

Press Release

30 July 2020



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COLOURS CAYMAN'S COMMENTS ON THE DEFEAT OF THE DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP BILL 2020

Colours Cayman would like to express our deep concern and disappointment in the outcome of the debate over the Domestic Partnership Bill in the Legislative Assembly this week.

This isn't just a sad day for our LGBTQIA+ community; it's also a terribly sad day for our wonderful Islands and our persons. The failure of our Legislative Assembly to pass the Domestic Partnership Bill has exacerbated and compounded what our Court of Appeal had already described as a "woeful" state of affairs. The rejection of the Bill by the MLAs that voted against it amounts to a blatant disregard for the rule of law and abdication of their responsibility. MLAs *must* secure adherence to the Constitution for the benefit of *all* persons in the Cayman Islands.

Furthermore, *Colours Cayman* would add that, while some MLAs spoke eloquently and compellingly in favour of the Bill, the vitriol spewed by so many other MLAs these past three days has left many in our community feeling appalled, disheartened and betrayed.

While our organisation respects that the people of the Cayman Islands hold fast to a wide and varying range of values and we often don't see eye to eye, this Bill was ultimately about recognising and affording the rights a sector of society that has, to date, been ignored, segregated and left unprotected, despite clear rights and protections in the Constitution to the contrary. It is a sector of society that has campaigned peacefully, long and hard, to be recognised as equally deserving of living the life afforded to every single heterosexual person and different-sex couple in our country.

But biases and beliefs should not preclude anyone from the enjoyment of any of their constitutionally enshrined rights, not least their right to private and family life. Basic human rights are not the result of a popularity contest, as some MLAs would like us to believe.

For those MLAs who supported the Bill, *Colours Cayman* extends our thanks and appreciation. Despite some bristling and hesitation in a few cases, those MLAs are cognisant of the significance of this Bill and adopted a position that, while controversial to many they represent, is indeed the right one.

To summarise, our elected officials should *always* respect the rule of law in each and every one of their decisions, even in a legislative debate. Again, biases and beliefs have no place here and, to paraphrase some of our own MLAs, while one may not agree with the law, one must still abide by it. What we have seen on display this week in the Legislative Assembly, however, demonstrates that the faith we have in many who claim to lawfully represent us and keep our best interests at heart is severely misplaced.

It's now time for the Governor to fulfil his constitutional rule and to restore the rule of law in our beloved Cayman Islands. His Excellency has a duty to uphold the Constitution, for which he has been vested with the tools in Section 81 of the Constitution, and to put an end to this unsatisfactory state of affairs. This is something that the Court of Appeal expected His Excellency to do if the Legislature failed to comply with their decision as they did today.

**Billie Bryan, Founder & President,
*Colours Cayman***