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Date: 16 February 2021

Issued by: Human Rights Commission

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Announcement to Dissolve Parliament underpins need for Parliamentary Code of Conduct

The statement issued by His Excellency the Governor Martyn Roper, OBE, informing the general public of the proclamation made on Sunday 14 February 2021 to dissolve the Parliament at the request of and in consultation with the Premier in accordance with s. 84(2) of the Constitution, comes on the heels of the contentious subject related to the behavior which led to the criminal conviction of the Honorable Speaker of Parliament which has been the accelerant for an early election which will now take place on Wednesday 14 April 2021.

This has however not been the only instance in the history of our Parliament where the behaviour of an elected representative has been questioned. Following receipt and consideration of a human rights complaint detailing concerns of threatening and discriminatory rhetoric used during a discussion in official sessions of Parliament, the Commission conducted in-depth research and ultimately wrote to the Members of Parliament recommending that Members work together in a unified manner to draft and implement a Parliamentary Code of Conduct which will serve to remind Members and the public alike of the importance the Cayman Islands places on treating each person with dignity and respect.

With continued growing public concern around the leadership and decisions of the country, the Commission again takes the opportunity to reiterate the importance of the Country establishing a Parliamentary Code of Conduct. Implementing policy documents, like Parliamentary Codes of Conduct, can help ensure that persons holding positions of power in our Islands are subject to transparent checks and balances and that they remain accountable for their behaviour.

“The Cayman Islands continues to make great strides toward good governance advancing and strengthening our arms of government, however the failure of our

elected representatives to enact a Parliamentary Code of Conduct is an area that sadly we are behind compared to other Caribbean and Commonwealth nations” Mr. Dale Crowley the Chairman of the Commission said. “It is to this end that the Human Rights Commission will continue to advocate for the implementation of a Parliamentary Code of Conduct in the Cayman Islands” Mr. Crowley added.

As the nature of this matter relates to upholding high ethical standards and integrity in public office the Commission shared its correspondence and recommendation with the Commission for Standards in Public Life (the “CSPL”). Mrs. Rosie Whittaker-Myles, Chairman of the CSPL indicated that the CSPL “fully endorses the Commission’s recommendation for the development of a Parliamentary Code of Conduct and Members are happy to assist in any way necessary to progress this matter.” “The development of, and adherence to, such a Code of Conduct would only serve to enhance the reputation of our Parliament and respect for its Members. The CSPL has provided feedback on a draft Ministerial Code of Conduct and has been, for several years, following up with the Cabinet Office on the finalisation of that Code which, unfortunately, remains in draft form” she continued.

Last year the Commission released its research in a chart detailing Parliamentary Codes of Conduct and related documents for the Caribbean Territories and Non-regional Commonwealth Jurisdictions which can be viewed on the Commissions website at http://www.humanrightscommission.ky/upimages/publicationdoc/CodesofConductResearchacrossCommonwealthCaribbeanandRelatedJurisdictions_041120_1607626984_1607626984.pdf

The Commission encourages all candidates for the 2021 General Elections to support the recommendation of the development of a Parliamentary Code of Conduct and further encourages all voters to stand firm in holding our elected representatives accountable.

Ends.