



Cayman Islands Human Rights Commission

promoting, protecting and preserving human rights

Ms. Dorine Whittaker, JP
Chief Officer, Community Affairs, Gender and Housing
5th Floor, Government Administration Building
Grand Cayman
CAYMAN ISLANDS KY1-9000

9 January, 2013

Via E-mail: dorine.whittaker@gov.ky

Dear Ms. Whittaker,

The Human Rights Commission (“HRC”) was created by s.116 of the Constitution to promote understanding and observance of human rights in the Cayman Islands. This is especially important now that Part One of our Constitution – the Bill of Rights, Freedoms and Responsibilities (“BoRFR”), is in full effect.

On the 17th of December 2012, there was an article in the news titled ‘Changes to the Adoption Law Ahead’ (Connolly, N., 2012, Changes in the Adoption Law, *Caymanian Compass* [online] December). The former Minister, Mr. Mike Adam, referred to the large number of outstanding cases and to a two year delay “even in best case scenarios”. The Minister also mentioned some extreme cases which had been “pending since 2001, another since 2004, two since 2006, five since 2007, seven since 2008, six since 2009 and 14 and 17, respectively, since 2010 and 2011”.

The Commission is most concerned with these delays based on section 17 of the BoRFR – the protection of children. As such the Commission is interested in ascertaining information regarding the reasons for such extreme delays. Additionally, we note that there are many revisions planned for the Adoption of Children Law and are enquiring as to whether the Ministry proposes to include in the legislation or regulations mandatory or suggested timetables for adoption cases in order to ensure that they are in future handled in a timely manner?

We appreciate your assistance in this matter

Kind regards,

Mr. Richard Coles
Chairman
Human Rights Commission