

DEMOCRACY PASSPORT



JAMAICA

A GUIDE TO ACTIVE CITIZENRY



The mission of the Electoral Commission of Jamaica is to so conduct national elections, that no advantage is given to any party or individual contesting the polls, ensuring that the objective of one man one vote is met under the six stated principles of universal adult suffrage.

This Democracy Passport is
presented to

Name

Constituency/Electoral Division

Date

Chairman's Message

As a country we must ensure that our people are always engaged in the issues that affect their daily lives; they should participate in the discussions that will shape the future of this country.

This is not an exercise which should be left to any one group or any one sector. We all have a role to play in determining the direction of our beloved country Jamaica.

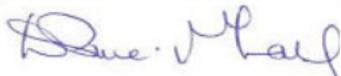
We must create the platforms to make this possible. This is why we at the Electoral Commission of Jamaica (ECJ) from time to time host community meetings to engage the people.

This is an important part of what we call democracy or the democratic process; the involvement of the citizenry of a country.

As part of this process we have a new Democracy Passport, a source of information and guidance relating to our electoral process, the role of each citizen and their individual power to effect change.

We felt it necessary to create this tool to help engage voters, particularly young voters who may feel disengaged or simply uninterested.

We encourage everyone to read it, pass it along to friends and family who can benefit and assist us in conveying the power of democracy, and the great importance of exercising our right to vote.



Hon. Dorothy Pine-McLarty, OJ
Chairman, Electoral Commission of Jamaica
September, 2016

The Strength of Democracy

What is Democracy?

A system in which all the members have the opportunity to be involved in making decisions about its affairs. In a democratic society, this includes voting to elect representatives to a parliament and local authorities.

What is good governance?

Good governance is the effective management of a country, nation or state and its resources in the best interest of the people.

How can you be an active citizen?

As a citizen of a democratic country, you must:

- demand accountability, transparency, justice and fair-play from leaders of the country;
- be a responsible citizen; this includes paying your taxes;
- insist on proper delivery of services including a quality healthcare system, good educational and employment opportunities, reliable security forces, a fair justice system and proper infrastructure;
- seek counsel with your elected representatives;
- embrace your fundamental rights and freedoms;
- be informed by gaining access to information;
- speak out against corruption;
- VOTE on Election Day.

Who can vote? A person who is 18 years or older, a citizen of Jamaica or Commonwealth country, not of unsound mind, not convicted or under suspended sentence and is on the Voters' List.

Why Should You Vote?

Voting can determine quality of health care, national security and whether an ambitious young Jamaican can afford an education, to buy a house, to raise a family and pursue their dreams.

Our communities need proper representation to ensure adequate social services e.g. road repairs and waste collection.

The citizens who vote have more credibility to voice concerns about the way the government operates because they actively participate in the process.

It is voting that gives citizens power to choose effective National and Local representatives.

Never forget that some elections are won by a handful of votes - that means your and your friends' votes can change the result of an entire election!

Governance of our country is enhanced through participating in the voting process

Steps to voting on Election Day

Step 1

- Secure your Voters' ID and find out exactly where you are to vote BEFORE Election Day

Step 2

- Go to the Polling Station and follow the instructions of the Presiding Officer.

Step 3

- Once you get the ballot, go behind the voting booth and CLEARLY mark an X for the candidate of your choice in the space provided.

Step 4

- Fold your ballot twice to protect the secrecy of your vote, leaving the flap out. DO NOT SHOW ANYONE WHO YOU HAVE VOTED FOR.

Step 5

- Give the folded ballot to the Presiding Officer so that he or she can detach the flap.

Step 6

- Dip your right index finger (pointer finger) in the integrity ink and WATCH while your unopened ballot is put in the ballot box.

The Correct Way to Mark the Ballot

JAMAICA WEST CONSTITUENCY
POLLING DIVISION NO. 0

Space for Initials of P.O.

Polling Day 1st JANUARY 2001

DO NOT FOLD ABOVE THIS AREA

SPECIMEN

1 LAST NAME, FIRST NAME

CANDIDATE ADDRESS
CANDIDATE OCCUPATION



2 LAST NAME, FIRST NAME

CANDIDATE ADDRESS
CANDIDATE OCCUPATION



SPECIMEN

History

- Prior to 1944, only approximately 60,000 Jamaicans were allowed to vote based on land ownership...the majority of Jamaicans were disenfranchised.
- In 1944, Universal Adult Suffrage (the right to vote) was given to persons 21 years old and over regardless of land ownership.
- In 1974 suffrage was moved from age 21 to allow persons 18 and over to vote.
- The Electoral Office of Jamaica was established in 1943 to administer the holding of Parliamentary and Local Government Elections.
- The Representation of the People Act was introduced in 1944 as the main law for elections.
- The first general election under Universal Adult Suffrage was held in December 1944.
- In 1962, Jamaica achieved independence from Britain.
- The Electoral Advisory Committee (EAC) (now the Electoral Commission of Jamaica), was established in 1979 as an impartial committee to oversee the country's electoral affairs.
- The work of the EAC, the EOJ and subsequently the ECJ has gradually addressed electoral improprieties and resulted in a more free and fair process.

Principles of Universal Adult Suffrage

The Vote is Universal

All citizens who meet the qualifications established by law have the right to vote.

The Vote is Free

The elector is entitled to vote free from pressure or duress.

The Vote is Secret

The process guarantees not to publicize the preference or will of each elector

The Vote is Direct

The citizen elects the representatives of his/her choice.

The Vote is Personal

The elector shall attend in person at his/ her designated polling station.

The Vote is Non -Transferable

The elector cannot transfer to anyone his/her right to vote.

Before 1944 the right to vote was determined by the amount of wealth or property a man held; women were not allowed to vote before 1919. Universal Adult Suffrage in 1944 extended voting rights to adults regardless of their race, sex, social class or possessions.

Jamaica's Administrative Structure

Type of Government: Parliamentary Democracy

Capital: Kingston

Administrative Divisions: 14 parishes consisting of 63 constituencies which are further divided into 228 Electoral Divisions

Independence: 6 August 1962

Legal System: Based on English Common Law

Suffrage: 18 years of age, Jamaican or Commonwealth citizen

Executive Branch: Head of State: Queen Elizabeth II, represented by a Governor-General (G-G)

Head of Government: Prime Minister

Cabinet: Cabinet appointed by the Governor-General on the advice of the Prime Minister

Legislative Branch: Bi-cameral Parliament

Senate: Consists of a 21-member body appointed by the G-G; 13 persons on the advice of the Prime Minister and 8 persons on the advice of the Leader of The Opposition

House of Representatives: Consists of 63 Members of Parliament from a General Election

Local Government: 13 Municipal Corporations (12 parishes + Kingston and St. Andrew) and the Portmore Municipal Council, each headed by a mayor.

Election Glossary

Bicameral Parliament - A system of government in which the parliament comprises two Houses—The House of Representatives (Lower House) and the Senate (Upper House).

Citizen - A person born in a country, or is naturalized by that country.

Constituency - A distinct territorial subdivision in a parish for holding a separate election for one or more seats in a legislative body.

Constitution - The rules, or established laws, that outline the framework for government, and that reflect the fundamental principles by which a country is governed.

Democracy - A system of government by the people, exercised either directly or through elected representatives.

Election - A formal decision making process by which the population chooses a group of individuals to serve as Members of Parliament in the House of Representatives.

Enumerate - To register to vote

First-past-the-post (FPTP) - A system in which the political candidate with the most votes is declared the winner. Jamaica has a FPTP electoral system.

Nomination - The selection and appointment of a candidate to contest an election.

Voters' List - A compilation of persons eligible to vote in elections.



For further information contact us at:
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*Scan this code with your smartphone to view the
Democracy Passport on your device.*

Produced by the Electoral Commission of Jamaica