



Tobago CivilNET

Tobago's Attitudes

TOWARDS AUTONOMY SURVEY

WELCOME
TO THE
PORT OF SCARBOROUGH



September 1st—October 7th

Population Size: 65,000 Individuals

Sample Size: 153

Confidence Level: 75%

Margin of Error: 5%

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Preface

Dear Tobago,

As we bring this year's 'autonomy survey' to a close, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to those who took the time to participate. We also welcome greater participation in our surveys so that we can achieve a more thorough representation of Tobago and its diaspora. However, your thoughtful responses play a pivotal role in achieving our objectives of:

Gauging Attitudes and Perceptions: Your insights have provided a reasonable understanding of local residents' attitudes towards autonomy/self-governance, particularly in relation to the Constitutional Amendment (Tobago Self-Government) Bill.

Fostering Awareness: Through your participation, we are raising awareness about the process involved in acquiring autonomy/self-governance.

Promoting Understanding: Your input contributes to a shared understanding of autonomy/self-governance and its implications, contributing to informed discussions.

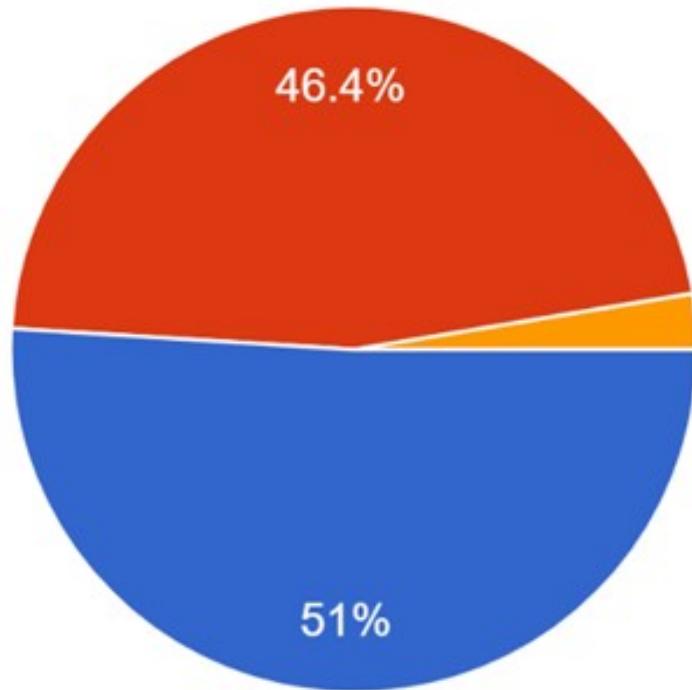
Encouraging Consensus: We are grateful for your efforts in helping us identify common ground and encouraging consensus on the necessary steps to achieve autonomy/self-governance.

As we analyse the data, we anticipate unveiling a wealth of information regarding respondents' knowledge, perceptions, and the importance attributed to autonomy. Your honesty and engagement have been instrumental, and we look forward to delving into the findings in the coming months. Once again, thank you for being an integral part of this crucial initiative.

Best regards,

Tobago CivilNET

Gender



Responses: 153

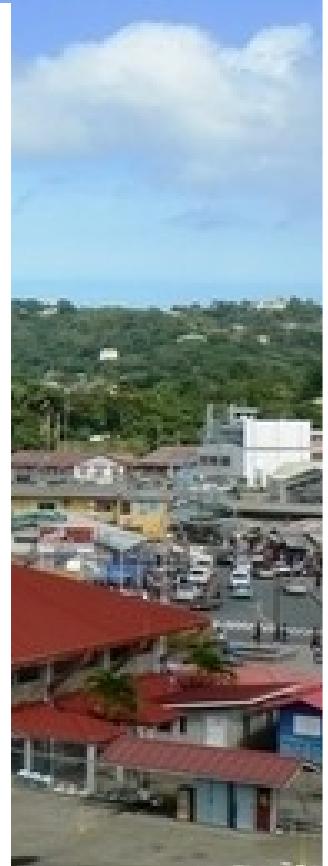
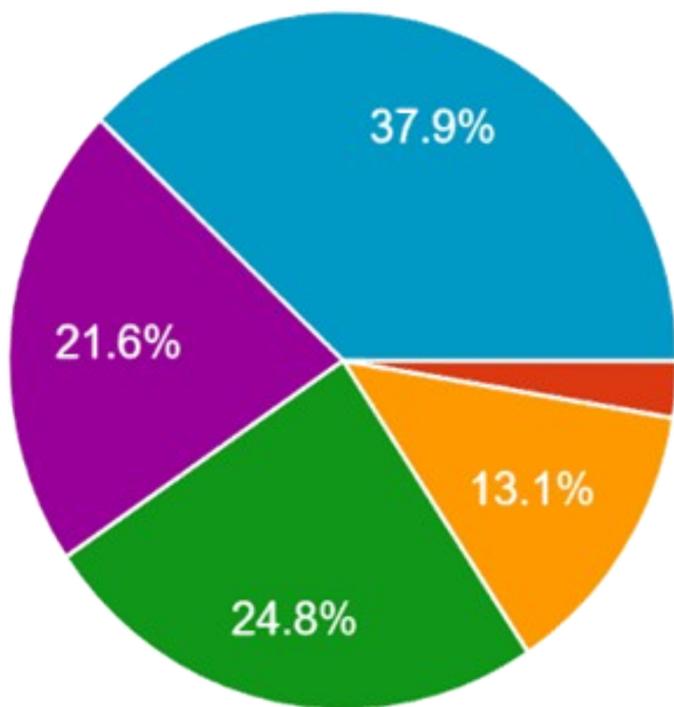
Male: 46%

Female: 51%

Prefer not to say: 3%



Age



Responses: 153

Under 18: 0

18 - 25: 2%

26 - 35: 13%

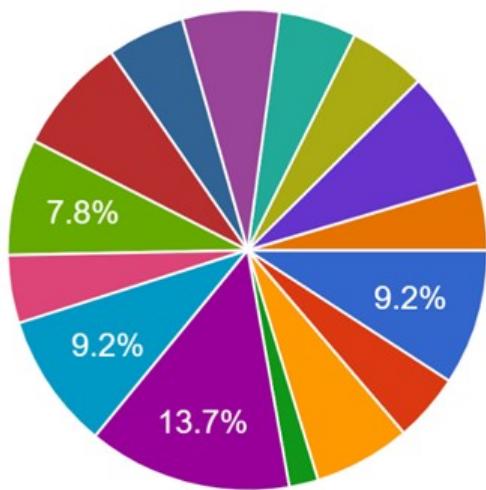
36 - 45: 25%

46 - 55: 22%

56 or Older: 38%



Which electoral district in Tobago are you from?

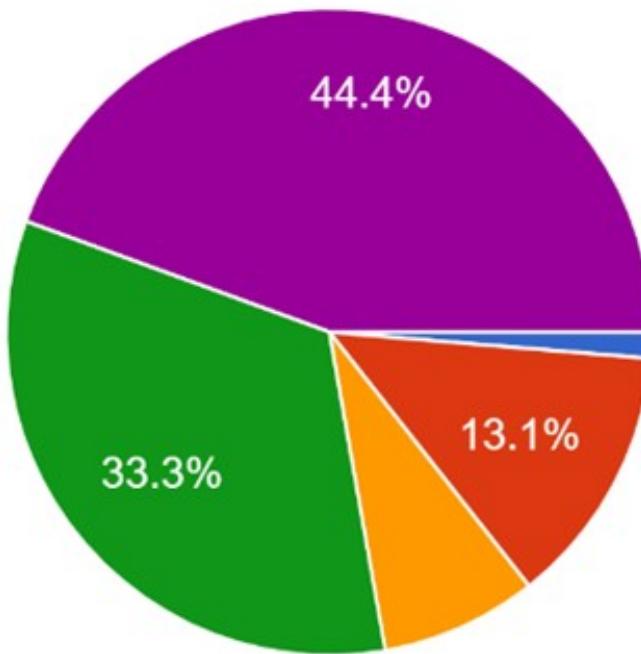


District	Counts
Bon Accord/Crown Point	21
Bagatelle/Bacolet	14
Buccoo/Mt. Pleasant	14
Lambeau/ Lowlands	12
Mason Hall/Moriah	12
Scarborough/Mt. Grace	12
Bethel/New Grange	10
Parlatuvier/L'Anse Fourmi/Speyside	10
Mt. St. George/Goodwood	8
Plymouth/Black Rock	8
Roxborough/Argyle	8
Belle Garden/Glamorgan	7
Darrel Spring/Whim	7
Signal Hill/Patience Hill	7
Bethesda/Les Coteaux	3

Responses: 153



What is your highest level of education?



Responses: 153

Post Graduate and Higher: 44%

Undergraduate: 33%

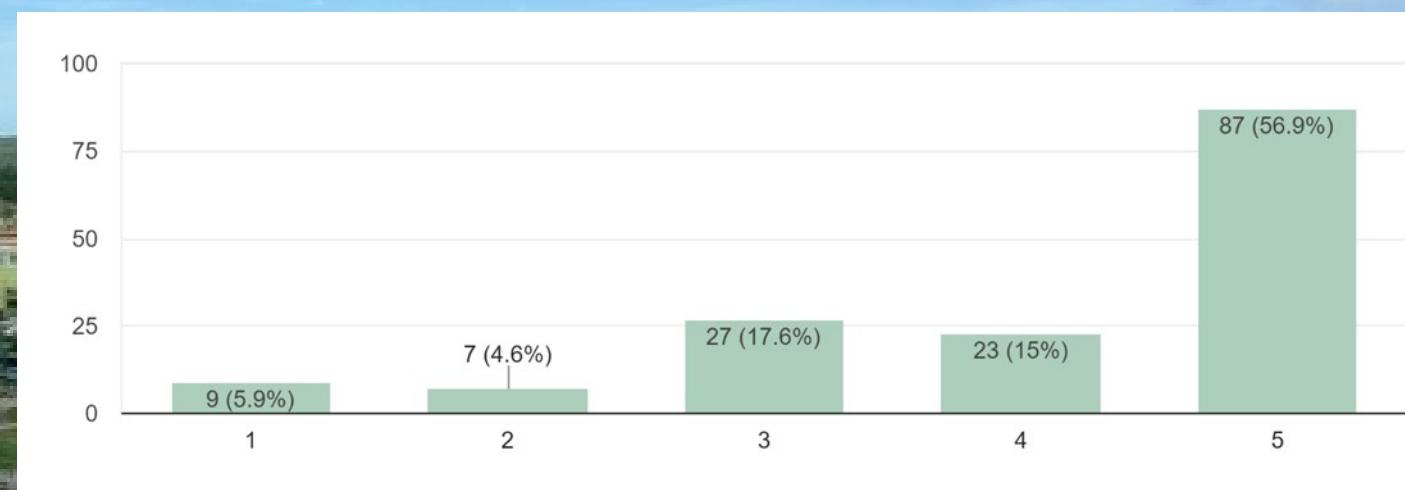
Secondary: 13%

Tech Voc: 9%

Primary: 1%



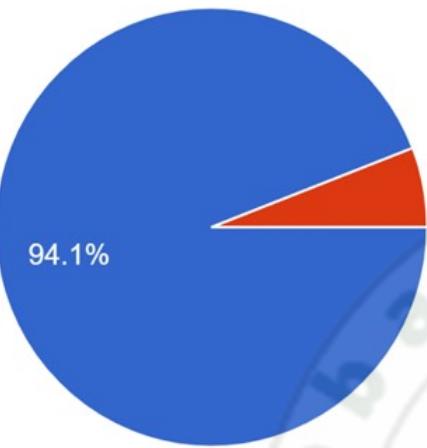
How interested are you in Tobago's politics? On a scale of 1 - 5



Responses: 153



Are you familiar with the concept of autonomy / self-governance for Tobago?



Responses: 153

Yes: 94%

No: 6%

If yes, please briefly describe your understanding of autonomy/self-governance in the context of Tobago?

Summary of Responses

Self-governance/autonomy - Many responses focus on Tobago having more control and decision-making power over its own affairs without interference from Trinidad's central government. This includes making laws, controlling resources, budgeting, etc.

Self-determination - Related to autonomy, but more about Tobago charting its own course and determining its own future and path forward. Not being dependent on or dictated to by Trinidad.

Greater power and authority for the THA - Giving more governance power and authority to the Tobago House of Assembly to make decisions and run the island without needing approval from the central government.

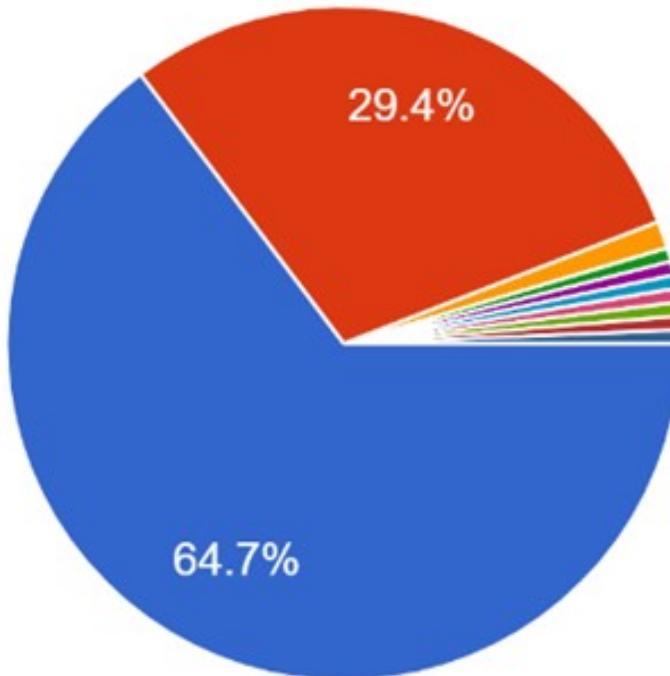
Equal partner to Trinidad - Tobago being seen and treated as an equal to Trinidad within the two island nation, not subservient. Acknowledging Tobago's unique interests within the unitary state.

Economic control and development - Managing Tobago's budgets, finances, revenues, resources to allow greater economic control and spur development. Not being dependent on handouts from Trinidad.

Dissatisfaction with current arrangement - Expressions that the current relationship with Trinidad is untenable and needs change. More decision-making power should reside in Tobago.

Sovereignty - A few mentions of complete independence/sovereignty for Tobago, though most stop short of this and focus on greater autonomy.

Which entity has the most influence in how Tobago is governed?



Responses: 153

Central Government: 65%

Tobago House of Assembly: 29%

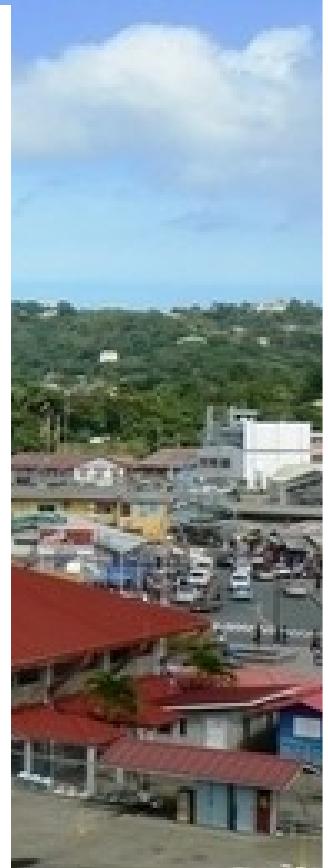
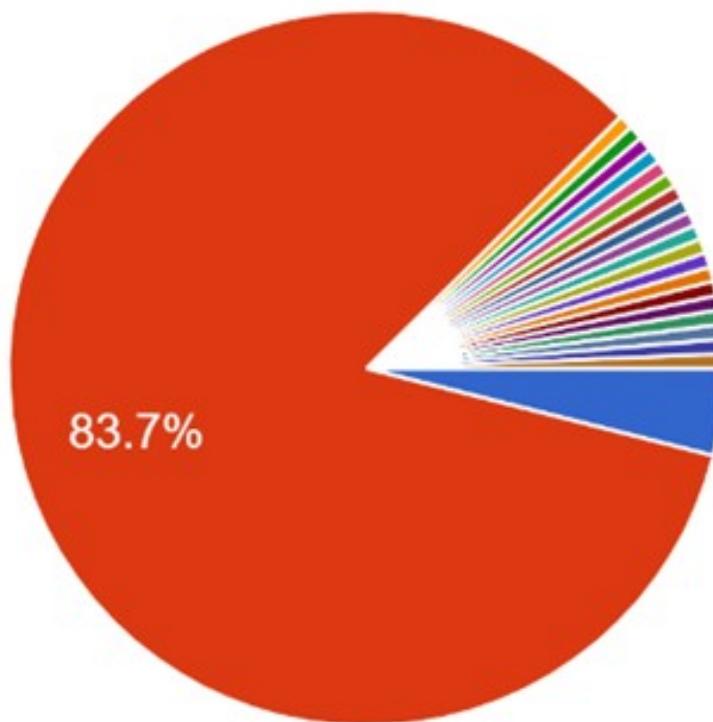
Other: 6%

(summary)

- Both
- The people
- THA when not impeded by the Central Gov.
- The parliament



Which entity should have the most influence in how Tobago is governed?



Responses: 153

Central Government: 4%

Tobago House of Assembly: 84%

Other: 12%

(summary)

- Both
- A democratised THA
- Fair government from Trinidad
- National Parliament joint sitting



In your opinion, which of the following would autonomy / self-governance for Tobago mean?

(Tick all that apply)

- More financial power in the hands of the THA
- The power for the Assembly to make laws
- Independent institutions free from Cabinet directives and oversight
- Clear definition of territorial boundaries
- All of the above
- Other...

Option	Counts
All of the above	101 (66%)
The power for the Assembly to make laws	67 (44%)
More financial power in the hands of the THA	66 (43%)
Clear definition of territorial boundaries	56 (37%)
Independent institutions free from Cabinet directives and oversight	53 (35%)

Responses: 153

Summary of 'Other' Responses

Requests for more autonomy/power

complete separation and a new arrangement that guarantees our economic development and control

ability to collect tax revenue from business, property, income and trading

right to determine the destiny of the island and the right for its residents to take ownership of their role

Criticism of current governance

a few persons behaving like royalty

Tobago would only benefit from these changes if the power of the Assembly is properly used

we cannot allow the Assembly to govern the way Central Government governs. It is time to get rid of the corruption and do the job properly and honestly

nonsensical, Poverty for the citizens of Tobago

Suggestions for more democracy/consultation

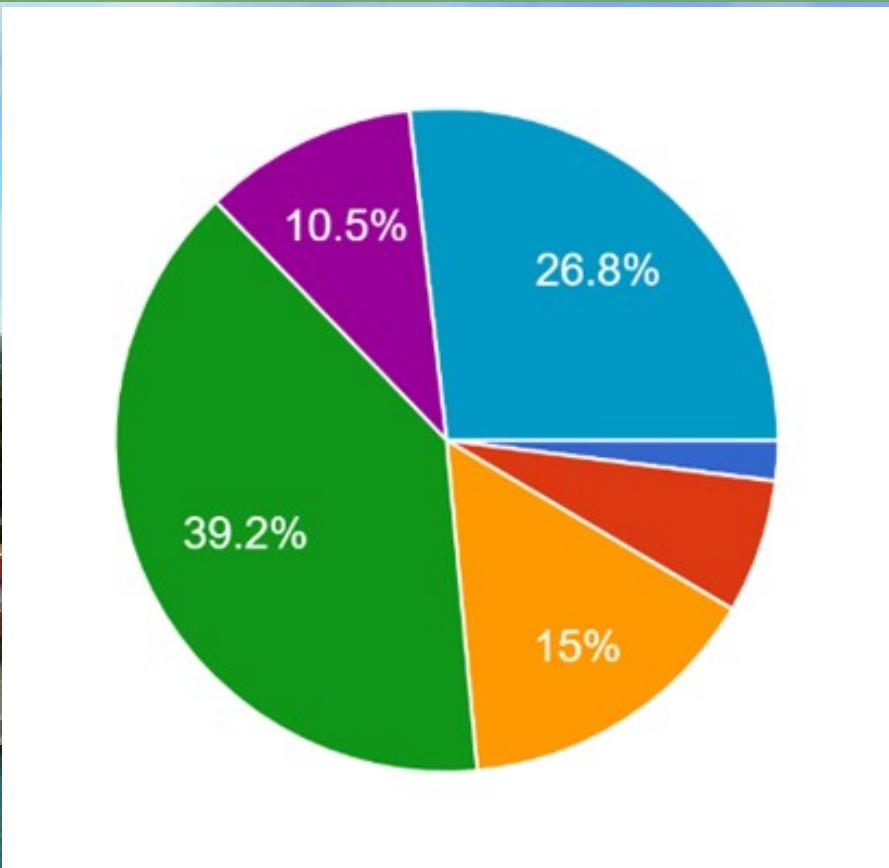
regular formal and compulsory consultation

Tobagonians themselves having greater influence in the governance

a proper national constitution

a seat at the table with respect to foreign relations

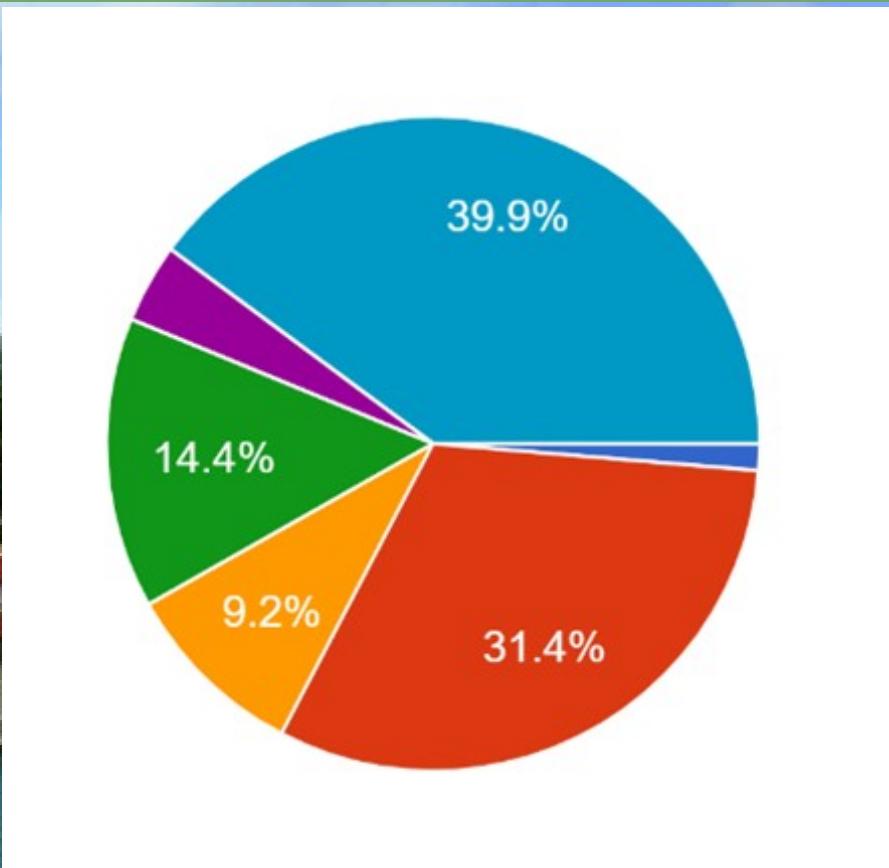
How do you rate the governance of the Central Government in relation to Tobago?



Responses: 153



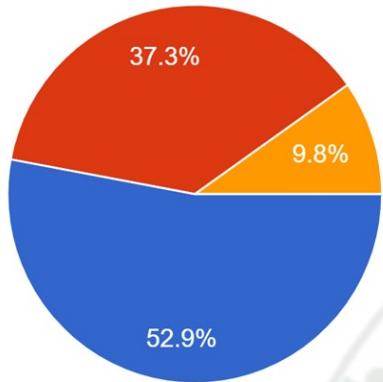
What do you think that the policy regarding Tobago's future relationship with Trinidad should be?



Responses: 153

14% Separation with partnership (e.g. Organization of Eastern Caribbean States)	40% Federal system (e.g. States of USA)	4 % Complete separation	9% The same relationship as at present	31% Decreased power for Central Government	2% Increased power for Central Government
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In your opinion is Tobago ready for greater autonomy?



Responses: 153

Yes: 53%

No: 37%

I don't know: 10%

Please explain your answer

Summary of Responses

YES

- Tobago is ready.
- Tobago is very capable of managing its affairs.
- Our new generation of administration shows things can be done effectively and efficiently.
- Tobago has more opportunities to raise revenue than other Caribbean states.
- The time is now.
- We can govern Tobago's affairs competently.
- Tobago does not have a choice, it has to be ready.
- We have the technical team to do the job.
- Tobago is being held back because it can't make its own decisions.
- Freedom should never be asked, it must be done.
- We can manage our own affairs without an overseer.
- Tobago has demonstrated it has the competence to handle autonomy.
- We have the capacity to manage our own affairs.
- Tobago should be given the chance at autonomy.
- Tobago has a right to self-determination.

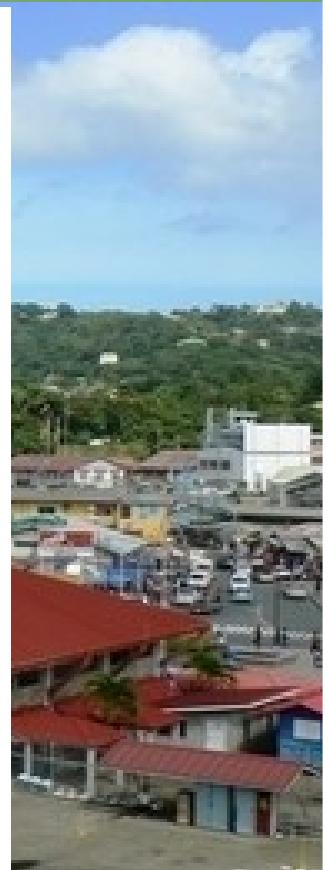
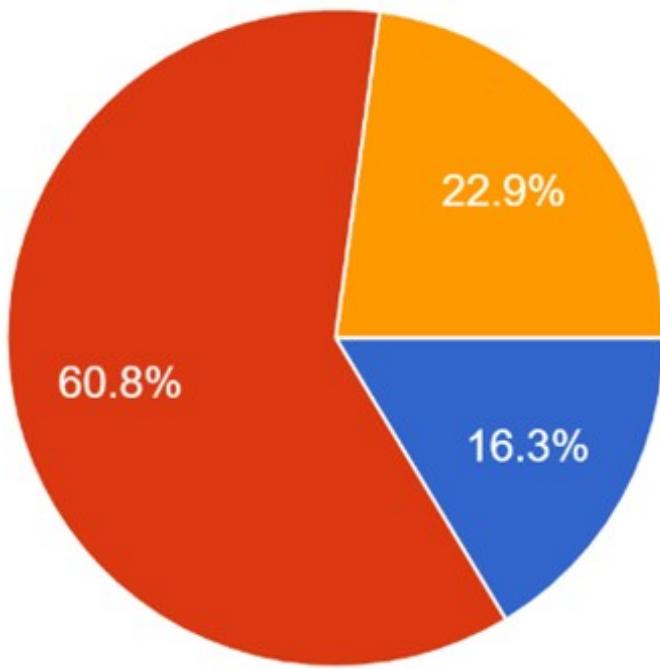
NO

- Tobago is not ready due to corruption.
- Tobago is too dependent on the central government.
- The THA does not have the skills compared to central government.
- Tobago's leaders lack maturity.
- The THA lacks expertise to utilize current provisions.
- Citizens are not psychologically prepared.
- Work ethic and discipline are poor.

I don't know

- It's difficult to determine if Tobago is ready.
- Unsure if there is enough competence in the THA.
- Whether citizens are engaged, knowledgeable, informed is questionable.

Do you think Tobago is fully utilizing its responsibilities already given under the 5th Schedule of the THA Act?



Responses: 153

Yes: 16%

No: 61%

I don't know: 23%



What do you see as the potential benefits of autonomy / self-governance for Tobago?

(Tick all that apply)

- Tobago does not have to go to Trinidad for approval
- There will be an increased funding allocation for Tobago
- An increase in efficiency
- A decrease in political tensions between the THA and Central government
- A possible expansion of the 5th Schedule
- Independent law making power for the THA
- Other...

Option	Counts
Tobago does not have to go to Trinidad for approval	114 (75%)
Independent law making power for the THA	107 (70%)
A decrease in political tensions between the THA and Central government	95 (62%)
An increase in efficiency	93 (61%)
A possible expansion of the 5th Schedule	79 (52%)
There will be an increased funding allocation for Tobago	77 (50%)

Responses: 153 Summary of 'Other' Responses

Benefits of autonomy

- Ability to manage generally
- Increased confidence to develop economy and engage with world
- Self-sufficiency and self-sovereignty
- Growth and development
- Customization of policies for Tobago's context
- Control over key institutions like airbridge

Concerns about autonomy

- Increased corruption
- Lack of accountability
- Incompetent leadership
- Lack of skills and resources
- Internal tensions and instability
- Uncertainty about benefits
- Autonomy unrelated to hardships
- Need for government oversight
- Exclusion of Tobagonians abroad

Requests related to autonomy

- Separation from Trinidad
- Greater empowerment of citizens
- Proper constitution to enable autonomy
- Comparison to independence

What do you see as the potential challenges or risks of autonomy / self-governance for Tobago?

(Tick all that apply)

- Having sufficient resources and skills to manage increased responsibility
- Having sufficient funds to manage effectively
- Being possessed of the political will and proper mindset to handle the increased responsibility
- Increased internal tensions as a result of corruption and political chaos
- Uncertainty relating to international relations
- Other...

Option	Counts
Having sufficient resources and skills to manage increased responsibility	88 (56%)
Having sufficient funds to manage effectively	82 (54%)
Increased internal tensions as a result of corruption and political chaos	76 (50%)
Being possessed of the political will and proper mindset to handle the increased responsibility	74 (48%)
Uncertainty relating to international relations	65 (43%)

Responses: 153 Summary of 'Other' Responses

Capabilities and Benefits

- Have resources, funds, willpower, but also corruption and uncertainty.
- Have resources and funds.
- Have sufficient funds.
- Have resources, funds, and willpower.
- Administration shows good international relations.
- Audits show proper spending.
- Tobagonians can succeed despite challenges.

Concerns

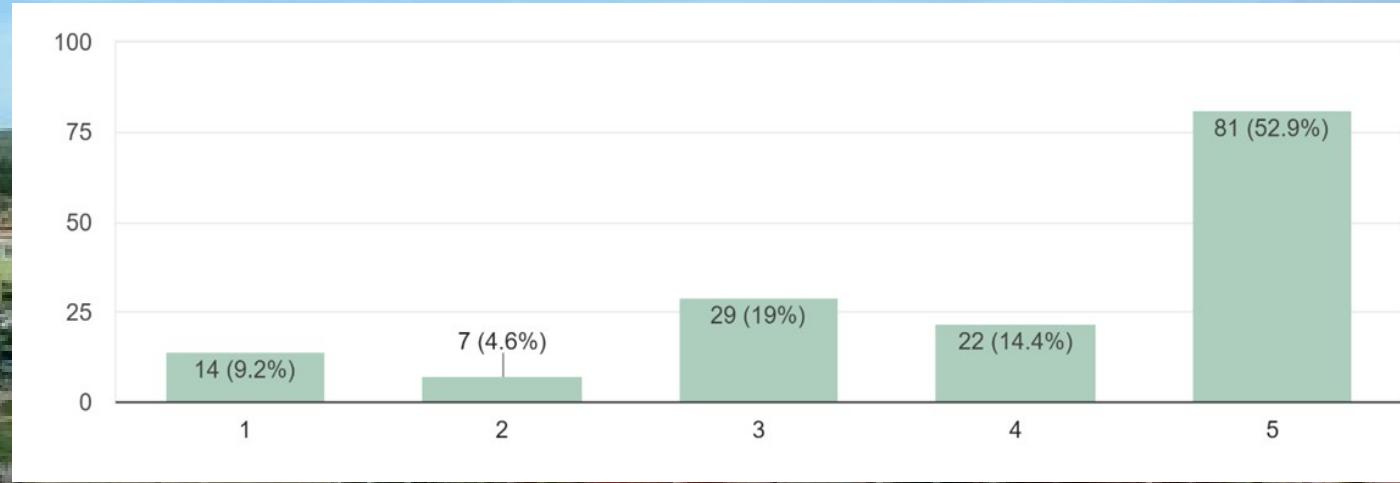
- Worry about corruption and chaos.
- Concern about corruption.
- Worry about island falling apart.
- Concern about slow economic growth.
- Concern about individuals becoming corrupt.
- Worry about immature leadership.
- Concern about wasteful spending.
- Worry about unqualified personnel.
- Could be interpreted as independence.
- Excludes Tobagonians abroad.
- Expect interference by Trinidad.
- May cause tension between islands.
- Lacks mature leadership.

Requests

- Need sustainability.
- Need public scrutiny and accountability.
- Reduce control by Trinidad.
- Should address corruption like Singapore.

QUESTION 16

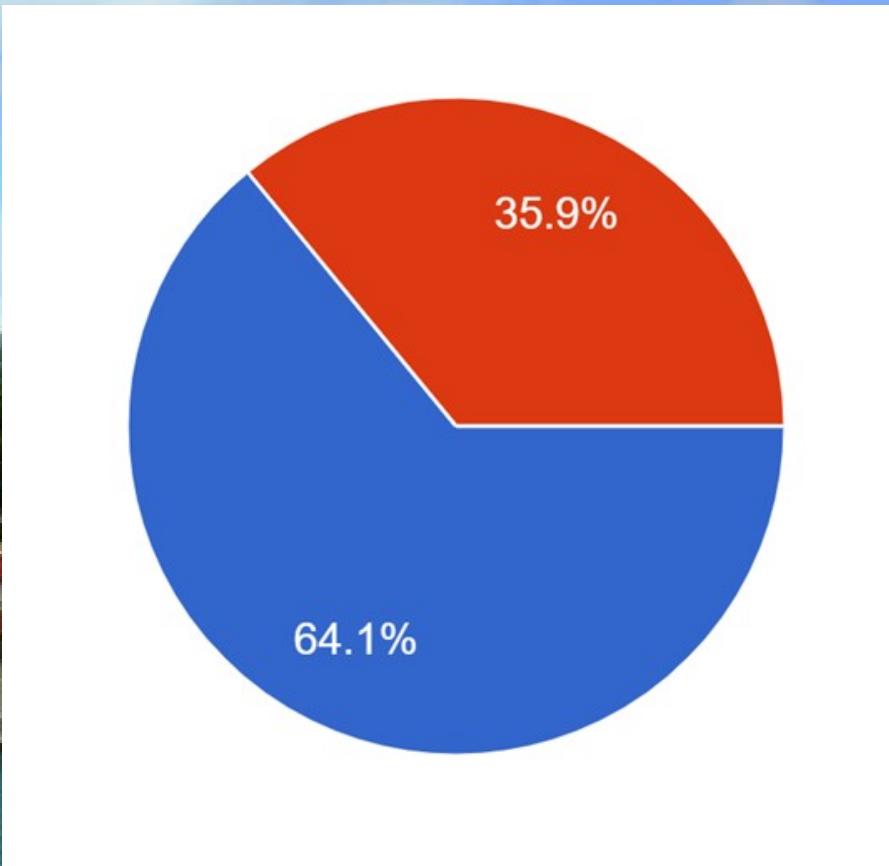
How important is it to you to achieve autonomy / self-governance for Tobago?



Responses: 153



Are you familiar with the Constitutional Amendment (Tobago Self-Government) Bill that was tabled in Parliament?



Responses: 153

Yes: 64%

No: 36%



Do you think that these areas (now excluded, Sixth Schedule Items) should be placed under the authority of the THA?

(Tick all that apply)

- The President
- National Security
- Foreign Affairs
- Civil Aviation
- Meteorology
- Immigration
- Legal Affairs
- Judiciary
- Auditor General
- Ombudsman
- Service Commissions
- Other...

Option	Counts
Service Commissions	97 (63%)
Civil Aviation	78 (51%)
Immigration	77 (50%)
Legal Affairs	73 (48%)
Ombudsman	72 (47%)
Foreign Affairs	71 (46%)
Auditor General	65 (43%)
National Security	63 (41%)
Meteorology	59 (39%)
Judiciary	58 (38%)
The President	15 (10%)

Responses: 153 Summary of 'Other' Responses

Institutional Control

- joint responsibility in all areas
- 51% majority vote in all areas
- representation in all areas
- local institutions not branches
- ability to impose local tax

Shared Authority

- Some collaboration needed in areas of joint interest
- Some scaled down authority possible
- Can have a role in some not all areas
- Ridiculous to build all institutions for small population

Against Autonomy

- None should be placed on schedule
- Will produce additional spending
- Not ready to take on these large entities
- Autonomy not the same as secession

Concerns

- Only if infrastructure and competencies in place
- Needs actual delivery and oversight of these areas
- Politically motivated question
- Sigh

How can Tobago fund its autonomy / self-governance?

(Tick all that apply)

- Collecting revenues from natural resources (oil/gas fields, quarry, spring water)
- Retaining property and other taxes paid in Tobago
- Increasing budgetary allocations from the Central government
- Expanding existing private sector (tourism, entrepreneurship, agriculture, locals living abroad, financial se...
- Supporting new business development
- Implementing cost-saving measures (audits, publication of financial statements)
- Diasporic investment
- Tobago cannot afford autonomy
- Other...

Option

Expanding existing private sector (tourism, entrepreneurship, agriculture, locals living abroad, financial sector)

Retaining property and other taxes paid in Tobago

Collecting revenues from natural resources (oil/gas fields, quarry, spring water)

Supporting new business development

Implementing cost-saving measures (audits, publication of financial statements)

Diasporic investment

Increasing budgetary allocations from the Central Government

Tobago cannot afford autonomy

Counts

130 (85%)

120 (78%)

117 (77%)

116 (76%)

112 (73%)

105 (67%)

88 (58%)

22 (14%)

Responses: 153 Summary of 'Other' Responses

Strategies for Development

- New Education structure to promote innovation
- Our story (self-determination)
- Community-based analysis of resources
- Align traditions, values with all development plans
- Capitalizing on the 1.4M strong consumer market in Trinidad

Governance and Legal Considerations

- Application of the Law Act 40 of 1996 for companies with franchises in Tobago to pay all taxes in Tobago
- Adopting a participatory governance model
- Constitution guarantees equal opportunity and access for Tobago residents
- Need for constitution reform on a national scale
- Autonomy requires financial independence and rule-setting capability

Funding and Economic Perspectives

- This question clearly highlights the lack of understanding of how economies expand and contract.
- This is a conundrum; the above measures cannot be implemented under the current construct
- Hope for financial support (Let's hope Farley has money)
- Uncertainty and challenges in current economic and governance structure
- Emphasis on understanding economic expansion and contraction, calling for expertise

What actions do you believe the central government should take to achieve autonomy / self-governance for Tobago?

(Tick all that apply)

- Amend existing laws to provide legal support for implementing autonomy/self-governance
- Implement fully existing laws and policies that facilitate autonomy/self-governance
- Promote dialogue and negotiation between national and local authorities
- Educate and raise awareness among Tobagonians about the benefits of autonomy/self-governance
- Update current draft Constitution Amendment (Tobago Self Governance) Bill to reflect the will of the people
- Pass the Constitution Amendment (Tobago Self Government) Bill
- Other...

Option

Update current draft Constitution Amendment (Tobago Self Governance) Bill to reflect the will of the people of Tobago eg. Territorial boundaries

Educate and raise awareness among Tobagonians about the benefits of autonomy/self-governance

Amend existing laws to provide legal support for implementing autonomy/self-governance

Promote dialogue and negotiation between national and local authorities

Implement fully existing laws and policies that facilitate autonomy/self-governance

Pass the Constitution Amendment (Tobago Self Government) Bill

Counts

106 (69%)

104 (68%)

97 (63%)

92 (60%)

89 (73%)

78 (51%)

Responses: 153

Summary of 'Other' Responses

Constitutional and Governance Reforms

- remove the arbitrary lower/upper percentage range to budgetary allocations
- set senate seats for Tobago
- pass a Law that allows Elected leaders in Tobago to have debates/motions in Parliamentary
- re-establish a DRC (Development and Reconstruction Committee) with Caricom participation
- pass the existing Bill with the 6 changes Tobagonians requested

Democratic Process and Public Participation

- make a decision after the People have spoken.
- the "will of the people" must be updated and reflect the CURRENT will of the people. What ended up at JSC was NOT the bill leaving Tobago.
- the previous process was done very wrong, leaving out the majority of the people. Many voices were cut short and not heard.
- begin a push towards a confederation-type arrangement between the two islands.

Economic and Development Priorities

- Tobago spends money badly on fetes, parties, a failed Carnival. THA spends little money on Marine science, technological Business development.
- self-governance must be a lower priority to revenue development.
- as I said, four separate States for TT. Northern State, Central State, Southern State, and State of Tobago. Amen!

What actions should THA take to achieve autonomy / self-governance?

What actions should THA take to achieve autonomy/self- governance?*

(Tick all that apply)

- Petition President and Parliament
- Consult and educate the people about the status of the Bill and the reasons why the Bill has not yet been ...
- Full implementation of existing autonomy/ self- governance
- Implement a more unified Tobago approach across party lines
- Other...

Option

Consult and educate the people about the status of the Bill and the reasons why the Bill has not yet been passed

Implement a more unified Tobago approach across party lines

Full implementation of existing autonomy/ self-governance

Petition President and Parliament

Counts

114 (75%)

106 (70%)

74 (46%)

72 (47%)

Responses: 153

Summary of 'Other' Responses

International Engagement and Relations

- International petitioning to Caricom, Commonwealth, OAS, UN for moral suasion via international embarrassment.
- Take the situation to the UN, CARICOM, OAS
- Seek international or Caricom involvement
- Involve Caricom. Write to UN for support
- Try international means if that's possible

Public Awareness and Education

- Consult and educate the people about the status of the Bill and the reasons why the Bill has not yet been passed.
- Let the Poll confirm Party Lines.
- Take the conversation away from party politics and view autonomy as a development strategy.
- Educate on consequences and action plan.
- Stop the foolishness and make Tobago a paradise for its residents.
- THA should seek independence.

Political Advocacy and Engagement

- Petition President and Parliament.
- Propose a new bill and propose amendments to other bills to give force to the THA.
- Tobago should become non-political, going back to the roots of the ideas about Assembly - with representatives - not political parties.
- Try international means if that's possible.

Economic Development Strategies

- Formulate new CEDP (3.0), strengthen its economic base.
- The nation as it is, should remain 'Rep. Trinidad and Tobago.'

What actions should Civil Society engage in to achieve autonomy?

(Tick all that apply)

Mass mobilization such as demonstrations

Public education

Advocacy for systemic change eg. Education reform

Impactful civil disobedience

Other...

Option	Counts
Public Education	135 (88%)
Advocacy for systematic change e.g. Education reform	108 (71%)
Mass mobilization such as demonstration	53 (35%)
Impactful civil disobedience	25 (16%)

Responses: 153

Summary of 'Other' Responses

Advocacy for Autonomy

- All parties must sign on a convention to petition the British Parliament for Autonomy.
- Unless the opinion leaders in Trinidad who influence the central government have their interests in Tobago threatened by inaction of the government then there is no real political will of central government to relent.
- We need to know the details and expected changes to our way of life.
- Voting en block with one voice.
- Demonstrations and civil disobedience should be removed from this list.
- Tobagonians are misled into thinking Trinidad is our enemy and we're at war.
- The emotions need to be removed, and realistic expectations be placed instead.
- Engage with International groups to this end.

Mass Mobilization and International Engagement

- Have discussions on other ways that Tobago can achieve its self-government and get what it wants, without Us having to beg and continue the cycle o
- If all else fails, we should seek outside help. Russia, Cuba, etc. (no former or neocolonial power).
- Take action by Petition to International Courts and Human Rights Council.

Challenges and Readiness for Self-Governance

- None. Focus on economic development and a population education in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.
- Put your money where your mouth is.
- Take time to introspect deeply and consider what values we want our society to follow.
- The mass has a lack of knowledge and depends on hearsay causing many not to believe that we can make it on our own. Plus, Tobagonians have a dependency syndrome.

What actions are you willing to participate in?

Mass mobilization

Public education

Advocacy for systemic change

Impactful civil disobedience

Other...

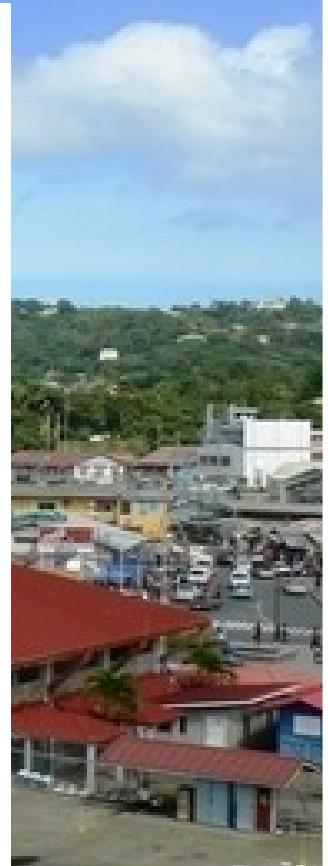
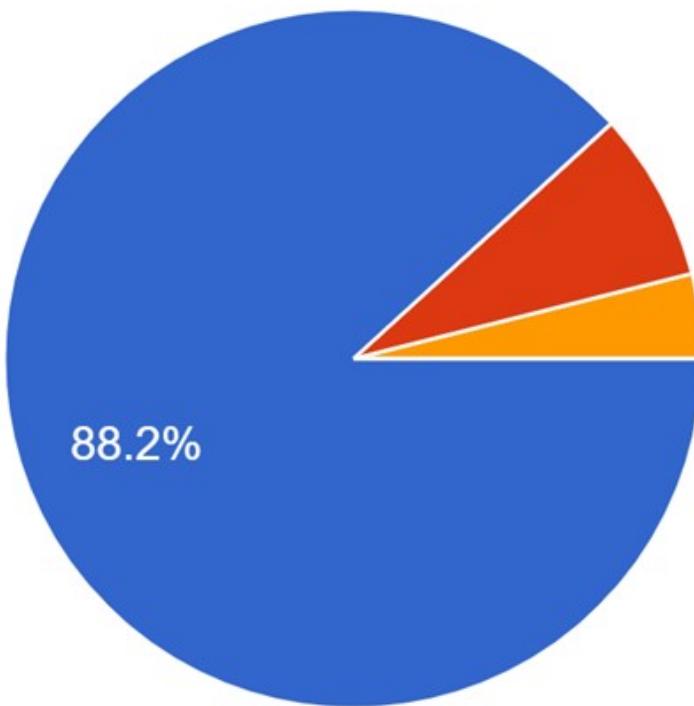
Option	Counts
Public Education	128 (84%)
Advocacy for systematic change e.g. Education reform	99 (65%)
Mass mobilization	50 (33%)
Impactful civil disobedience	25 (15%)

Responses: 153

Summary of 'Other' Responses

- No participation in systemic slavery by operating in my autonomous power as an indigenous of the land (sustainable lifestyle and collective movement)
- We must negotiate from strength, not attack Central Government. Unless we absolutely have to
- Again, the bigger the nation, the more effective. Maybe it's time to try Federation like the Philippines.
- i am prepared to boycott most Trinidad consumables and buy local only
- Advocate to the Dispute Resolution Committee.
- What ever gives us independence
- Petition the International Courts and Human Rights
- None, I don't waste my time with nonsense. Not until there's a clear plan.
- Tobago value to Trinidad and Tobago Economy
- i am against this divisiveness under the guise of this autonomy. I am willing to work to elevate Tobagonians but not in the form of Tobago against Trinidad
- Tobagonians must no longer beg for autonomy. The cycle of sending bills to Trinidad to fail must end.
- I disagree with all the above
- No, I have been doing it and most people don't read, only rely on gossip

Do you think that more public information is needed on the Constitutional Amendment (Tobago Self-Government) Bill 2018?



Responses: 153

Yes: 88%

No: 8%

I don't know: 4%



What other ways can the benefits of autonomy be achieved beside political reform?

- Increased entrepreneurship in Tobago
- Increased international investment in Tobago
- Greater direct relationships with foreign entities
- Entering international competitions under a separate Tobago banner
- Other...

Option	Counts
Increased international investment in Tobago	117 (77%)
Greater direct relationships with foreign entities	109 (71%)
Increased entrepreneurship in Tobago	107 (70%)
Entering international competitions under a separate Tobago banner	59 (39%)

Responses: 153 Summary of 'Other' Responses

Economic Development and Entrepreneurship

- Not autonomy, independence!
- Entering international competitions under a separate Tobago banner
- Before approaching external we must assess what we have internally
- All of the above requires approval from the oppressor. Autonomy is a government issue there is no other way
- Unfettered access to international funding options that we're currently precluded from by being attached at the hip to Trinidad's upper middle class
- Improved self-confidence in the people of Tobago
- Autonomy is unnecessary
- Autonomy is the first requirement
- The above 4 are exactly the benefits
- The only way forward is political reform. Can't be doing the same thing over and over and expect a difference.
- Autonomy of an underdeveloped island like Tobago will reduce citizens to poverty with a small group of wealthy tyrants sitting pretty at the top
- Where are your taxes paid? and who controls your revenue when they come in?
- More educated persons to engage with society
- We only beg for more money and allow Central Government to screw with us
- Autonomy requires economic resources and economic resources require sense

Please provide any additional comments or suggestions regarding autonomy / self-governance for Tobago

Summary of 53 responses:

Political Strategies

- Tobagonians suggest reigniting discussions in Trinidad to push for a referendum in the upcoming General Elections.
- It's urged that all political parties in Tobago promptly call for the reintroduction of the autonomy bill in the House to avoid potential delays.

Autonomy Advocacy and Challenges

- Advocates stress that pursuing autonomy should demonstrate direct benefits for all Tobagonians, presenting both pros and cons transparently for a majority vote.
- Some express the need to remove the People's National Movement (PNM), viewing it as a hindrance to Tobago's development.
- Concerns are raised about the practicality of autonomy amid existing infrastructural challenges and environmental issues.
- Calls for education and support focus on raising awareness about the autonomy bill and placing Tobago's interests at the forefront.

Call for Action and Preparedness

- Tobagonians are encouraged to actively participate in the autonomy movement and understand its importance.
- Urgent action is stressed, emphasizing that continuous dialogue is crucial for progress.
- Some respondents express frustration with the current survey's effectiveness and call for a more impactful approach.
- Clarity is sought in autonomy-related questions, with an emphasis on comprehensive education and system improvements for goods and services.
- The sentiment is shared that achieving autonomy requires the active involvement of Tobagonians, and the matter has been delayed for too long.
- Calls for educating the populace, particularly the youth, through social media and community engagement are highlighted.
- The sentiment is expressed that autonomy must be taken rather than granted by the central government.