

**STATEMENT
OF
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DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF INSULAR AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**BEFORE THE
HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON INSULAR AFFAIRS, OCEANS AND WILDLIFE**

**REGARDING
H.R. 3940
A BILL TO AUTHORIZE ASSISTANCE FOR POLITICAL STATUS EDUCATION ON GUAM**

November 5, 2009

Madam Chair and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss H.R. 3940, a bill to authorize grants and other assistance for political status education on Guam.

The Department of the Interior has no objection to the enactment of H.R. 3940. However, we note that any assistance provided under this authorization would have to compete with other priority needs.

H.R. 3940 would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to extend assistance to the Government of Guam to facilitate a public education program on political status options for Guam. Included in such assistance would be grants, research, planning assistance, studies, and agreements with Federal agencies.

When the political status of a territory is under consideration, education of the public regarding the options available to the people is of utmost importance. Only an educated populace can make informed decisions about its future. The Department of the Interior would not object to funding political status education on two conditions:

- the education on options is factual, and
- all points of view receive equal opportunity for hearing.

The Department would not award funding to extol one point of view that unfairly excludes other points of view. The hallmark considerations for a public education program on political status are facts and fairness.