



Corinne Glasgow
PSC secretary

PSC issues statement on Constitutional Report

By Guy P. Harrison
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The Public Service Commission is unanimously opposed to aspects of the Constitutional Commissioners' Report which it feels would politicise the PSC and undermine its purpose.

In a press statement this week, the PSC said it is concerned with how the seven-member Commission will be appointed. The Commission is charged with considering and recommending persons to fill public sector vacancies. Currently, members are appointed by the Governor. Proposed changes would still leave the Governor in the appointment role, but consultation with the chief minister and opposition leader would be required. This, it is feared, would lead to politically-based disunity and favouritism.

"We don't want the Commission to be put into the hands of political influences," said Corinne Glasgow, secretary of the Public Service Commission. "Myself, the staff, and the commissioners are in agreement about this. There are other ways to advance the commission. This would be a step backwards."

According to the statement, which was signed by the seven commission members, the proposals would "likely sow discord and in the worst scenario it is possible to envisage the Public Service Commission lining up

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on opposite sides in many cases, as opposed to its present smooth operation."

Glasgow explained that a vital purpose of the Commission is to ensure fairness to all job applicants.

"We look at qualifications, experience, and performance in the interview, other factors are not relevant. A person's political ties have no proper place in the process. But they likely would if the present system is changed." She added. "The typical lay person in Cayman may not know the intricacies of the Constitutional Report. But the lay persons will feel it. They might be the first to have difficulties in seeking a [government] job."

The release further states, "With due respect to the [Constitutional] commissioners, this seems a most unfortunate proposal. To politicise the Civil Service in this way follows the American pattern where most senior officers in some towns or cities are changed when a Republican replaces a Democrat or vice versa. Up to now, the Cayman Islands have avoided this practice."

Glasgow added, "Cayman is just too small. We must give everyone equal opportunity. If the board becomes a collection of political appointments it defeats the purpose of having the Commission."

The Public Service Commission includes seven board members, currently appointed by the Governor, a secretary, and a staff of four. Current members are A.C.E. Long, CMG, CBE; Andrea Bothwell, JP; Vernon Jackson, OBE, JP; Jennifer Kaufman; Islay Conolly, MBE; Anthony Connolly, JP; and Mark Panton.