabeth," together with contemporaneous references to flags and motorcade signage. Importantly, it still stops short of declaring criminal liability, which the report leaves for independent investigation.

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