



OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER
I MINA'TRENTA NA LIHESLATURAN GUAHAN | 30th GUAM LEGISLATURE
JUDITH T. WON PAT, Ed.D.

Testimony by Speaker Judith T. Won Pat, Ed.D. on H.R. 3940 - To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to extend grants and other assistance to facilitate a political status public education program for the people of Guam.

Hafa Adai (greetings) Madam Chairwoman Bordallo and members of the Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans, and Wildlife. Thank you for holding this hearing today on H.R. 3940 a bill that would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to extend grants and other assistance to facilitate a political status public education program for the people of Guam.

My name is Judith T. Won Pat, a senator in the 30th Guam Legislature and currently serving as its Speaker. I am pleased to submit this statement in support of H.R. 3940 and urge the members of the subcommittee to act expeditiously on this legislation.

Guam remains one of the world's oldest colonial dependencies. For hundreds of years, Guam has been the possession of outside powers who valued the island only for its strategic geographic location. Beginning with Spain's arrival on Guam in 1521, the ceding of Guam to the United States by Spain in 1898, to this very day, Guam's history has been filled with starts and stops, failures and successes towards the eventual goal of political self-determination for the people of Guam.

In 1902, the people of Guam petitioned the United States Government to establish their rights and liberties, declaring that "fewer permanent guarantees of liberty and property rights exist now than under the Spanish regime." Although the petition was supported by the second naval governor of Guam who referred to its "propriety and urgency," elective representation and self-government were not made available.

In 1917, when the Guam Congress, a purely advisory body, was established, one of its first actions was to request the governor to recommend to the President and the United States Congress that the civil and political rights of the people be defined. It fell on deaf ears.

In the early 1930's the people of Guam submitted a petition with 1,965 signatures to President Roosevelt, seeking greater political recognition. The appointed naval governor also suggested in the early 1930s that fundamental rights then enjoyed by all Americans be proclaimed for the people of Guam by the President, and he also appealed for "some basic law or grant not subject to change at the will of the Governor."

As a result, in 1937 the first bill to confer United States citizenship for Guam was introduced in Congress. Hearings were held, but the Secretary of the Navy testified that it would be detrimental to the best interests of the United States and the local inhabitants to grant such citizenship. Secretary of State Cordell Hull, upon being pressed, concurred with the Secretary of the Navy.

The passage of the Organic Act of Guam in 1950 addressed some of the concerns of the people of Guam and was the product of years of pursuit, struggle, and initiative. However, the Act's provisions, which contained citizenship and organized self-government, did not go far enough. The governor was still appointed by the President and there were no provisions for any representation in Washington. In 1968, Congress eventually approved for Guam to elect its own Governor and in 1970, the first elected Governor of Guam, Carlos G. Camacho, took office.

While progress has been made, the people of Guam have yet to exercise their right to self-determination and continue to seek a more permanent political status. Guam's standing as an unincorporated territory has proven to be no longer suitable or appropriate.

With the pending military buildup, Guam is expecting a substantial growth in its population (some estimates project as many as 30,000 new people on Guam) with a majority of those new residents eligible to participate in the local electoral process. This will ultimately dilute even further, the pool of eligible indigenous voters, leaving the native inhabitants, the Chamorros, a minority in their own homeland and thus, denying the Chamorros the opportunity to truly voice their political desire. The projected population boom is scheduled to occur in a few years, necessitating the quick passage of this legislation.

The resolution of future political status is one of the most important Constitutional responsibilities of the Congress. Congress is vested with the power to admit States and the power to dispose of the territory of the United States. This is one of the fundamental authorities that affect the nature of our society and government. Congress needs to be responsive to the needs and aspirations of the residents of the territories. I believe this legislation is an important first step in providing a pathway so that the people of Guam can resolve the issue of self-determination once and for all with finality and certainty.

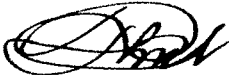
One concern that I have about this legislation is the absence of an appropriation to carry-out the mandates of the bill. I would suggest that a provision for direct appropriation from Congress to the Department of Interior be included in H.R. 3940. As you are well aware, appropriation of federal funds for similar purposes have been approved in the past. Public Law 101-45 provided \$3,500,000 to the Territory of Puerto Rico to "participate in the legislative process involving the future political status of Puerto Rico " and Public Law 101-

219, which appropriated "such sums as may be necessary for a further referendum on approval of the Compact, if one is required, or other appropriate costs associated with the approval process in Palau".

For their part, the National Governors Association, in February 2009, published their policy position on Guam's pursuit of self-determination urging "...Congress and the Administration to recognize and grant the right of local self-government to the people of Guam as a prelude to their immediate exercise of self-determination. Furthermore, we urge Congress and the Administration to immediately recognize and implement the democratically expressed will of the people of Guam, according to their desired political status, with the intention of granting full integration, should the people of Guam choose."

I would like to close my testimony by thanking you, Madam Chairwoman for allowing me to provide testimony, on behalf of the people of Guam, on this most worthwhile legislation. It is my hope that this legislation will be the impetus for Guam to finally resolve the issue of self-determination.

Senseramente,



Judith T. Won Pat, Ed.D.
Speaker