

(Daily Gleaner article - March 14, 2011)

Open Letter to Prime Minister Bruce Golding

March 13, 2011

Hon. Bruce Golding, M.P.,
Prime Minister,
Office of the Prime Minister,
Jamaica House,
1 Devon Road,
Kingston 6.

Dear Prime Minister:

Re: Women in Media demand action against Mr. Everald Warmington

We, the undersigned, representing women working in a wide cross-section of Jamaican media organisations, express our deep outrage over recent offensive statements by Mr. Everald Warmington which we find particularly demeaning and degrading of Jamaican women.

As you are aware, Prime Minister, Mr. Warmington—who until recently represented the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) as the Member of Parliament for South West St. Catherine—told CVM news anchor Kerlyn Brown to “go to hell” during a live television interview last Tuesday evening. He was supposed to be responding to a legitimate journalistic question about his reasons for remaining a member of the House of Representatives since 2007 when, by his own recent admission, he knew that his membership was in breach of the Jamaican Constitution.

Subsequent to that exchange Mr. Garfield Burford, Manager, News and Current Affairs at CVM Television (Ms Brown's direct supervisor) called Mr. Warmington to express his personal concern about the inappropriate comment and to enquire what could possibly be a justification.

We have been advised by Mr. Burford that Mr. Warmington's response to him *was even more offensive**.

We have no reason or basis to believe that Mr. Burford's recollection was anything but accurate. Indeed, Mr. Warmington has had a long history of offensive verbal assaults on the media and leaders of your party have apologised for him from time to time. We cannot, however, recall any occasion when he has apologised for his own abusive behaviour.

In this latest instance, the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) Chairman and Minister of Transport and Works, Mr. Mike Henry has apologised to persons "who may have been offended" by Mr. Warmington's abusive comments and said, on behalf of the JLP, that Mr. Warmington shares his position on the importance of respect to all Jamaicans, including the media.

Prime Minister, this is wholly unacceptable. On International Women's Day, Mr. Warmington, without reason has insulted, demeaned and degraded us as professionals and it cannot be let alone.

As prime minister of Jamaica and leader of the Jamaica Labour Party, you cannot accept nor endorse Mr. Warmington's comments to either Ms. Brown or Mr. Burford and so we call on you to take action to show your disapproval.

Specifically, we are calling on you as JLP leader not to permit Mr. Warmington to be nominated as a candidate for the JLP in the by-election scheduled for April 4. This would be a signal that you represent a higher standard of political conduct and that you support our view that the people of South West St. Catherine deserve a member of Parliament who shows a high level of respect to women, to all Jamaican citizens, and to our national institutions that so far Mr. Warmington has consistently failed to demonstrate.

CC: Mr. Mike Henry, Chairman, Jamaica Labour Party

**Note: This section has been amended.*

Signed by 65 Women in media:

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Gleaner Company

Jamaica Observer

Nationwide News Network

Sunday Herald

CVM Television

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