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## **Equality in focus: Reflections on year that was**

[Newsday](#)

10 Hrs Ago



HR Ian Roach. -

### **HR IAN ROACH**

AS THIS year draws to a close, it is fitting to pause and reflect on the conversations we the EOC have shared through this column and the purpose they continue to serve. Throughout 2025, the Equal Opportunity Commission has written consistently more than 13 fortnightly columns in the Newsday and has used this space to speak directly with the public about equality, dignity and fairness, not as abstract ideals, but as everyday realities that affect real lives.

Over the past months, our columns have explored a wide range of issues that sit at the heart of the Equal Opportunity Act and our national values. We addressed discrimination in education, reminding readers that a child's right to learn must never be compromised by

race, religion, disability, culture or appearance. We spoke about natural hair and identity, literacy and access, and the responsibility of institutions to ensure that policies uplift rather than exclude.

We also examined the often difficult but necessary conversations around mental health. Through discussions on men's mental health, disability and psychosocial conditions, and workplace inclusion, we highlighted that mental well-being is a human rights issue. Equality cannot exist where stigma silences people or where fear prevents them from seeking support or fair treatment.

Our columns marked important international observances, including International Literacy Day, World Mental Health Day, International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Human Rights Day, Mandela Day and Public Service Day. Each observance gave us an opportunity to connect global principles to local realities, and to show how international human rights standards align with the protections already enshrined in our law.

We reflected on diversity and unity during Divali and Christmas, celebrating the cultural and religious richness of Trinidad and Tobago, while reinforcing the importance of mutual respect. We examined public health and human rights through discussions on immunisation, and revisited the core role of the commission itself, explaining what we do, why it matters, and how the public can access our services.

Taken together, these columns tell a clear story. Equality is not confined to courtrooms or legislation. It is present in classrooms, workplaces, hospitals, public offices and homes. It shows up in how policies are written, how decisions are made, and how people are treated when they speak up or ask for fairness.

I wish to commend the EOC team, our legal officers, communications staff and contributors, for their thoughtful research, clarity and commitment throughout the year. Writing about equality requires care, balance and courage. This team has consistently met that responsibility, ensuring that our messaging is accurate, accessible and rooted in empathy.



To our readers, thank you for engaging with these discussions, sharing them, questioning them and reflecting on them. Public education is most effective when it becomes a conversation rather than a lecture, and your continued interest strengthens that exchange.

As we look ahead to the new year, the commission remains committed to continuing this column and to deepening these conversations. Discrimination does not stand still, and neither can our efforts to challenge it. We will continue to inform, to advocate and to encourage dialogue that promotes understanding and inclusion.

On behalf of the dedicated and motivated commissioners, management and staff of the Equal Opportunity Commission, I extend warm season's greetings to all our readers and citizens, and best wishes for a safe, peaceful and fulfilling New Year. May the year ahead bring renewed commitment to fairness, respect and equal opportunity for all.

*HR Ian Roach is the chairman of the Equal Opportunity Commission*