



Cayman Islands Human Rights Commission

promoting, protecting and preserving human rights

For Immediate Release

Date: 25 September 2020

Issued by: Human Rights Commission

Contact: Shari Welcome, Public Relations and Education Coordinator

(Email: shari.welcome@gov.ky; info@humanrightscommission.ky; Tel: 244 3670)

HRC Statement on Freedom of Expression and Encouraging a Mindful Community

The Human Rights Commission would like to take this opportunity amidst the current atmosphere of escalated tensions with the recent assent of the Civil Partnership Law, 2020 to remind us all that although freedom of expression is guaranteed under section 11 of the Constitution this right, like many others, is a qualified right. This means that the right can be lawfully restricted or taken away by the government in certain broadly defined circumstances. Therefore, it must be balanced against the rights and interests of others bearing in mind that section 88 of the Penal Code provides that actions or articulation which are threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviours that are likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress can be considered a criminal offence.

In this democratic society the Commission encourages all members of the Cayman community to respect individual rights, regardless of personal differences. Non-discrimination is a fundamental principle of human rights. It is imperative that both individually and collectively we remain mindful and conscious of our speech and our actions to ensure that hate and discrimination does not erode the social fabric of our democratic culture.

The Cayman Islands has long been and continues to be a caring community grounded in mutual respect for all individuals. To this end in true Caymankind manner the focus on freedom of expression must be prefaced with mindfulness of its consequences to uphold the country's commitment to the democratic values of human dignity.

For more information on the Commission or to learn more about the Bill of Rights, Freedoms and Responsibilities, call 244-3685 or visit our website and Facebook pages at www.humanrightscommission.ky and www.facebook.com/cihrc.

Ends.