



# THE CPAC INFORMER

Political Issues Impacting the  
Caribbean American Diaspora

Volume 2 Issue 1 May-June 2015

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear C-PAC Members, Supporters and Friends;

I am privileged and honored to serve as your fourth Chair for the Caribbean-American Political Action Committee (C-PAC), especially at such a critical time at this. C-PAC will celebrate the 10th anniversary of its founding this year. As the country gears up for the 2016 Presidential elections and our region is courted by the myriad candidates who are seeking office, it is critical that we show up to not only voice our concerns but, equally important, offer solutions to programs and policies that we deem pivotal to our community.

C-PAC exists today because of the foresight of three visionary individuals – Chris Gardiner (Bahamas/Turks & Caicos, Elizabeth Stanley (U.S. Virgin Islands) and Denys Vaughn Cooke (Guyana). Today, C-PAC continues to be the unified political voice of the Washington, DC Metropolitan area's vibrant and growing Caribbean-American community. In keeping with our mission, C-PAC will continue to endorse and support candidates for public office in the Metropolitan area who articulate policy positions that will strengthen the economic, educational, social, and cultural conditions of individuals of Caribbean heritage residing in the area. C-PAC will also seek to foster greater relationships between the U.S. Federal, State and Local governments and the nations of the Caribbean.

Your membership is a testament to your support of C-PAC'S mission. The annual general meeting will be held early fall and all are welcome to attend. I especially encourage you to participate if you're interested in getting more involved with C-PAC.

I share a bit of history here with you!! After eight consecutive years as C-PAC's chair, Chris Gardiner voluntarily resigned in 2013 to allow for "*a new leadership of C-PAC*" with new and fresh ideas. With the effort of a search committee, Dr. Ivan Walks, a Founding Patron, who has been very active as Advisory Board member, Founding Patron and Luncheon sponsor was selected as the 2nd Chair of C-PAC. Unfortunately, Dr. Walks was unable to continue due to a significant increase in his professional workload. Former Jamaican Ambassador to the UN and a Founding Patron of C-PAC, the Hon. Curtis Ward was then tapped to lead the organization until the 2014 elections. Thus, for the first time in our

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history we now have a Chair as well as a Board who were voted in by our membership. We will work to prove ourselves worthy of this honor.

I am incredibly pleased to be working with a committed, vibrant and innovative group of Caribbean professionals who make up the C-PAC Board. I invite you to learn more about your C-PAC Board by reading about them in, “**ABOUT THE BOARD**” below. All joined C-PAC during a period of momentous change in the politics of the DC Metropolitan region and C-PAC’s unique history. Through it all, we have charted and continue a clear and bold direction for C-PAC’s future. We will work to expand our membership base, strengthen our policy positions and maintain the organization’s strong financial stability. We expect to continue to be a powerful political force in our region.

Since the beginning of the program year, the Board has met regularly to evaluate, among other matters, our technological capabilities. Based on our findings, we have developed a strategic approach to improve them. The impact of this approach is an expected improvement in communications with our membership and the greater Caribbean American community in our region. To that end, we have expanded our social media presence by activating our Twitter and Instagram accounts.

Our most critical effort will be the updating our database. This will ensure that our communication capabilities are where they need to be, so that we may provide information in a timely and effective manner. Look for greater use of Social Media in this regard. Also look for membership surveys in which we ask for your input regarding what C-PAC should be doing to better serve you and the Caribbean American community. Your responses to our surveys will help us determine our priorities and better refine, focus and strengthen C-PAC’s operations.

Please also be on the lookout for exciting news from D’shawna Bernard, our Vice Chair for Communication. She will provide a “countdown” to our Annual Founding Patron’s Luncheon, which will be celebrated on Saturday, November 7th. We look forward to hearing from you – Be Well!!

## ABOUT THE BOARD

The 7 members of Caribbean American Political Action Committee (C-PAC) are primarily elected by C-PAC’s members to provide strategic guidance in the fulfillment of C-PAC’s mission to advance the political agenda of Caribbean-Americans currently residing in the Washington DC Metropolitan Area (Washington DC, Maryland and Northern Virginia). C-PAC’s overarching mission is to be the political voice of the Metropolitan area’s vibrant and growing Caribbean-American community



# MEET THE 2015-2016 C-PAC BOARD

The C-PAC board has broad responsibility to govern the organization. Together and with input from all members, they make policy to govern C-PAC, determine C-PAC's official position on matters of public policy, set priorities and develop strategic plans to guide organizational development.



**GOULDA DOWNER, PHD**  
2015-2017  
*President, C-PAC*

**RESIDENCE:** Washington, DC  
**CURRENT MEMBER SINCE:** 2005, Founding Patron  
**OCCUPATION:** Public Health Professional  
**C-PAC LEADERSHIP POSITIONS:** 2008-2013, Chair Luncheon Committee; 2009-2013: Chair, Advisory Board; 2013-2014 Vice Chair Communications; 2013-2014 Editor Newsletter  
**OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATIONS (Professional/Social)** Fellow, Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics; Greater Leadership Washington; DC Statewide Health Coordinating Council; District of Columbia Developmental Center for AIDS Research (DC D-CFAR); University of the District of Columbia, Nutrition and Food Science Advisory Board; Community Hospice; Plan Management Committee DC Health Benefit (Obamacare) Exchange Authority.  
**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN/ANCESTORY:** Jamaica



**YVONNE ESTIME, ESQ.**  
2015-2017,  
*Secretary, C-PAC*

**RESIDENCE:** Reston, VA  
**CURRENT MEMBER SINCE:** 2005, Founding Patron  
**OCCUPATION:** Attorney  
**C-PAC LEADERSHIP POSITIONS:** 2014-Present: Secretary; 2008-2011: Secretary; 2008-2009: Advisory Board Member; Co-Chair, Founding Patron's Luncheon Committee.  
**OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATIONS (Professional/Social)** Member, Bar of the District of Columbia Bar; Member, Bar of the State of Maryland; Association; Member, Board of Kids R First; Former Appointed Commissioner, District of Columbia Mayor's Advisory Commission on Caribbean Community Affairs  
Former Appointed Member of the Executive Board of Montgomery County Council  
**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN/ANCESTORY:** Haiti



**JOHN GEORGE, MD**  
2015-2017  
*Vice Chair Finance C-PAC*

**RESIDENCE:** Montgomery County, MD  
**CURRENT MEMBER SINCE:** 2005, Founding Patron  
**OCCUPATION:** Physician  
**C-PAC LEADERSHIP POSITIONS:** 2013-2015 Advisory Board  
**OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATIONS** Member: Caribbean-American Intercultural Organization, American Association of Gynecologic Laparoscopists, DC Medical Society; Founding Patron Howard University Hospital Medical Association.  
**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN/ANCESTORY:** Grenada



**SUZANNE MATTHEWS-WILLIAMS**  
2015-2017  
*Vice-Chair-at-Large, C-PAC*

**RESIDENCE:** Prince George's County, MD  
**CURRENT MEMBER SINCE:** 2005, Founding Patron  
**OCCUPATION:** Behavioral Health (Psycho-Therapist, In-patient setting)  
**C-PAC LEADERSHIP POSITIONS:** 2010-2013: Co-Chair, Membership Committee; 2011-2012 Luncheon Committee; 2014 Newsletter Committee.  
**OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATIONS (Professional/Social)** Commissioner- State of Maryland Caribbean Commission  
Vice-President- Caribbean Council of Prince George's County  
**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN/ANCESTORY:** Guyana



**LUIGI LEBLANC**  
2015-2017  
*Vice Chair Membership, C-PAC*

**RESIDENCE:** Waldorf, MD  
**CURRENT MEMBER SINCE:** 2009  
**OCCUPATION:** Engineer, Public Health Professional  
**C-PAC LEADERSHIP POSITIONS:** 2012-2014 Advisory Board, 2012-2013 Luncheon Committee  
**OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATIONS:** Electronic Health Network Accreditation Commission, Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society, American Tele medicine Association, Maryland Health Information Exchange and Telehealth Advisory Board  
**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN/ANCESTRY:** Haiti



**ROY LAYNE, CPA, CMA, CGMA**  
2015-2016  
*Treasurer, C-PAC*

**RESIDENCE:** Prince George’s County, MD  
**CURRENT MEMBER SINCE:** 2005, Founding Patron  
**OCCUPATION:** Accountant/Auditor  
**C-PAC LEADERSHIP POSITIONS:** Treasurer, 2008-present  
**OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATIONS:** American Institute Certified Public Accountant, Institute of Management Accountants, Maryland Association of Certified Public Accountants  
**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN/ANCESTRY:** Grenada



**D'SHAWNA C. BERNARD**  
2015-2016  
*Vice Chair Communications, C-PAC*

**RESIDENCE:** Silver Spring, MD  
**CURRENT MEMBER SINCE:** 2015  
**OCCUPATION:** Program Coordinator/Consultant  
**C-PAC LEADERSHIP POSITIONS:** 2015-2016 Vice Chair Communications;  
**OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATIONS** (Professional/Social) The Student and Professional Organization of Trinidad and Tobago, Montgomery East County Volunteer Ambassadors, Women in Politics Institute (Class of 2015) Congressional Black Caucus Emerging Leaders Alumni, American University Alumni  
**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN/ANCESTRY:** Trinidad and Tobago

**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

We are in the process of planning our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations share with us what some things you would love to see! Have an idea? Send us a message!

**STAY IN TOUCH**

Have you liked our Facebook page?



Follow Us @CPACDMV

**FOLLOW US ON TWITTER**



Email: [Cpac.dmv@gmail.com](mailto:Cpac.dmv@gmail.com)



**STAY INVOLVED**

C-PAC will be celebrating 10 years this year. Stay tuned for more information on how you can get involved in our activities this year!

**CPAC Newsletter Committee**

Dshawna Bernard  
Denise Bailey  
Lillian Crawford-Abbensetts  
Goulda Downer  
Jackie Sealy

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