

Cayman to talk with Jamaica about removing visas

Jamaica and the Cayman Islands have agreed to resolve the issue of the visa requirements for travel between the two countries.

The agreement to talk about the matter was made during informal talks (Wednesday, 15 September) between McKeeva Bush, the premier and Jamaica's Deputy Prime Minister, Kenneth Baugh. Bush spoke with Baugh when he visited Cayman with former Jamaican Prime Minister "PJ" Patterson, and CARICOM Economic Adviser Byron Blake when they were in transit to attend a CARICOM Foreign Ministers' Conference in Cuba. The visa was first introduced by the CI government in 2005 following the large increase of Jamaican nationals coming to Cayman as a result of the economic boom here in the wake of Ivan. The requirement was then reciprocated by the Jamaican government which in turn introduced a visa for Caymanians visiting Jamaica. Given the significant amount of Jamaicans living and working in Cayman and the huge family ties of Caymanians with Jamaica the visa has been criticised and blamed for further fuelling divisiveness. Aside from discussing the possible removal of the visa requirement the Jamaican delegation also visited the Cayman Islands Legislative Assembly, where as well as Bush they met with the speaker Mary Lawrence as well as the deputy governor Donovan Ebanks as well as government ministers the opposition leader, MLAs and official members. After watching the Legislative Assembly at work, the guests talked about the close historic ties between the islands. They also spoke of the need to rebuild the traditional Caribbean foundation of strong parenting and families in their countries, A GIS release stated.