

November 18<sup>th</sup> 2022

## **CHOOSING HOPE OVER HATE AND FAITH OVER FEAR**

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### **Introduction**

The results of the just-concluded mid-term elections in the United States of America carries several lessons for Vincentian voters as they bore some striking similarities in the way the major parties conducted the campaigns and the messages they took to the voters. Once liberal commentator summarized it this way “the Republican Party ran on fear and fraud, while the Democratic party ran on hope and progress, and the voters responded to the message from the Democratic Party”. The pundits were unified in their projections, backed by historical data, that the democrats would suffer significant losses in both the Senate and House races, with many referring to the outcome as a “red wave”. When the dust settled, the outcome was far from any landslide victory for the Republicans, with the Democrats retaining control of the Senate and the House margin of victory for the Republicans being quite slim. The Democrats have since the elections have been in an upbeat mood, with what they consider to be a better-than-expected performance, while the Republicans have begun the process of finger-pointing and blaming. At the heart of the results is the role of the voter in connecting with one message over the other and in effect rejecting soundly the message of a party that peddled in negativity and fear. Here in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, we are saddled with our own version of negative campaigning with an opposition party that peddles its own version of fear with misinformation and disinformation, content to mislead our people for political gains. Since 2010, following the referendum on constitutional reform, the opposition decided that big lies and constant negativity was going to be their message to Vincentians, the opposite of what the ULP was offering; belief in self and hope for the future. What has been clear and unequivocal is the rejection of the hate, fear and negativity that’s the hallmark of their messaging by the Vincentian voter and the deliberate decision to embrace hope and faith.

### **Choosing Hope, Rejecting Hate**

In his latest publication, “A Time of Respair”, Comrade Ralph encapsulates the general mood in our Vincentian communities, following the two-year period of convulsion that our country has experienced. Our country was battered by one event after another with significant overlap of events, specifically, the volcanic eruptions during the Covid-19 pandemic, with many individuals having to be housed in emergency shelters, at a time when social distancing was necessary. The pandemic had already been a source of hardship for citizens of our country, and this was further compounded by the destruction of personal property, farm produce and livestock and physical

infrastructure. Our farmers, fisherfolk, students, teachers, nurses, police officers experience significant challenges that required strength to get them through the difficult periods. Our communities displayed unbelievable resolve and determination to get our country through one of its toughest periods in our existence. It was very important in recognizing the mammoth task ahead following the various disasters, that our people were able to draw hope going forward to put our country back on track. Comrade Ralph has been consistent, speaking to our people and offering a clear path forward, laying out our party's plan to get SVG back on track to progress and growth. Our people have taken to the message of hope offered by comrade Ralph and our country is making considerable strides in our quest for sustainable development with projections of approximately 6% GDP growth this year. This is quite remarkable, and we must not take what we have been able to achieve since the period of convulsion that included a pandemic, a hurricane and volcanic eruption. The rebuilding of damaged infrastructure, the relocation of residents who lost homes, the repair of more than 600 homes, the paying of income support, all while commencing major capital projects. Our country moves forward, as we draw on fresh hope for the future.

### **Our Faith Will See Us Through**

The bible teaches, "faith without work is dead", and we have embraced this as a people focusing on the task of rebuilding our country in building that modern, competitive, many-sided, post-colonial economy that is at one national, regional and global. We are witnessing many positives with the start of the tourist season, our modern port is under construction, the ongoing investments in new hotels, and we will soon see the commencement of construction of our acute referral hospital among other initiatives that create jobs and drive growth. Growing our country's economy, developing our human resource, expanding social programs that protect the most vulnerable among us including the elderly and very young, remains priority for our government but this national effort requires collective action. In November of 2020, the ULP promised Vincentians that if re-elected, the government will continue to lift SVG higher, and the choice between platforms couldn't be clearer. The voters had a choice, they could respond positively to the message of development and prosperity as put forward by the ULP or the message of fear, disorder and lawlessness, devoid of a clear vision presented by the opposition. Much like the result of the US mid-term elections, the Vincentian voters responded to the message of faith and prosperity, handing the ULP an increased parliamentary majority. Two years later, the faith of our people, coupled with our hard work and determination is being rewarded as the government continues to deliver on its promises. SVG appears to be the first country in CARICOM to offer salary increases and the revision of the minimum wage to our workers in this post-pandemic period, while at the same time reducing personal and corporate taxes.

This post-pandemic period offers fresh hope for Vincentians, and our ULP government continues to lead this process of rebuilding with very clear policy

positions, grounded in the belief that we must put people over partisan politics. While the opposition continues to be engulfed in negativity, chaos, fearmongering and lawlessness, our government continues to be the source of inspiration and hope that gets the best out of our people and makes the best of every circumstance. Let's continue to embrace the positive among us working together with our government to deliver the type of society we want.