



LAW ASSOCIATION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

MEDIA RELEASE

Members of the Law Association as well as members of the public have expressed their views in different forums about the censorious and unwarranted attack by the Leader of the Opposition on members of the Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago (LATT) who participated in and voted at our recent Special General Meeting (SGM). We remind the Honourable Leader of the Opposition (who is a member of the Inner Bar), that the LATT is established by statute and is charged with certain functions.

Its meetings are private meetings of professionals who make up the membership. At the SGM, which the Honourable Leader of the Opposition said that she attended, members were reminded that the meeting was a private one. The meetings of the LATT have always been private, as is the case with other similar associations. This is neither new nor unusual.

Members were entitled to rely on and did rely on this long-standing protocol in presenting the motion, speaking on it, and participating in the general debate. Members had enquired prior to and at the meeting whether voting was going to be anonymous and by secret ballot, as was the case.

The Council of the LATT was therefore surprised and disappointed that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, an attendee, not only made public how certain members had indicated they were going to vote but singled out certain members for an unseemly public attack, attributing the most dishonourable of motives to them for the position they took.

As with all organisations which adhere to principles of democracy and open debate, it is essential that the membership should feel themselves free to express their views without repercussion. The attempt at the public shaming of our respected members by the Leader of the Opposition, could only have a regrettably chilling effect, especially on younger members, of discouraging freedom of expression in future debates. We take no issue with any principled criticism of the position taken by the majority voting at the meeting. What is beyond the pale is the personal vilification of individual members by the holder of a high constitutional office.

We remind members that the LATT will stand firm in carrying out its duties under the Act which includes, among other things, the protection and representation of the interests of its members. The LATT is not a political party nor are our statutory objectives political ones. As such, we call upon the Leader of the Opposition to do what is appropriate and withdraw her statements.

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22nd July 2022