

A portrait of Denise Daley, a Black woman with short, dark, curly hair, wearing a dark blue blazer and a multi-strand gold necklace. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background behind her is a dark, textured surface.

SECTORAL 20
DEBATE 25

CHAMPIONING
CHANGE

**IN GENDER, PERSONS WITH
DISABILITIES, & INCLUSION
AND CULTURE AND
CREATIVE INDUSTRIES**

DENISE DALEY **SHADOW MINISTER**
Gender Affairs, Persons with
Disabilities & Inclusion

SECTORAL PRESENTATION 2025

**“CHAMPIONING CHANGE IN GENDER, PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES & INCLUSION
AND CULTURE AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES”**

DENISE DALEY, MP

EASTERN ST CATHERINE

JUNE 24, 2025

GORDON HOUSE, JAMAICA

Madam Speaker, I rise today with the privilege to represent my constituents of Eastern St. Catherine. I am grateful to them for continuously putting their confidence and trust in me. I pay my respects to my councillors, Keisha Lewis, Enos Lawrence, Donovan Guy, and, of course, Norman Scott, who I will be sad to lose, but I know South East St Elizabeth will be the winner. Eastern St Catherine and this great team are the driving force behind my contribution to the People's National Party's great rescue mission for our beloved country, Jamaica.

Today, I also stand with pride as the Opposition Spokesperson for Gender, Persons with Disabilities, and Inclusion. I am grateful to those who have supported me throughout my political journey, including our Party leader, Mark Jefferson Golding. Your dedication and integrity truly motivate me on this march to progress. The small but vibrant team of Parliamentarians who stand in defence of our people, thank you for your unwavering support.

I am indebted to my family and friends, and I express my gratitude to those who have supported me throughout my political journey. I extend my appreciation to my dedicated support team at the constituency office, including Audrey and Carl, and to my loyal security detail. I am also grateful to the members of my task force for their invaluable contributions.

Madam Speaker, I also wish to thank everyone in this House for their support and friendship, even in the heat of political debates.

Today, I will address the portfolio areas of Gender Affairs, Persons with Disabilities and Culture and Entertainment. These three sets of portfolios are people-centric, not block and steel but flesh and blood; hearts and souls. So while I speak to you as a member of this House, I do so too as a woman, a mother, and a teacher who lives in a small rural town and who represents a mixed urban/rural community, both in the Parish of St. Catherine. Every day, in both areas, I see an erosion of hope and a growing desperation for opportunities. No matter what the numbers are telling us, Madam Speaker, or what you say the numbers are saying, Jamaican people are struggling. Many suffer quietly, burdened also by pride and dignity, but they tend their small farms, and keep their small shops, braid hair, run taxis and clean houses to keep children in school and food on the table. These are the people on whose behalf I am here. Many of them are women, so that is where I will start.

Gender Affairs

On the matter of Gender Affairs, the Women's Health survey tells us that more than one in four women aged 15 to 64 will experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime. We have written press releases, held press conferences and even strengthened legislation for gender-based violence. It is time now to move to people-centred solutions that touch the lives of those who inflict violence and those who suffer from its trauma.

Madam Speaker, even beyond traditional forms of gender based violence (GBV), in today's digital world, women are being followed, tracked and harassed. We

are hearing reports of Smartphone stalking where women's locations are being monitored without their consent. Addressing GBV requires the ability to quickly make a connection with someone who can and will help. There needs to be a means by which victims can quickly reach out for help.

Upon assuming office, we will develop a mobile app for quick reporting of gender-based violence. The app will utilise geolocation technology to determine the location of the incident remotely. Geolocation technology utilises Wi-Fi, cellular networks, cell towers, and IP addresses to determine a person's location. Madam Speaker, the effectiveness of this app will mean efficient monitoring to ensure the privacy of the information provided. The confidentiality of the victims' data must be prioritised.

Effective implementation will require political will, leadership, and people who will ensure the app continues to function properly. This mobile app is not intended to replace existing measures for combating gender-based violence; rather, it aims to supplement and enhance these measures, including reporting cyberstalking. Madam Speaker, we will roll out a national public education campaign to make sure women and men understand their rights and protections. We will also make sure that education, which encourages boys and girls to live in mutual respect and harmony with each other, begins at the basic school level and is carried through to high school. Children have to be taught how to speak up and seek help when needed. This will give our children the tools to protect themselves.

We will use predictive analytics to identify and monitor high-risk areas and hot spots for gender-based violence. This means creating and using data to determine where attacks are most likely to occur, whether due to poor lighting, inadequate policing, or known patterns of criminal activity.

Madam Speaker, we will see to it that gender parity for government boards aims for a 60/40 ratio at minimum within six months when we form the next government.

Madam Speaker, we will carry out tracer studies to see how well the Women's Centre of Jamaica is doing. We will measure the success of graduates, we will help the mothers to progress to tertiary education or facilitate their enrolment in vocational and entrepreneurial training programs through HEART, JBDC and other training agencies.

We will also conduct a comprehensive review of all gender-related laws to make sure that they are being effectively implemented and enforced.

Women in rural areas often have nowhere to go when escaping domestic abuse. As such, our plan includes partnering with churches in those communities to offer temporary shelter until secure relocation is possible.

Madam Speaker, our mothers, our sisters, and our daughters are crying out for help. They don't need more promises. They need solutions. They need leadership. They need a government that will act, and act now.

We stand ready to lead this fight, with technology, with education, with compassion and with political leadership to end the epidemic of gender-based

violence in Jamaica once and for all. Let us not be the Parliament that looked away. Let us be the Parliament that acted.

Persons with Disabilities

Madam Speaker, we must pay special attention to persons with disabilities who face unique challenges and barriers that can impact their ability to fully participate in society. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities acknowledges that individuals with disabilities are entitled to ALL human rights. The rights of individuals with disabilities are the same as human rights.

The Disabilities Act 2014, passed by Parliament in October 2014 and fully implemented in February 2022, states that the Act is to be reviewed in three years, which means that a review should have commenced in February 2025. During a sitting of the House in February this year, I reminded Minister Charles Jr. of this, but I have seen or heard that the review has started. Madam Speaker, this does not look good. We will see to it that the review is done.

Madam Speaker, we have heard time and time again about the need for wheelchair access and workplace assistive devices for the disabled community, and we must ensure that we pay attention to these important concerns.

I also have a serious concern that disabled persons feel that they have to do the same work for less money and are not being recognised and promoted in the same way as people without any form of disability. This has to stop.

The PNP will establish a National Disability Fund from the Consolidated Fund in the first year when we form the next government, and we will amend the 2014 Disabilities Act to give legitimacy to the Fund. We will also appoint a Board to oversee the Fund, which will be specifically designated for supporting the disabled through educational and other initiatives.

Madam Speaker, regarding the Disabilities Rights Tribunal, set up to deal with complaints of discrimination and other breaches of the Disabilities Act, we will make sure that the disabled community is informed on how to use the Tribunal to seek redress in cases where they feel their rights have been violated.

Also, the assessment testing for persons with disabilities is woefully inadequate. The waiting list for testing is so long that some children will transition out of the educational system without ever being tested. When we form the next government, we will partner with the Ministry of Education to boost testing capacity and improve access to testing across the seven regions of the Ministry of Education.

Madam Speaker, there is also the matter of testing for disabilities that are not immediately visible or observable. This includes mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression. And what about developmental disabilities such as autism. Research must be done to identify the most effective approach to addressing the complex needs of individuals with autism.

Madam Speaker, testing for disabled children will help us create individual education plans that cater to their specific needs.

Inclusion

Madam Speaker, an area of personal interest to me is inclusion. It is a theme that crosses many portfolios in our current structure of government, including culture, education, social security, labour, justice, and others. Addressing inclusion is a huge part of our decolonisation journey. It is all about how we oppress and repress each other, which only serves to hold our development back.

While there has been greater tolerance for inclusion, we still encounter biases, stigma and discrimination in many vulnerable communities. Even in this Parliament, the behaviours around race, class, gender, sexuality and ability are well below the pale. This has to stop. The push for a more inclusive society must begin with us.

Inclusion is an area that the next PNP government will address the moment we assume office as a part of our ethical framework for governance. We will ensure that, through public education, we will emphasise the need for greater commitment to inclusion in families, communities, institutions and generally in interpersonal relationships. Upholding the national motto "Out of Many, One People" is our priority.

We will revisit the values and attitudes programme first mooted by former Prime Minister PJ Patterson. We all see what is happening in Jamaica, the land we love. There are too many behavioural problems - cultures of violence, cultures of corruption, a scamming culture that needs to be addressed. There is so much

hostility and anger - a seething and suppressed rage across the island. A values and attitudes program will be adapted to address the existing pathology, even as it seeks to transform negative behaviours. This will be a central element of the PNP's Social Transformation Strategy. Inclusion must be a central theme to be achieved by promoting respect for all individuals.

Madam Speaker, the approach to inclusion will mean collaborating ministries, agencies and NGOs implementing worthwhile national projects that celebrate Jamaica's racial diversity, cultural heritage and cultural identity. This must begin in our schools. The enhancement of Jamaica Day is one fitting example. Collaborations with the relevant Ministries, community members and cultural agents in schools would centre national projects such as a national debate, poster competitions, short films, essays, songwriting or any other appropriate activity to celebrate our cultural diversity and direct skill in content production in positive directions.

We will work with arts educators and other professionals to develop a curriculum for an annual "Art for a purpose" summer school programme aimed at instilling positive values and attitudes in children and young adults. The values and attitudes programme will be implemented through local government, churches and any other entity using public/private partnerships.

This, Madam Speaker, brings us to the holistic development plan that we have developed for the portfolios now known as culture and entertainment. We have a broader vision for these sectors grounded in national development.

Culture and The Creative Industries

Madam Speaker, Culture is the living, breathing core of who we are as Jamaicans. It shapes our identity, it governs our values, and it defines our way of life. It is how we know ourselves and how the world comes to know us.

We channel this rich Jamaican culture through our creative industries. It is our music, fashion, food, language, and stories. Cultural industries transform these into real economic power. The Orange Economy - in name and nature. Here, culture meets commerce, creating jobs, industries, exports, pride, and global visibility. So when we speak of culture and creative industries, we speak not only of soul and spirit, but of serious economic strategy. It is a three-trillion-dollar global industry.

Entertainment is one of the twenty sub-sectors of the creative economy. While the world invests in its entertainers and its culture, we continue to underinvest in ours. No matter how they spin it, for ten lost years, when it comes to the development of this sector, this administration has been asleep at the wheel. It has been a decade of policy neglect with sporadic programmes, promises, pronouncements, and publicity, but no policy. Now, with elections looming, they scramble to reverse-engineer ideas and dress them up as policy, the great pretence that what they bring now is their innovation.

When the JLP took office in 2016, the groundwork was already laid. The Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller established the National Cultural and Creative Industries Commission (NCCIC) in 2013. It was a forum for participatory governance, designed to harness the sector's power. Through the NCCIC, creatives would be asked to make decisions for their own development. It hasn't been convened once since 2015.

The NCCIC completed a policy framework with a development plan. International organisations provided global best practices to follow. There were CARICOM-endorsed strategies and a regional blueprint mooted by the Most Honourable PJ Patterson, and technical assistance from international agencies. Other countries acted. They did not. They sat on the policy for ten years, implementing unsustainable, piecemeal programmes:

- Career expos without clear career paths.
- Unsustainable insurance schemes
- Entertainment zones with no infrastructure, destroying the environment in the process.
- Training academies launched before the curriculum was even written.
- Publicity in overdrive, but policy in reverse.
- Expedience over sustainability.

And what does the Prime Minister offer as justification? That the sector is "too informal", "too risky", "too hard to measure". Madam Speaker, the rest of the world

has measured it. This is not a mystery; it's a missed opportunity. His excuse is the very reason we need a real development plan: to bring structure, support, and sustainability to a sector bursting with talent but underserved by policy.

Where is the plan for our UNESCO Creative City of Music Kingston? And what about the Rastafari community, still seeking formal recognition of their economic claims to marijuana and Reggae? Or the Maroons, still marginalised despite international calls for reconciliation? And don't get me started on the Ward Theatre and Vale Royal. A disgrace seen at heritage sites across the country.

Creative professionals are still forced to seek favours and access from 'enablers', rather than benefit from transparent, equitable systems. That is not policy. That is patronage. An enabler is someone who encourages and facilitates negative or self-destructive behaviour. Why would that description be seen as acceptable?

But Madam Speaker, the PNP sees culture differently. The people, the artist, the creative is central. While they reinvent our wheel, we will put in the political will to turn it. We see the power of culture in the grassroots: the Round Robins, the fish fries, the local dances, sound systems and cultural activity where our people create joy, income, and community. These are celebratory events and economic engines. Nearly 30 billion Jamaican dollars are earned by 30,000 Jamaicans islandwide in community-led entertainment, with little or no help from the government. That is innovation from the ground up.

These earnings put lunch in children's bags, shoes on their feet, and books in their hands. They also foster community cohesion, safety, and pride. So, when we speak of culture and creative industries, we don't separate them. We speak of both social transformation and economic development. Under our leadership, the creative economy will no longer be treated as an afterthought. It will be a national priority, grounded in ethics.

We have crafted a bold, strategic, and sustainable response: the 5G Sustainable Growth Plan. For the first time ever, we have placed Culture, Creative Economy, Sport, and Digital at the centre of a national growth strategy. That's a big deal.

Project G is our development plan for Jamaica's Culture and Creative Economy. It packages and focuses on measures of sustainability, not expedience. In summary, given the time, we will:

- Nurture greatness from the ground up, with values-based education and cultural development programmes; and cultural confidence, with programmes that deepen understanding of our decolonisation journey
- Embed culture in community development, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals
- Invest \$1 billion in business development for creative professionals, and data-driven mechanisms to contribute to economic growth.
- Reform broken governance structures like sector fragmentation, ensuring transparency, inclusion, and accountability

- Going Global: Building infrastructure and investment-ready ecosystems to support export and innovation

Our manifesto will detail the specific projects within each strategic node of Project G.

So Madam Speaker, after ten years of shallow optics and stunted opportunity, we ask the people of Jamaica: Do you want another decade of delay? Or do you want direction? The PNP offers a real plan, a serious plan, a plan grounded in Jamaica's spirit, potential, and pride. For us, culture is not just a backdrop. It is the main event. It is the song in our voices, the movement in our bodies, the rhythm of our history and our future. It is not just for entertainment. It is the expression of our very being. Let us finally give it the respect, the resources, and the strategy it deserves.

Conclusion

Madam Speaker, all the subject areas discussed today have suffered the ills of marginalisation, exclusion and policy neglect in one way or another. Inclusion is not a favour. Our women, our persons with disabilities, our youth, or our cultural and creative visionaries deserve more and better. The next PNP government will put them front and centre.. Jamaica cannot thrive while leaving so many behind. The time is now to build a just, equitable society that empowers all our people. Let us rise with purpose and create a Jamaica that honours every voice, every talent, every life on this march to progress. 'People time come!'