

I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan
BILL STATUS

BILL NO.	SPONSOR	TITLE	DATE INTRODUCED	DATE REFERRED	CMTE REFERRED	FISCAL NOTES	PUBLIC HEARING DATE	DATE COMMITTEE REPORT FILED	NOTES
218-38 (COR)	Shelly V. Calvo	AN ACT TO ADD A NEW § 421 TO CHAPTER 4, TITLE 1, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO MANDATING THE OFFICIAL USE OF THE SPELLING "CHAMORU" IN PLACE OF "CHAMORRO" IN GUAM LAW, POLICY, AND PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, AND TO REQUIRE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS CHANGE BY ALL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PUBLIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS.	11/7/25 8:40 a.m.	11/17/25	Committee on Finance and Government Operations.	Request: 11/17/25 11/25/25	1/20/26 2:00 p.m.	3/3/26	



Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas

CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

February 26, 2026

The Honorable Frank F. Blas Jr.
Speaker, *I Mina'trentai Ocho na Liheslaturan Guåhan*
163 W. Chalan Santo Papa
Hågatña, Guam 96910

Via Honorable Vice Speaker V. Anthony Ada 
Chairman, Committee on Rules

RE: Committee Report on Bill No. 218-38 (COR)

Buenas yan Håfa Ådai Speaker,

Transmitted herewith is the Committee Report on Bill No. 218-38 (COR) – Shelly V. Calvo - “AN ACT TO ADD A NEW § 421 TO CHAPTER 4, TITLE 1, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO MANDATING THE OFFICIAL USE OF THE SPELLING “CHAMORU” IN PLACE OF “CHAMORRO” IN GUAM LAW, POLICY, AND PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, AND TO REQUIRE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS CHANGE BY ALL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PUBLIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS.”

Committee votes are as follows:

- 1 TO DO PASS
- TO NOT PASS
- 6 TO REPORT OUT ONLY
- TO ABSTAIN
- TO PLACE IN INACTIVE FILE



COMMITTEE ON RULES

RECEIVED:

February 27, 2026 9:11 a.m.
Marie Crisostomo

Senseremente,

Senator Christopher M. Dueñas
Chairman, Committee on Finance and Government Operations



Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas
CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

COMMITTEE REPORT

BILL NO. 218-38 (COR)

INTRODUCED BY

Senator Shelly V. Calvo

“AN ACT TO ADD A NEW § 421 TO CHAPTER 4, TITLE 1, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO MANDATING THE OFFICIAL USE OF THE SPELLING “CHAMORU” IN PLACE OF “CHAMORRO” IN GUAM LAW, POLICY, AND PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, AND TO REQUIRE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS CHANGE BY ALL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PUBLIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS.”



Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas

CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

February 26, 2026

MEMORANDUM

To: All Members
Committee on Finance and Government Operations

From: Senator Christopher M. Dueñas
Chairperson, Finance and Government Operations

Subject: Committee Report on Bill No. 218-38 (COR)

Transmitted herewith for your consideration is the Committee Report on **Bill No. 218-38 (COR)** - Shelly V. Calvo - "AN ACT TO ADD A NEW § 421 TO CHAPTER 4, TITLE 1, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO MANDATING THE OFFICIAL USE OF THE SPELLING "CHAMORU" IN PLACE OF "CHAMORRO" IN GUAM LAW, POLICY, AND PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, AND TO REQUIRE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS CHANGE BY ALL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PUBLIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS."

This report includes the following:

- Copy of COR Referral of Bill No. 218-38 (COR)
- Notices of Public Hearing
- Copy of the Public Hearing Agenda
- Public Hearing Sign-in Sheet
- Copies of Submitted Written Testimony
- Committee Vote Sheet
- Committee Report Digest
- Copy of Bill No. 218-38 (COR), As Introduced
- Fiscal Note
- Related News Reports

Please take the appropriate action on the attached vote sheet. Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

Senator Christopher M. Dueñas
Chairperson, Committee on Finance and Government Operations




COMMITTEE ON RULES

Vice Speaker V. Anthony Ada, Chairperson
I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan
38th Guam Legislature

November 17, 2025

To: **Rennae V. C. Meno**
Clerk of the Legislature

Attorney Darleen Hiton
Legislative Legal Counsel

From: **Vice Speaker V. Anthony Ada** 
Chairperson, Committee on Rules

Subject: **Referral of Bill No. 218-38 (COR)**

Håfa Adai,

As per my authority as Chairperson of the Committee on Rules and subject to §6.01(d)(1), Rule VI of our Standing Rules, I am forwarding the referral of **Bill No. 218-38 (COR)** – Shelly V. Calvo. – “AN ACT TO ADD A NEW § 421 TO CHAPTER 4, TITLE 1, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO MANDATING THE OFFICIAL USE OF THE SPELLING “CHAMORU” IN PLACE OF “CHAMORRO” IN GUAM LAW, POLICY, AND PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, AND TO REQUIRE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS CHANGE BY ALL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PUBLIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS.”

Please ensure that the subject bill is referred to the Committee on Finance and Government Operations chaired by Senator Christopher M. Dueñas. I also request that the same be copied to the Prime Sponsor of the subject bill and to Management Information Services (MIS) for posting on our website.

A copy of the bill is available on our legislative website.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Kamarin Nelson, Committee on Rules Director at 671-472-2461.





FIRST NOTICE of Public Hearing on January 20, 2026

Senator Chris Duenas <senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov>
To: phnotice@guamlegislature.gov

Mon, Jan 12, 2026 at 8:00 AM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 12, 2026

MEMORANDUM

To: All Senators, Stakeholders, and Media

From: Senator Christopher M. Dueñas
Chairman, Committee on Finance and Government Operations

Re: FIRST NOTICE of Public Hearing on January 20, 2026

The Committee on Finance and Government Operations will hold a public hearing on **Tuesday, January 20, 2026**, beginning at **2:00 pm** at the Public Hearing Room in the Guam Congress Building. The agenda is as follows:

- **Bill No. 142-38 (COR)** – Telo T. Taitague - AN ACT TO AMEND § 13108.1 OF CHAPTER 13, TITLE 2, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO AMENDING THE SPECIAL COST OF LIVING ECONOMIC TASK FORCE.
- **Bill No. 203-38 (COR)** – Vincent A.V. Borja - AN ACT TO AMEND §43103 OF CHAPTER 43, DIVISION 2, TITLE 11, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO INCREASING THE TAX REBATE FOR QUALIFIED EDUCATOR EXPENSES FROM FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$500) TO ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$1,000) UNDER THE EDUCATOR APPRECIATION ACT.
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If you would like to participate in the Public Hearing listed above or submit written testimony, please contact the Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas for further assistance via email at senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov or by phone at (671) 989-9554.

In compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), all government activities, programs, and services are accessible to individuals with disabilities. *If you or anyone you know requires assistance or special accommodations to participate in the public hearing, please contact the Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas at the contact information provided above.*

The Public Hearing will be broadcast LIVE on local television (GTA Channel 21, Docomo Channel 117) and streamed online through I Liheslaturan Guåhan's YouTube Channel (@guamlegislaturemedia).

This ad was paid with funds by the Committee of Finance and Government Operations.



Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas

Chairman, Committee on Government Finance and Operations

259 Martyr St., Hagatna, Guam 96910

senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov

(671) 989-9554

2 attachments



senator-duenas-headshot.jpg

70K



1N 1-20-26 (142 203, 218, & 62).pdf

361K



Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas

CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

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OFFICE OF SENATOR CHRISTOPHER M. DUEÑAS

259 MARTYR STREET, HAGATNA GUAM 96910 | TEL: 671-989-9554 | SENATOR.DUENAS@GUAMLEGISLATURE.GOV

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Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas

CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

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PUBLIC NOTICES



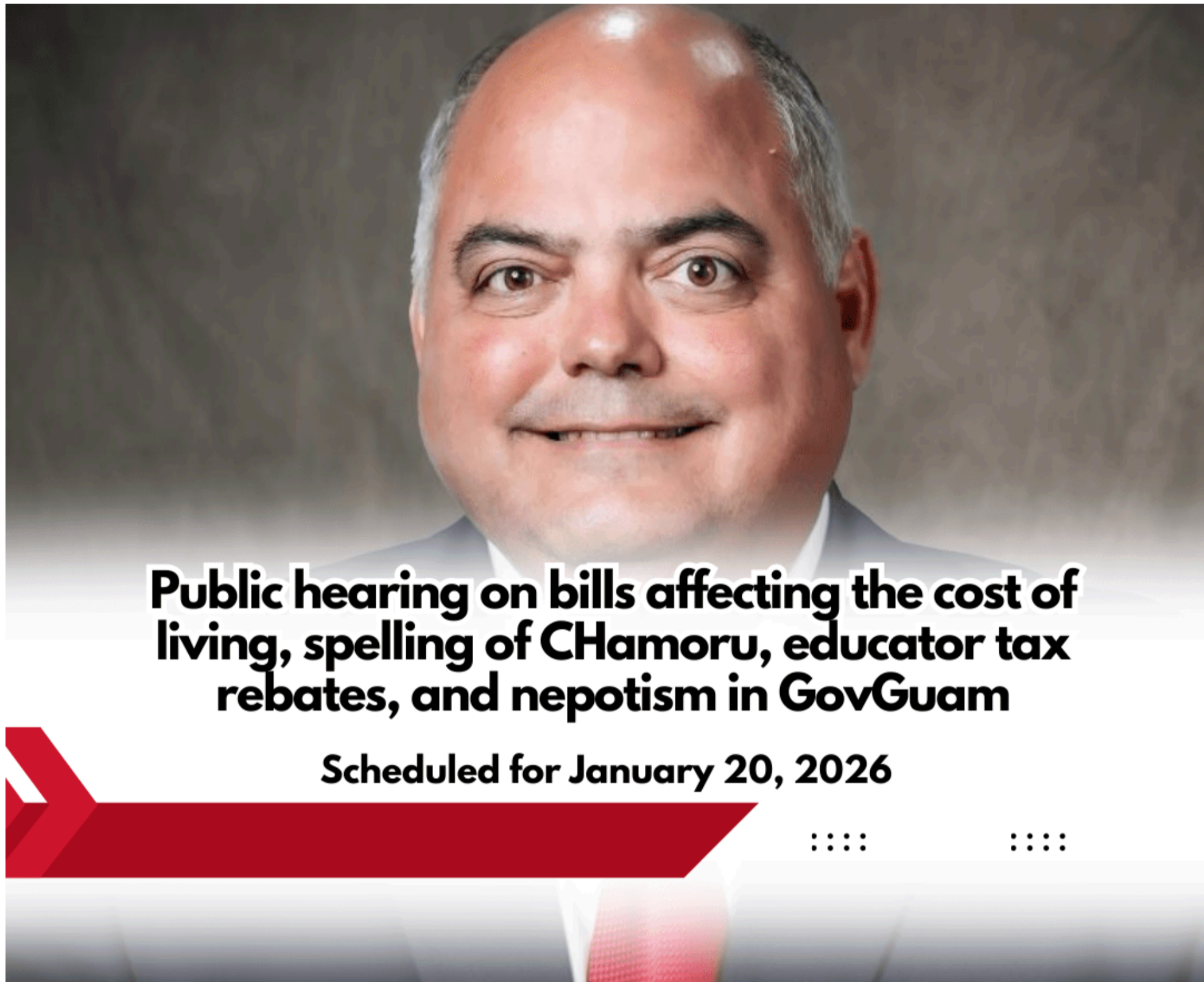
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Below are notices of public hearings posted in chronological order of date and time each is

scheduled to begin:



Public hearing on bills affecting the cost of living, spelling of CHamoru, educator tax rebates, and nepotism in GovGuam

Scheduled for January 20, 2026

⋮⋮⋮

⋮⋮⋮



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FIRST NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING by Senator Chris Duenas
Published on Kandit on January 12, 2026

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Share FAVORITES By Troy Torres Posted on: Monday, 01/12/2026 1:35 PM Legislature Other Events 0 comments 144

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FIRST NOTICE of Public Hearing on January 20, 2026

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**FIRST NOTICE of Public Hearing on January 20,
2026**

PUBLIC HEARING



 **Posted on:** 01/12/2026 08:07 AM

 **Posted by:** Ashley Shinohara

 **Public Hearing Date:** 01/20/2026 02:00 PM

 **Department(s):**
[GUAM LEGISLATURE \(/notices?department_id=92\)](/notices?department_id=92)

 **Division(s):**
OFFICE OF SENATOR CHRISTOPHER M. DUENAS (/notices?division_id=267)

 **Notice Topic(s):** PUBLIC HEARING (/notices?topic_id=74)

 **Types of Notice:** PUBLIC HEARING (/notices?type_id=7)

 **For Audience(s):** PUBLIC (</notices?public=1>)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 12, 2026

MEMORANDUM

To: All Senators, Stakeholders, and Media

**From: Senator Christopher M. Dueñas
Chairman, Committee on Finance and Government
Operations**

Re: FIRST NOTICE of Public Hearing on January 20, 2026

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([http://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%20142-](http://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%20142-38%20(COR)%20Referred%20Version.pdf)

38%20(COR)%20Referred%20Version.pdf) - Telo T. Taitague
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Bill No. 203-38 (COR)

([http://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%20203-38%20\(COR\).pdf](http://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%20203-38%20(COR).pdf)) -

Vincent A.V. Borja - AN ACT TO AMEND §43103 OF CHAPTER 43, DIVISION 2, TITLE 11, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO INCREASING THE TAX REBATE FOR QUALIFIED EDUCATOR EXPENSES FROM FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$500) TO ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$1,000) UNDER THE EDUCATOR APPRECIATION ACT.

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([http://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%20218-38%20\(COR\).pdf](http://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%20218-38%20(COR).pdf)) -

Shelly V. Calvo - AN ACT TO ADD A NEW § 421 TO CHAPTER 4, TITLE 1, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO MANDATING THE OFFICIAL USE OF THE SPELLING "CHAMORU" IN PLACE OF "CHAMORRO" IN GUAM LAW, POLICY, AND PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, AND TO REQUIRE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS CHANGE BY ALL GOVERNMENT

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AGENCIES AND PUBLIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS.

Bill No. 62-38 (COR)

([http://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%2062-38%20\(COR\).pdf](http://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%2062-38%20(COR).pdf)) -

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Senator Chris Duenas <senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov>

SECOND NOTICE of Public Hearing on January 20, 2026

Senator Chris Duenas <senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov>
To: phnotice@guamlegislature.gov

Fri, Jan 16, 2026 at 8:00 AM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 16, 2026

MEMORANDUM

To: All Senators, Stakeholders, and Media

From: Senator Christopher M. Dueñas
Chairman, Committee on Finance and Government Operations

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Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas

Chairman, Committee on Government Finance and Operations

259 Martyr St., Hagatna, Guam 96910

senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov

(671) 989-9554

2 attachments



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2N 1-20-26 (142 203, 218, & 62).pdf

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Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas

CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

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Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas

CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

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SECOND NOTICE of Public Hearing on January 20, 2026

 PRINT

SECOND NOTICE of Public Hearing on January 20, 2026

PUBLIC HEARING



 **Posted on:** 01/16/2026 08:45 AM

 **Posted by:** Ashley Shinohara

 **Public Hearing Date:** 01/20/2026 02:00 PM

 **Department(s):**
GUAM LEGISLATURE (/notices?department_id=92)

 **Division(s):**
OFFICE OF SENATOR CHRISTOPHER M. DUENAS (/notices?
division_id=267)

 **Notice Topic(s):** PUBLIC HEARING (/notices?topic_id=74)

 **Types of Notice:** PUBLIC HEARING (/notices?type_id=7)

 **For Audience(s):** PUBLIC (/notices?public=1)

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- AN ACT TO AMEND § 13108.1 OF CHAPTER 13, TITLE 2, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO AMENDING THE SPECIAL COST OF LIVING ECONOMIC TASK FORCE.

Bill No. 203-38 (COR)

([http://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%20203-38%20\(COR\).pdf](http://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%20203-38%20(COR).pdf))–

~~Vincent A.V. Borja - AN ACT TO AMEND §43103 OF CHAPTER 43, DIVISION 2, TITLE 11, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO INCREASING THE TAX REBATE FOR QUALIFIED EDUCATOR EXPENSES FROM FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$500) TO ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$1,000) UNDER THE EDUCATOR APPRECIATION ACT.~~

Bill No. 218-38 (COR)

([http://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%20218-38%20\(COR\).pdf](http://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%20218-38%20(COR).pdf)) –

Shelly V. Calvo - AN ACT TO ADD A NEW § 421 TO CHAPTER 4, TITLE 1, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO MANDATING THE OFFICIAL USE OF THE SPELLING “CHAMORU” IN PLACE OF “CHAMORRO” IN GUAM LAW, POLICY, AND PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, AND TO REQUIRE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS CHANGE BY ALL GOVERNMENT

.....
AGENCIES AND PUBLIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS.

Bill No. 62-38 (COR)

([http://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%2062-38%20\(COR\).pdf](http://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%2062-38%20(COR).pdf)) -

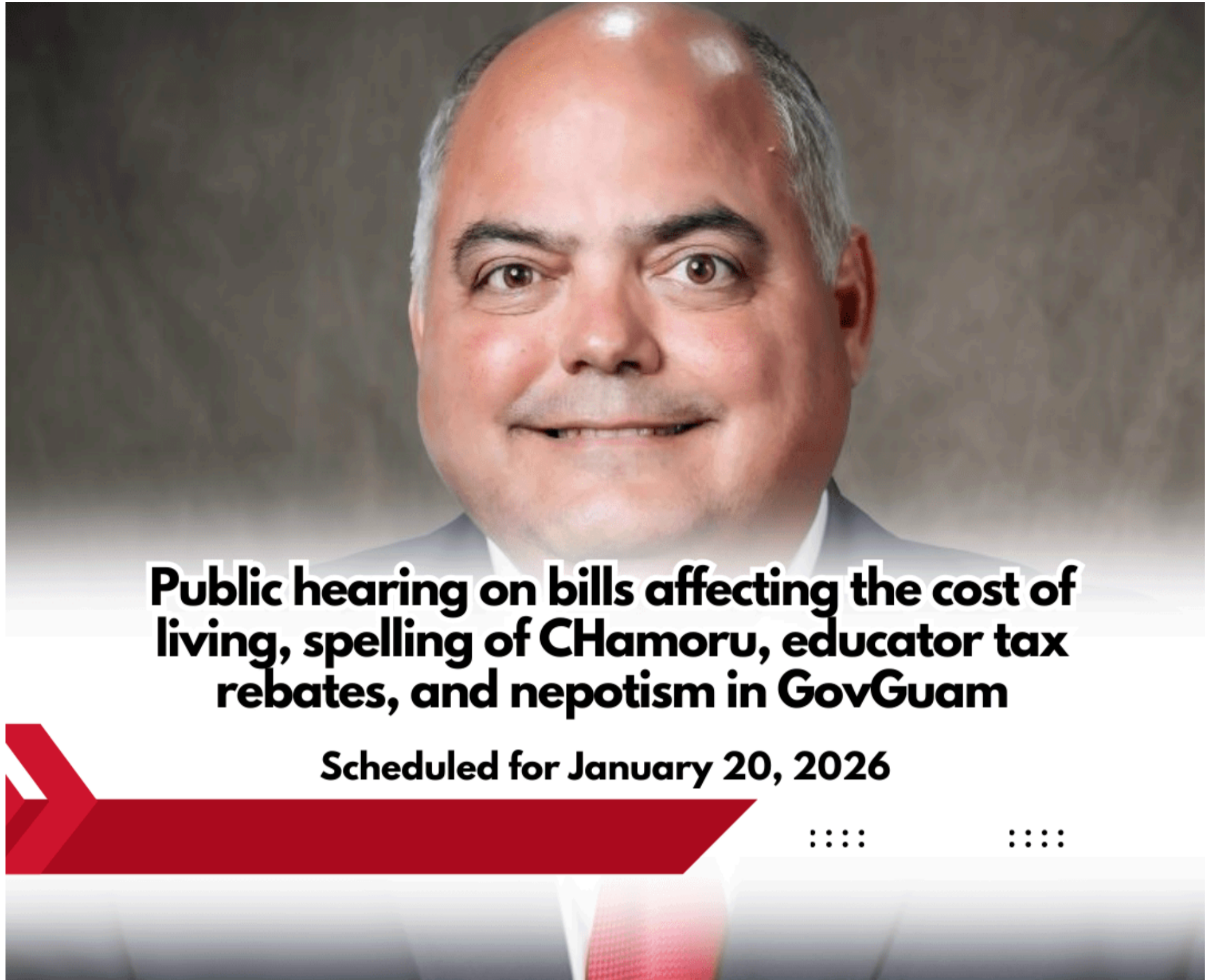
William A. Parkinson - AN ACT TO ADD A NEW CHAPTER 18 TO TITLE 4 OF GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO ENSURING FAIR EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES IN THE GOVERNMENT OF GUAM; AND TO CITE THIS ACT AS THE "NO MORE PARI PARI ACT OF 2025".

If you would like to participate in the Public Hearing listed above or submit written testimony, please contact the Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas for further assistance via email at senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov (<mailto:senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov>) or by phone at (671) 989-9554.

In compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), all government activities, programs, and services are accessible to individuals with disabilities. *If you or anyone you know requires assistance or special accommodations to participate in the public hearing, please contact the Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas at the contact information provided above.*

The Public Hearing will be broadcast LIVE on local television (GTA Channel 21, Docomo Channel 117) and streamed online through Liheslaturan Guåhan's YouTube Channel ([@guamlegislaturemedia](https://www.youtube.com/@GuamLegislatureMedia) (<https://www.youtube.com/@GuamLegislatureMedia>)).

scheduled to begin:



Public hearing on bills affecting the cost of living, spelling of CHamoru, educator tax rebates, and nepotism in GovGuam

Scheduled for January 20, 2026

⋮⋮⋮

⋮⋮⋮



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SECOND NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING by Senator Chris Duenas
Published on Kandit on January 17 and 18, 2026

The Committee on Finance and Government Operations will hold a public hearing on **Tuesday, January 20, 2026**, beginning at **2:00 pm** at the Public Hearing Room in the Guam Congress Building. The agenda is as follows:

- **Bill No. 142-38 (COR)** – Telo T. Taitague – AN ACT TO AMEND § 13108.1 OF CHAPTER 13, TITLE 2, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO AMENDING THE SPECIAL COST OF LIVING ECONOMIC TASK FORCE.
- **Bill No. 203-38 (COR)** – Vincent A.V. Borja – AN ACT TO AMEND §43103 OF CHAPTER 43, DIVISION 2, TITLE 11, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO INCREASING THE TAX REBATE FOR QUALIFIED EDUCATOR EXPENSES FROM FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$500) TO ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$1,000) UNDER THE EDUCATOR APPRECIATION ACT.
- **Bill No. 218-38 (COR)** – Shelly V. Calvo – AN ACT TO ADD A NEW § 421 TO CHAPTER 4, TITLE 1, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO MANDATING THE OFFICIAL USE OF THE SPELLING “CHAMORU” IN PLACE OF “CHAMORRO” IN GUAM LAW, POLICY, AND PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, AND TO REQUIRE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS CHANGE BY ALL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PUBLIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS.
- **Bill No. 62-38 (COR)** – William A. Parkinson – AN ACT TO ADD A NEW CHAPTER 18 TO TITLE 4 OF GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO ENSURING FAIR EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES IN THE GOVERNMENT OF GUAM; AND TO CITE THIS ACT AS THE “NO MORE PARI PARI ACT OF 2025”.

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The Public Hearing will be broadcast LIVE on local television (GTA Channel 21, Docomo Channel 117) and streamed online through I Liheslaturan Guåhan's YouTube Channel (@guamlegislaturemedia).

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CHRIS DUENAS PUBLIC NOTICES

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Senator Chris Duenas <senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov>

Invitation to Public Hearing on Bill No. 218-38 (COR)

Senator Chris Duenas <senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov>

Mon, Jan 12, 2026 at 9:08 AM

To: "melvin.borja@guam.gov" <melvin.borja@guam.gov>, "nathan.cruz@dca.guam.gov" <nathan.cruz@dca.guam.gov>

Buenas yan Hafa Adai!

The Committee on Finance and Government Operations invites you to a public hearing where **Bill No. 218-38 (COR)** is on the agenda. The hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, January 20, 2026, beginning at 2:00 p.m. in the Guam Congress Building.

Your input is valuable, and we encourage you to attend and share your testimony. If you plan to present written testimony, please bring 15 copies or email it to the committee at least 48 hours prior to the hearing.

If you are unable to attend in person, you may submit written testimony via email to senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov at least 48 hours before the public hearing.

Please note, if you plan to testify with a digital presentation via external usb drive, please submit it to our office 48 hours prior to the hearing as it will need to be assessed by our MIS department.

Kindly confirm your receipt of this email and whether you will be attending the hearing. If you have any questions or require additional information, please call our office at (671) 989-9554.

Regards,

--



Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas

Chairman, Committee on Government Finance and Operations

259 Martyr St., Hagatna, Guam 96910

senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov

(671) 989-9554



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Office of Senator Christopher M. Duenas

CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

PUBLIC HEARING AGENDA

Tuesday, January 20, 2026 – Guam Congress Building



2:00PM:

- [Bill No. 142-38 \(COR\)](#) – Telo T. Taitague - AN ACT TO AMEND § 13108.1 OF CHAPTER 13, TITLE 2, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO AMENDING THE SPECIAL COST OF LIVING ECONOMIC TASK FORCE.
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- [Bill No. 62-38 \(COR\)](#) – William A. Parkinson - AN ACT TO ADD A NEW CHAPTER 18 TO TITLE 4 OF GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO ENSURING FAIR EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES IN THE GOVERNMENT OF GUAM; AND TO CITE THIS ACT AS THE “NO MORE PARI PARI ACT OF 2025”.

If you would like to participate in any of the Public Hearing listed above or submit written testimony, please contact the Office of Senator Christopher M. Duenas for further assistance via email at senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov or by phone at (671) 989-9554.

OFFICE OF SENATOR CHRISTOPHER M. DUEÑAS

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Date: January 20, 2026

I Mina'trentai Ocho na Liheslaturan Guahån
Office of Senator Christopher M. Duenas
Chairman, Committee on Finance and Government Operations

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Bill No. 218-38 (COR) – Shelly V. Calvo - AN ACT TO ADD A NEW § 421 TO CHAPTER 4, TITLE 1, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO MANDATING THE OFFICIAL USE OF THE SPELLING “CHAMORU” IN PLACE OF “CHAMORRO” IN GUAM LAW, POLICY, AND PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, AND TO REQUIRE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS CHANGE BY ALL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PUBLIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS.

	Name	Agency / Address	Contact No.	Email	Type of Testimony		Support	
					Oral	Written	Yes	No
1	Laura M.T. Soudon	Komisyon			✓	✓	✓	
2	Robert UNDERWOOD	Komisyon self			X	X	X	
3	Geraldine A Cepeda	UOG Compiler's Office			X	X		
4	Lucia Calvo	Komisyon					✓	
5	Lourdes Mangione	UOG					✓	
6	Peter R Onedera	Self			X	X	X	
7	John Howard	Self			✓	✓	✓	
8	PIATRA TUNCAP	SELF					✓	
9	Jae'anilyn Tuncap	Self					✓	
10	Simone Bollinger	GCE			✓	✓	✓	
11	Lucelle Lizama							
12								



Date: January 20, 2026

I Mina'trentai Ocho na Liheslaturan Guahån
Office of Senator Christopher M. Duenas
Chairman, Committee on Finance and Government Operations

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Bill No. 218-38 (COR) – Shelly V. Calvo - AN ACT TO ADD A NEW § 421 TO CHAPTER 4, TITLE 1, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO MANDATING THE OFFICIAL USE OF THE SPELLING “CHAMORU” IN PLACE OF “CHAMORRO” IN GUAM LAW, POLICY, AND PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, AND TO REQUIRE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS CHANGE BY ALL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PUBLIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS.

	Name	Agency / Address	Contact No.	Email	Type of Testimony		Support	
					Oral	Written	Yes	No
1	Brian J. Terlaje	Yonina Mayor's Office				✓		
2	Olivia Palacios				✓		✓	
3	Elerida Cruz	Commission I Food Ctr			✓		✓	
4	FRANK MORA						✓	
5	JUANITA CRUZ							
6	Michael Evangelista	DCA / Comm						
7	ANNA MARIE AROD	HURAO			✓	✓	✓	
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								

Buenas yan Hafa Adai!

I respectfully submit this testimony in unwavering support of Bill 218-38, a measure that seeks to mandate the official spelling of the word “CHamoru” in place of “Chamorro” and require its use across all Government of Guam agencies and public education institutions.

For more than twenty years, I served as an educator of the CHamoru language and culture within our school system. During that time, I dedicated my life to teaching our children not only how to speak the language, but how to understand its meaning, its spirit, and its deep connection to who we are as a people. I taught using the standardized orthography established by the Kumisión Fino’ CHamoru, a body whose members devoted their lives to protecting the integrity, accuracy, and legacy of our precious language. Their work was not casual or arbitrary—it was intentional, researched, debated, and grounded in cultural responsibility.

This bill is deeply personal to me. Like many of our people, I struggled with my identity. I know firsthand what it feels like to grow up navigating multiple narratives about who we are—our history filtered through colonization, our language altered by outsiders, and our identity often defined for us rather than by us. For many CHamoru people, that struggle continues today. Our children, in particular, are trying to anchor themselves in a world shaped by technology, globalization, and constant cultural noise, while still yearning to belong to something rooted, authentic, and real.

This testimony is not about arguing what is correct versus incorrect. It is not about dismissing anyone’s lived experience or memories. Rather, it is about unity, consistency, and adaptation. Language evolves, but it must do so with intention. Uniformity in the use of “CHamoru” across our government and educational institutions provides clarity, strengthens cultural pride, and reinforces a shared

identity—especially for future generations who will look to these institutions for guidance and legitimacy.

Today, I continue this work not only as an educator at heart, but now as the Honorable Mayor of the Municipality of Yona. In this capacity, I remain committed to perpetuating and educating the correct orthographic CHamoru language—not only within my office, but throughout our village community. Whether through official correspondence, community engagement, cultural events, or daily interactions, I strive to lead by example and ensure that the CHamoru language is honored, respected, and accurately represented.

When government institutions model cultural responsibility, it sends a powerful message: that our language matters, that our scholars are valued, and that our identity is worth protecting. Bill 218-38 does exactly that. It affirms the work of our language experts, supports educators, and most importantly, gives our people—especially our youth—a consistent and respectful foundation upon which to build their sense of self.

If we truly wish to preserve the legacy of our ancestors for generations beyond our own time, then we must begin by standing together today. Let us choose unity over division, intention over ambiguity, and legacy over convenience. Let us do this not just for ourselves, but for those who have yet to be born—who will one day inherit this island, this language, and this identity.

For these reasons, I wholeheartedly support Bill 218-38 and respectfully encourage my brothers and sisters to do the same.

Si Yu'os Ma'åse'.

Buenas yan Håfa Adai!

Kon respetu, hu entrega est ana testimonio ya hu sen sapotte i Bill 218-38 para u ma aturisa i ufisiána dumilitreha i palábran CHamoru ki i palábran Chamorro ya u ma tâgo' i u ma usa todudu gi ufisinan gubietnamenton Guahan yan i sagan idukasion siha.

Desde bente años, hu fa'nâ'gue i lengguahen CHamoru yan kottura gi i halom Dippåtamenton Idukasion Guahan. Guihi na tiempo, hu gopte i lina'la'-hu para i fina'nâ'guen lengguahi yan kottura para i famagu'on yan para u ma tungo' yan u komprende i sustânsia, i Espiritu yan i tinetchen hâyi hit ni' ManCHamoru siha. Hu fa'nâ'gue i estudiânte-ku i otografia na ma adapta ginen i Kumision Fino' CHamoru. Este na kumision ma prutehi i minaolek, i dinanche yan i irensian i lengguahi-ta. I che'cho'-ñiha, i responsapblidât para hita, espisiâtmente para i taotao-ta ni' manmama'ila' siha na tiempo.

Este na Bill gof tâddong na siñiente para guahu. Parehu ha' yan todû i mañe'lu-hu siha, kulan chatsaga an hu aidentifika CHamoru. Sen tâddong i ekspiriansiâ-ku yan i kinalamten i hinanao-hu na CHamoru. Sisigi ha' yu' hu keustiona hâyi yu'? Kao CHamoru yu'? Kao ti CHamoru yu'? Pues yanggen CHamoru yu', debi di hu tungo' i fino'-hu. Åhe' ti i tiningo' ha'' lao i kinemprende, i fundamento yan i dinanche.

Guahan a biahe na i taotao-ta siha, esta pâpago ha' u siente ayo na chinatsaga. Mås para todû i famagu'on-ta. Ma kuestiona i aidentifikan-ñiha sa' put i inangokkon-ñiha nu hita. Taimanu na para ta atbânsa i fina'nâ'guen i mañaina-ta yanggen i interesao i taotao-ta mâs para i teknolohia yan gi fino' Ingles, social media? I malago-ñiha i famagu'on-ta, i fundamenton i lina'la' siha, ayo na lina'la', i lengguahi yan i kottura.

Este na testimonio, ti para hâyi pat hâfa i mâs dinanche pat i ti dinanche, yan lokkue' ti para ta na'tai respetu i mañaina-ta. Lao este na testimonio para i dinanña' hâcha na taotao, i finaloffan yan i adapta. An para ta usa este na palábran CHamoru, ma na'klâru hit, ma nâ'i hit fuetsas yan minesngon, espisiâtmente i tiningo' i taotao-ta yan todû siha na ma keke'espaha i dinanche.

Pâ'go hu kontinuha este na hinanao gi i singsong Yo'ña as i Mahot gi i mâs gâtbo na songsong. Sisigi ha' yu' hu usa yan hu praktika i mâs dinanche na dumilitreha yan otografia i lengguahen CHamoru gi enterementen komunidât yan hu esgaihon siha mo'na yan hu chachalâni siha mo'na lokkue'na ta onra yan respetu i representasion.

Hita na gubietnamento, guaha responsapblidât na para ta na'metgot i che'cho'-ta ginen i taotao-ta siha. Ya ma nâ'i hit mâs metgot na kinalamten i fundamenton lina'la'.

An sen malago' hit na para ta prikura i lina'la' i mañaina-ta siha para todû siha na hinerasion ni' manmama'ila', nisisita na para ta fanohge hâcha na taotao Guahan.

Ta ayek i dinanña' ki i sinepâra. Ta ayek i minaolek ki i bâba. Yan ta ayek i lina'la' ki I dinibidi. Ta cho'gue este, åhe' ti para hita guini na tiempo, lao para todudu hit ni' taotao Guahan.

Para este na rason siha, hu sen sapotte ginen i lina'la'-hu yan i kurason-hu i Bill 218-38 yan kon respetu hu gâgagao i mañe'lu-hu siha na para u sapotte lokkue'!

Sen Dângkulo' na Saina Ma'âse'!



December 31, 2025

TO: Senator Christopher M. Dueñas, *I Mina Trentai' ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan*
Chairperson, Committee on Finance and Government Operations

FROM: Jesse L.G. Alig
Mayor of Piti

SUBJECT: Testimony on Bill No. 218-38 (COR)

The preservation of our indigenous language is a responsibility shared by all - elders, educators, scholars, activists, and policymakers alike. That shared responsibility, however, requires clarity about what truly constitutes preservation and what constitutes interpretation or preference. A public law mandating the spelling change of our language from *Chamorro* to *Chamoru* risks confusing the two.

If cultural preservation is the stated objective, then public policy must focus on outcomes that ensure the language is spoken, transmitted, and lived, not merely standardized on paper. The most urgent threat facing our indigenous language today is not orthography, it is declining fluency, limited intergenerational transmission and the absence of everyday usage among our people.

For the majority of our people, *Chamorro* is not an abstract academic construct. It is the language spoken at home by grandparents, used in prayer, sung in songs, written in family names, etched into legal documents and embedded in our collective memory. A legislative mandate to change spelling does not strengthen that lived relationship; instead, it risks alienating speakers who already use the language with confidence and pride under its existing form.

Language preservation begins with speakers, not spellings. A child does not lose fluency because the word ends in "o" rather than "u." What they lose fluency from is the lack of opportunity, encouragement and necessity to speak the language daily. Public resources would be far better invested in expanding immersion programs, supporting teachers and elders as language bearers, incentivizing households to speak *Chamorro* at home and normalizing its use in public life.

Additionally, changing long-established spellings of names, places and commonly understood terms through legislation introduces confusion rather than continuity. It imposes a particular scholarly or ideological viewpoint onto a community that has not reached consensus. New terminology, such as newly created phrases for “good morning” or “thank you” may be academically interesting, but they are not inherently preservation. They are adaptations and adaptations should emerge organically through use, not through statute.

We must also consider the negative fiscal impacts that these changes will impose on the government of Guam. The Bill excludes proper nouns, historic program names, and references where legal or historical accuracy requires retention of legacy terms. It applies to Government of Guam line agencies, autonomous and semi-autonomous agencies, as well as public educational institutions. The Bill mandates that the term *Chamorro* be replaced with *CHamoru* in all official documents, signage, websites, correspondence, and programs, with the phase-out of *Chamorro* to be completed within eighteen months of enactment. To ensure proper orthographic usage across digital platforms, systems, and communications, Department of Chamorro Affairs, I Kumision i Fino' Chamorro, Office of Technology, and Department of Administration will coordinate with all affected agencies.

Overriding concerns include the potential for an unfunded mandate and limited manpower, as new procedures would need to be absorbed into existing budgets, supplemented by cultural preservation grants or legislative appropriations. Questions also remain regarding the Department of Chamorro Affairs' capacity to implement and enforce the Bill's provisions with current resources, as well as the consequences for government agencies that fail to comply.

Vitally important are the comments and feedback from all affected agencies and organizations on their capacity, plans for training implementation, available funding sources and their willingness to comply with the Bill, including the expenditure of unappropriated funds.

Instead of directing our funds towards unnecessary alterations, we should focus on genuine perpetuation efforts and address more urgent needs that directly affect every resident.

As we reflect on the legacy of our grandparents, who would undoubtedly be astonished by the latest adaptations of the *Chamorro* language, it becomes crucial to address an essential concern. While advocates for language change often argue that the old orthography and former terms stem from Spanish ancestry, we must recognize that language is inherently dynamic and can naturally evolve, influenced by various cultures.

This debate is often framed as tradition versus progress, or authenticity versus colonial influence. That framing is incomplete. Many who oppose the spelling change are not opposed to scholarship, evolution or cultural pride. They are concerned about top-down cultural engineering that prioritizes symbolic change over practical survival. They recognize that language thrives when people feel ownership of it, not when they are told that what they have spoken all their lives is suddenly incorrect.

It must also be acknowledged that while activists and scholars play an important role in cultural discourse, they do not alone represent the majority experience. Policymaking must account for the voices of everyday speakers, families, and elders, those who carry the language not as a theory, but as a way of life. Preservation cannot succeed if it is perceived as corrective or exclusionary.

In closing, the question before us is not whether we value our language, we do. The question is whether legislation focused on spelling advances that value in a meaningful way. True preservation requires investment in people, practice and participation; and should take precedence over modification. We must resist unnecessary changes to a language that has withstood the test of time. Instead of normalizing alterations that do not enhance our linguistic identity, we must direct our efforts towards supporting the individuals and organizations dedicated to the authentic perpetuation of the *Chamorro* language. Until our people are speaking the language freely, confidently and often, changing how it is spelled will remain a symbolic gesture, not a solution.

Let us preserve our language by ensuring it is spoken tomorrow, not by redefining how it is written today.

Sincerely,



JESSE L.G. ALIG

Mayor of Piti



UNIVERSITY OF GUAM
UNIBETSEDÁT GUAHAN
MARGARET PEREZ UCHIMA SCHOOL OF HEALTH
UOG STATION , Mangilao, Guam 96923

**LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY
IN SUPPORT OF BILL 218-38 (COR)**

“AN ACT TO ADD A NEW § 421 TO CHAPTER 4, TITLE 1, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO MANDATING THE OFFICIAL USE OF THE SPELLING “CHAMORU” IN PLACE OF “CHAMORRO” IN GUAM LAW, POLICY, AND PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, AND TO REQUIRE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS CHANGE BY ALL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PUBLIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS.”

January 20, 2026

Dear Senator Shelly Calvo, senators, and leadership of the 38th Guam Legislature:

This testimony is submitted in full support of Bill 218-38 (COR). As a faculty of the University of Guam with academic appointments in both the social work and CHamoru studies programs, and as a former Acting Administrator for the CHamoru Language Commission; I support the effort to align the spelling of CHamoru that is consistent with the adopted Guam orthography that establishes the rules for spelling the CHamoru language. Several years ago, the CHamoru Studies program at the university voted unanimously to spell the word *CHamoru* consistent with the island’s adopted orthography and the CHamoru alphabet. The *Chamorro* spelling utilizes the modern English alphabet and not the CHamoru alphabet. Hence, maintaining the *Chamorro* spelling is illogical, antiquated, and colonial in practice.

While the past has been witness to great political debate and contention on the spelling of the word CHamoru, the mandated effort of Bill 218-38 (COR) truly reflects cultural authenticity and decolonial practice. It is for this reason that I urge full support of the proposed bill. If you require additional information, I may be reached via e-mail at [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED]

Si Yu’os ma’ase,

LisaLinda Natividad, PhD, LCSW
Professor of Social Work

January 20, 2026

Senator Shelly Calvo,
Chair, Committee on Child Welfare, Youth Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women's Affairs, Disability Services, the Arts, Culture, Historic Preservation, and Hagåtña Restoration
I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan

Re: Legislation of Bill 218-38

Buenas Senator Calvo, Speaker Blaz, and members of this Committee,

My name is Mariles Diaz Benavente. I am in full support of the Legislative Act, Bill 218- 38, an Act that requires Government agencies to use the correct orthographical spelling of CHamoru that would help reinforce more frequent and standardized use of the CHamoru language in the workplace.

I came to Guam as a young child in the early 1950's. I attended Guam schools and grew up primarily in Guam. I understood some of the spoken language by being around friends and families who were regular users of the language. But in my adulthood and in my retirement years I found and admit that I did not know enough of the language to converse easily in the vernacular. It did not help that at times when I asked someone how to say a statement in CHamoru, that often it would vary depending on who I asked (especially the spelling of a word).

When the opportunity presented itself, I joined Dr. Laura Souder-Betances' CHamoru Language classes conducted via Zoom in 2020 and have been learning CHamoru ever since in her class. I love that the class is composed of many who are of my generation, many who are CHamoru, and who are, for the first time, studying the language in a systematic way. I discovered that this seemingly informal and light-hearted language, CHamoru, with its friendly terminologies like "ga'chong, maila' hãlom, nihi ta fañocho," is, in fact, a rather intricate language with characteristics that require those standard rules (with exceptions) for consistency to help non-users learn, speak, read and write CHamoru with uniformity. For the first time in my life, I can say I can understand more of the language than ever before. I still have a distance to go to feel confident in speaking the language in public. By the way, I am certain that if anyone notes an error in my CHamoru, that they would be able to go to the Orthography Rule Book and point to the relevant Rule to help me correct my error.

The orthography helps to preserve and perpetuate the language and the Chamoru culture. Contrary to what some people say, the orthography is not reinforcing the use of the Spanish language, but neither is it discounting Spanish influenced words altogether. The *Utugrafihan CHamoru* is reinforcing the spoken words of the sainas before us. It is becoming a written language established by CHamoru language speakers and language specialists knowledgeable of the kuttura, and who have studied aspects of the language in detail.

Guåhan is fortunate and should be very proud that their language is evolving from an oral spoken tradition and being enriched by a written language form as a tool for perpetuity. Legislating the correct use of the word to identify the proud CHamoru is a milestone that can serve as a marker of progress for the language, culture and the identity of the people of Guåhan.

Respectfully submitted,

Mariles D. Benavente

Mariles D. Benavente

January 20, 2026

Testimony on behalf of Bill 218-38

Hafa adai todus hamyo,

Guahu si Simone Efigenia Perez Bollinger, familian Boño. Profesora yu' giya Kulehon Komunidät Guahån.

I'm happy to speak today and give my perspective as we discuss Bill 218-38 "relative to mandating the official use of the spelling 'CHamoru' in place of 'Chamorro'". My perspective is partially informed by my official capacity as associate professor and chairperson of the English Department, which houses the CHamoru track of the Liberal Studies program at Guam Community College. I also speak as a student of the CHamoru language, as someone who delights in learning the grammar and orthography of my mother's first language.

At GCC, we have classes such as CHamoru Composition, which seeks to improve literacy levels in CHamoru, and Utugrufihan CHamoru, Guahån, which examines the local orthography. Both courses use the official Guahån orthography including the spelling 'CHamoru'. In our classes we discuss the role of an orthography and specifically the spelling of CHamoru. Some people still hold on to the Spanish spelling of the word that many of us grew up with, and argue the importance of producing speakers over questions of spelling. They're not wrong, we desperately need young fluent speakers. However, now that we have the GDOE immersion program, Faneyåkan Sinipok, and the Maga'låhen Hurao CHamoru Academy Charter School, both of which are producing fluent CHamoru speakers, the need is shifting. We need consistency.

But it's not only fluent speakers or academics who need consistency. This morning on our way to school my daughter asked what I was up to today. When I told her I was coming here to support this bill, she smiled and said, "Of course you are." She was tickled that our language was being discussed at such a high level of government. "It makes sense," she said. "We don't have a 'c' in our alphabet." So even GDOE students who are not in the immersion program recognize that there is inconsistency in the old spelling.

This really is a time for us CHamorus on Guahån to come together on this topic. It is about defining or redefining ourselves. Just like in English or any other language, the way we spell matters and defines us. Language is dynamic, shifting in word usage, pronunciation, and even spelling. It's amazing, but for many these changes can feel personal. Our passion for the language is so strong that sometimes it feels as if there are landmines in any conversation about orthography or how to say something the correct way in CHamoru. Landmines discourage conversation, and can make it feel unsafe for people who desire to learn the language of our ancestors.

What I hope to offer today is lighter perspective on the CH spelling of CHamoru and our unique orthography here. If you'll indulge me, as an English professor, I'd like to use a short poem to do this. Written by my former colleague at GCC and good friend, Desiree Taimanglo Ventura, this poem speaks to the unique power of the CHamoru language and its orthography, and the desire of many of us who have to study a language we wish was our mother tongue.

It's called "Profesora Fino' Ingles" in the book *Kinalamten gi Pasifiku*.



DESIREE TAIMANGLO VENTURA
Profesora Fino Ingles

Wish I caught glotas like I catch commas,

That I could red pen the shit out of that um-infix

Wish we didn't have to spend this hour talking latin roots,

That I could wax on about our ROOT(s)...words.

Gupu...gumupu.

I wanna call out reduplication real quick, like I do run-ons.

Malalagu.

I want to look it up from Dungca and tell Webster to peace out.

Because who cares if this is the British or American form when all we really wanna know is how Luta says it?

Why can't we spend the day debating whether we're maolek or mauleg?

Why am I teaching a language so bastardized, so weak, that a single sentence needs to borrow from four different countries,

When we have tongues so powerful they change whole words, cutting them apart, interrupting and disturbing them, shaking the hell out of them until they are uniquely OURS.

SINEXY

We steal vowels and replace them, so our melody stays fierce.

I Fleres

We dress up our A's with lonnats, Gave our N's tildes and g's,
making three

because a simple N could not contain us, and we

tricked out our "C"

because one capital letter wasn't even enough to announce us.

Testimony in Support of Bill 218-38 to Adopt CHamoru as an Official Spelling

by

Peter R. Onedera

Tuesday, January 20, 2026 Guam Legislature Public Hearing

Håfa Adai, guåhu si Peter R. Onedera. Gaige yu' guini na ha'åni para bai hu fannå'i testimoñu para sinapotten Priniponi 218-38 para u ma adåpta tåtkumu ufisiåt i dinilitreha kapitalisa CH-a-m-o-r-u gi manåtatte siha na tinige', uson, yan minantieni na dukumento, parehu ufisiåt yan rigulåt, åttikulu, rekot yan kinalamten put este na finiho' ni' hagas ha estapblesa hit na taotao Guåhan yan kontodu i fino'-ta.

I was the executive director of the previous CHamoru Language Commission that adopted this particular spelling that happened in 1989, nearly ~~thirty-seven~~ ^{forty} years ago. The nine members of the commission and I can still name them to this very day, the late Dr. Bernadita Camacho-Dungca, the late Ana Borja Garcia, the late Dr. Jeffrey D. ~~Tainatongo~~ ^{Barcinas}, the late Josefina Perez Barcinas, the late Francisco San Nicolas, and Juanita Toves Peredo, Sister Bernadette Quintanilla, Rosa Salas Palomo, and William Paulino, unanimously decided to obey the rules of the CHamoru orthography that was established in 1983. In looking over my records of those days, the motion was made by Sister Bernadette Quintanilla, seconded by the late Dr. Jeff D. ~~Tainatongo~~ ^{Barcinas}, and unanimously approved by the members present.

I learned the mandate of the orthography and the list of seventeen rules that were its provisions. There were two points made clear by the orthography, first, that its main purpose was to follow the rule as to how to spell words in the language. It didn't change our language in anyway such as grammar and structure and it didn't recommend how the language was to be used. The explanation given was how to conduct correct spelling of words. The second point which can be considered important, was that the orthography wouldn't work if it wasn't used at all. For the CHamoru language to thrive, then it has to be seen in print and to use the correct process.

When a new law established the present Commission on CHamoru Language and the Teaching of the History and Culture of the Indigenous People of Guam, their board of directors continued the use of the spelling and it was this that prompted Senator Shelly V. Calvo from the 38th Guam Legislature to propose that the word ch-a-m-o-r-r-o be officially adopted to reflect kapitalisa CH-a-m-o-r-u. Thus Bill 218-38 formally proposes the spelling to be accepted so that it will be a law on Guam, on government publications, and materials that would also follow suit to ensure public education.

I know that there will be feelings of and about this bill. Some will be bothered, some will be educated on the word and its reason for adoption, and some will be confused, but, at long last,

it will be before the people of Guam who'll be informed in order for a decision to be made whether to accept it or negate it. From this, I'll touch upon some perceived reactions regarding the matter.

There will be questions from our brothers and sisters to the north of us, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas. They have been separate from us for practically more than a century and even though we have now become closely associated because of our status as sister territories of the United States, we will not be together on this move especially as the issue affects us together. We, since the beginning of time, are CHamoru and will forever be. Once this bill becomes law, again, it will affect only those of us who live here on Guam and not the CHamoru of Rota, Tinian, Saipan and the islands farther north.

The spelling will not be acceptable to them. In addition, they do not follow our CHamoru orthography and have embarked on their own to craft and create theirs. In addition, a group of scholars and linguists in the CNMI have been working on their own official dictionary, contrary to the ones written by Dr. Donald Topping, Dr. Bernadita Camacho-Dungca, and Tun Pedro Ogo who was from Luta. All three are now deceased. In addition, the one written, printed, and distributed by the Department of Chamorro Affairs in recent times was our latest compilation of the dictionary. I'm not sure if the CNMI dictionary work has been completed and is now in full use in the commonwealth.

There will also be reactions from our relatives, brothers, sisters, and descendants who now live in the 50 states of the union. When I stayed for a brief period in San Diego, I presented the issue of the spelling to those CHamoru who enrolled in the CHamoru Language Foundation that I established while living there. It was a school where I had huge enrollments from nearby surrounding cities. Many were aghast and denied that such a move was decided by nine members of the island of Guam. Many were extremely upset while others were indifferent as they claimed that they have no more ties to the island and neither to the language. Now, I was aghast at that, too, and it hit me like a slap in the face. The biggest question that resulted in my attempt to educate them, was, why fix something that wasn't broken in the first place? I tried my best to let them know that an official orthography for the island was what brought that about. As a final thought, many said they'll keep the traditional and conventional spelling of Ch-a-m-o-r-r-o until they leave this earth.

I support this bill. I've taught this spelling that I adopted from the CHamoru Language Commission to my years as an instructor at UOG and GCC as well as in the books that I've written in the CHamoru language, academic articles, news columns in both the Pacific Daily News and presently with Kandit News on Facebook.

However, there must be an addendum where I would like to urge its inclusion. The affabeton CHamoru must also be included to explain the capitalization of two letters made up of

two characters: the kapitalisa CH, dikike' letra ch, and the kapitalisa NG, and the dikike' letra ng. All proper nouns such as CHamoru, CHapanes, CHinu as well as NGãnga' like in the also-known-as-family names are capitalized as well as when they begin sentences, too, for example: CHule' i eskoba yan i lampãsu; CHonnek i sahyan huyong gi i katsãda; NGayu put fabot para i ma biran i babui; NGinge' i saina-mu todú i tiempo; yan NGãsan i asson-ña, kulan gã'gã' gui' in the nubenan niñu.

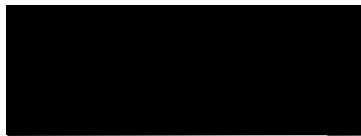
In short, the Åtfabeton CHamoru is taught in the school system but still, not everyone is aware of its existence. Everyone on the island must be made aware that the åtfabetu has been in existence, too, since 1983 when the utugrafiha was established simultaneously. This way, everyone would be educated. I'm not sure at this very moment if anyone among you seated up there know your Åtfabeton CHamoru. Learn it, too, and, in case you didn't know there are twenty-four letters that are pronounced differently from what you are accustomed to in the English alphabet.

In closing, here is the Åtfabetu in all its glory. Those of you who are here and are either members or employees of the **Kumision I Fino' CHamoru yan Fina'nã'guen I Historia yan Lina'la' I Tatao Tãno'**, please recite along with me.

‘	A.	Å.	B.	CH.	D.
E	F	G	H	I	K
L	M	N	Ñ	NG	O
P	R	S	T	U	Y

Si Yu'os ma'ãse'.

Si Peter R. Onedera



Priniponen 218-38

Mandating the official use of the spelling “CHamoru” in place of “Chamorro” in Guam Law, Policy, and public documents, and to require implementation of this change by all government agencies and public education institutions.

Buenas Sinadot/Sinadora....

KAO CHAMORRO HAO PAT CHAMORU HAO? (Taitai 3 biãhi)

Ti put asunton dinilitreha pat utugrafiha ha' este...estague' dangkolo na pätten HÂYI HIT, I HESTORIÂ-TA, YAN I NINA'LA'LA' I KOTTURÂ-TA YAN I TINAOTAO-TA.

Most of the times in the past, I have been very firm about using CHamoru, I will not apologize but I do regret having to proceed in the use English instead of CHamoru to ensure my message is clearly understood on this particular subject, as it has been over 30 years that I have had to face this orthographic reform.

Legislating the spelling of “CHamoru” is not merely a matter of orthography—it is an affirmation of identity, history, our cultural and the survival of our peoplehood. Language is foundational to who we are as a people, and it cannot be separated from our culture, values, and our worldview. It is linked to our existence as a people. Although the orality and storytelling of our ancestors is what has carried the survival of our language through time, we must also adapt and co-exist with the evolution of time, the concept of a writing system.

I witnessed the evolvement of the Kumision I Fino' CHamoru for the past 35 years. I not only watched and learned as a young advocate on this mission of revitalization, I held the position of Director/Administrator. I was so blessed to have the beautiful experience in the 'real work' and very committed work with our Mañaina. At the age of 24, I faced many orthographic reforms, particularly for the spelling of the word “CHamoru”. I am now 58 and we are still trying to get this right.

So I have every reason to be a responsible Chamoru to come before you today to stand for this legislation that may seem to some “unimportant” but yet so vital to the future of our revitalization. For example, the capital “CH” reflects the distinct phonetics of our language and how it distinguishes our people from colonial misinterpretations that have long minimized our presence. By codifying this spelling into law, we provide clarity in education, government, and public records while honoring the resilience of the Chamoru people. This consistency strengthens language revitalization efforts by reinforcing correct usage, supporting curriculum development, and normalizing Chamoru in official spaces. In doing so, we create a stronger foundation for future generations to learn, speak, and proudly carry their language and identity forward.

ANNA MARY ACEA

Imagine children learning the official orthography of Guåhan in school and then living in our community, seeing all different ways we spell words in CHamoru, reading all the various official signage and promotions that do not align to what they are learning in school. When the children ask the question “why”, I can only say “in chachagi fuma’maolek para in na’dinanche patgon-hu” (We are trying to fix and correct it my child). I pray for the day to come that I will not have to keep saying that.

- Like our license plate, where it is spelled tano I Manchamorro, instead of Tåno’ I Manñamoru with out the correct diacritical markings and spelling?!

- our village road names one village spells Chålan Para’isu one way and the other another way?!

We must always be open to recalibrating as we grow as a people. And most importantly, as the mañaina leading the next generations, we must put our differences aside and move with what will benefit our children.

ANITA MARIE ARKO,
Principal + Founder,
Magaliten Hwas

KUMISIÓN I FINO' CHAMORU YAN I FINA'NÁ'GUEN
I HISTORIA YAN I LINA'LA' I TAOTAO TĀNO'

*Commission on CHamoru Language and the Teaching of the History
and Culture of the Indigenous People of Guam*



Re: Testimony on Bill No. 218-38

January 20, 2026

Submitted to: Senator Christopher M. Dueñas, Chairperson
Committee on Finance and Government Operations
38th Guam Legislature

Submitted by: Dr. Laura M. Torres Souder, Géhelo'
Kumisión i Fino' CHamoru yan i Fina'náguen i Historia yan Lina'la' i Taotao Tāno' Guåhan

Senator Shelly Calvo, chair of the legislative committee for culture, has introduced bill 218-38 (COR) which proposes the formal adoption of the orthographically correct spelling “CHamoru” in place of “Chamorro” across Guam law, policy, and public documents. This measure reflects long-standing efforts advanced by the Kumisión and other CHamoru language scholars, educators, and cultural institutions to promote and respect the accurate, culturally-relevant, official spelling cannon contained in Guåhan’s Utugrafihan CHamoru. Personally, I applaud this long-awaited measure. From the vantage point of my role as Géhelo' of the Kumisión, I am immensely grateful that the Senator recognizes and understands the importance of the orthography in language revitalization and has honored our request to introduce this legislation.

The orthographically aligned spelling of CHamoru has been used for decades by teachers and those learning how to read and write in our indigenous language. Because our children are not learning CHamoru as their first language, they learn it in school or in classroom settings through written material. Our ancestors and elders, who learned CHamoru as a spoken language through oral transmission, did not need a spelling system to teach it to the next generation. However, the interruption in learning CHamoru that way due to English-only policies promulgated by the U.S. Government, necessitated that we take a different approach. We have gone from orality to literacy. This requires understanding grammar and spelling rules. Teaching CHamoru as a second language has made standardization of spelling a critical need.

Every dynamic modern language has a system of spelling and grammatical rules attached to it. CHamoru continues to be a living language because speakers through the centuries have made changes, incorporated new words and customized them to the implicit rules contained in our spoken language. The orthographic spelling of CHamoru has been used for decades but not consistently. This effort to standardize government usage is but another step to complete the process.

Aligning our spelling and naming practices with the way words are pronounced in our spoken language is a sign of profound respect for the Mother Tongue that has been gifted to us by our indigenous ancestors. When we transform borrowed words or colonial terms so that they become part of our linguistic structure, we are engaged in decolonization. Such acts of

cultural sovereignty move us away from the spotlight of doubt that is often caused by a colonial mindset.

Why now? Is it so urgent? Simply put, incorrect spelling of proper names is not acceptable. If your name was misspelled, especially in official documents, wouldn't you do what it takes to seek legal redress and ensure that the correct spelling of who you are called is used moving forward?! That is what this act represents.

I commend Senator Calvo and the other members of the 38th Guam Legislature for their efforts to ensure CHamoru language continuity and for introducing measures to provide second language learners of the CHamoru language with a spelling cannon or standard for consistency and predictability in pronunciation, reading and writing.

In conclusion, the spelling change proposed in Bill 218-38 (COR) is no small thing. People have fought and died to protect, defend and perpetuate their ancestral languages. Acts of cultural sovereignty, restorative justice and decolonization are not exercises in futility. Nor are they a waste of effort, money and time. As nations throughout the world decolonize, they transform colonial spellings of what they are called to more authentic, culturally-relevant terms so Palau reverts to Belau, Peking reverts to Beijing, Bombay reverts to Mumbai. For us, Chamorro becomes CHamoru. Let's get this done!

January 20, 2026

Honorable Chris Duenas and Shelly V. Calvo
Guam Legislature
Hagatna GU

Testimony of Robert A Underwood
Bill 218-38

Chairperson of the Committee on Child Welfare, Youth Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women's Affairs,
Disability Services, the Arts, Culture, Historic Preservation & Hagåtña Restoration,

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

Si Yu'os ma'ase for the opportunity to present testimony on this important piece of legislation. I have been professionally and emotionally involved in the study, protection and advancement of almost all issues related to the CHamoru people for almost all of my entire life. This stretches from the time I tried to teach my 5th grade classmates in Norwalk California a few words in CHamoru to calling out adopted CHamoru words like "bogart" and "mullard" to the military and their unnecessarily cooperative local political leadership. I avoided other great contributions from English like kaksaka.

Along the way, there are important milestones of success and perhaps an equal number of disappointments. But almost all of the struggles revealed the strength of the people who historically were the first to sail over the remote ocean to arrive here in Guahan and a little bit to the north in Sa'ipan. We are not talking about a bedraggled people barely surviving into the present century. We are talking about a great people who did great things in the past and established a civilization and a way of life that continues to inspire us for almost 4,000 years.

The greatest gift that we have from them is the language itself. It is a remarkable feature of our existence today that we use words which are comprehensible to the first people to live in these islands. I think of words like pakyu, tupu, pugas and mama'on and I am instantly transported through millennia of existence.

We are here to formalize the spelling of the name of these people, at least here in Guahan. There will be arguments about whether CHamoru is the right term and about why change its spelling when it has been written Chamorro for at least the past 200 years. It is amazing that with all of our capacity to understand human history, we remain stuck on spelling as the definer of who we are.

There has been a lot of ridiculous chatter aimed at you Madam Chair that this is symbolic and doesn't address more substantive economic or political issues. Of course it is symbolic. That is exactly why it is important and that is why we need to address it. We do many things ritually and symbolically. It defines, reinforces and inspires our sense of purpose and identity. When we say the pledge of allegiance or the inefresi, the words are symbolic. But they remind us what we are about and what we should strive for. When the words "liberty and justice for all" are repeated by millions of children every day, I wonder whether the adults are really trying to carry out that mission. When thousands of children sing "Fanohge CHamoru," I wonder whether the adults are really standing up for the CHamoru people.

Today is one of those days where we symbolically stand up for the CHamoru people. Of course, changing the spelling doesn't by itself promote the language or culture. Of course, arguments about

spelling and the dreaded orthographic rules seem pointless and academic. The same could be said for orthographic rules for English, but the rules themselves are necessary. I try to smile when members of the Kumision who have been entrusted by law to make rules are dismissed as academics lording over the public. We have a public body to make this determination. For American English, the rules are made by dictionaries and the Modern Language Association. Basically, English language academics made those decisions. The good news for us here in Guahan is that you can always talk to someone who makes the spelling rules. They have regular and public meetings every month. I doubt if anyone here knows anyone who determines American English spelling rules.

In order to facilitate the use of the language, in order to encourage reading and writing, we need a system that we all utilize. Spelling rules may or may not make sense to the millions who use it, but they use the rules in any event. Fortunately, we live in a world where typesetting, document presentation and spelling corrections are no longer necessary. Computer programs will allow the Compiler of Laws here in Guahan to make a simple correction to CHamoru and the entire code is corrected in a matter of seconds. For those who write, we have spell check which will correct us. And that program is coming soon to a computer near you for CHamoru.

In this particular instance, the legislation before you requires that it be spelled CHamoru. This is not a new idea nor will it cause language disorientation. In fact, it is spelled CHamoru more frequently now than the older, more familiar form for us older citizens. This is how it is taught in schools, this is how people use it in the internet. This is the preferred form for younger generations.

I am a proud member of the Kumision i Fino' CHamoru. Dr. Laura Souder has already presented the Kumision's position on this matter. But I just want to make this point. Previous Kumisions basically avoided the issue by proclaiming that the orthography doesn't apply to proper nouns. Chamorro is a proper noun. But we have all known since the beginning that it isn't pronounced Chamorro in the CHamoru language. It is about time that the spelling reflect the reality of pronunciation and popular usage today.

The Kumision has other legal obligations in addition to making spelling rules. It has responsibilities in deciding place names. There are many more controversies to come as when the Kumision addresses whether Nimitz Hill, Marbo, Agafa Gumas and Camp Witek among other should revert back to its original forms. That is a charge given to the Kumision as well and I am sure that there will be avid conversation on those items as well.

Si Yu'os Ma'ase

Si Robert A Underwood

Testimony on bill No. 218-38(COR)

Senator Christopher M. Duenas, Chairperson, Committee on Finance and Government Operations

Submitted by: John Howard

Subject: Testimony on bill No. 218-38(COR)

Date: January 20, 2026

As a speaker of one of the indigenous languages of Micronesia, I understand how critical it is to preserve and perpetuate our Mother Tongue that our ancestors gifted to us.

All the Micronesian languages, including CHamoru, were taught generation to generation orally. Children used to learn their indigenous language as their first language.

Today, many island youth are learning English first and do not learn their indigenous language as they did in the past, so we must teach our languages as second languages. This requires that we go from orality to literacy and depend on the reading and writing of our languages in order to teach them to the next generation. We now have to teach the grammar and spelling rules of our languages.

Micronesians can learn from the experience of the CHamoru people, as our children are not learning to speak their Mother Tongue in the way that my generation and those before us learned from birth.

I support the work of the CHamoru Language Kumision to standardize the spelling of the CHamoru language beginning with the term, CHamoru. I fully support the effort by Senator Shelly Calvo to recognize this by making it public policy.

Thank you.



Supreme Court of Guam

OFFICE OF THE COMPILER OF LAWS



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KATHERINE A. MARAMAN
Chief Justice

GERALDINE AMPARO CEPEDA
Compiler of Laws

January 20, 2026

Hon. Christopher M. Duenas, Chairperson
Committee on Finance and Government Operations
38th Guam Legislature
Calvo Arriola Building Suite 101-B
259 Martyr Street
Hagåtña, Guam 96910

Re: Testimony on Bill No. 218-38 (COR)

Dear Chairperson Duenas,

I am submitting testimony regarding Bill No. 218-38 (COR), AN ACT TO ADD A NEW § 421 TO CHAPTER 4, TITLE 1, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO MANDATING THE OFFICIAL USE OF THE SPELLING “CHAMORU” IN PLACE OF “CHAMORRO” IN GUAM LAW, POLICY, AND PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, AND TO REQUIRE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS CHANGE BY ALL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PUBLIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS, introduced by Senator Shelly Vargas Calvo.

The stated intent of Bill No. 218-38 is the formal adoption of the spelling “CHamoru” in place of “Chamorro” across official government documents, statutes, educational materials, and agency names. Specifically, Section 2 of the bill proposes to add a new Section 421 to Chapter 4 of Title 1 of the Guam Code Annotated.

I present testimony today in my capacity as the Compiler of Laws, the official publisher of primary Guam law, which includes but is not limited to, statutes, rules and regulations, and rulings from the courts of Guam. Although I recognize the important intent of Bill 218-38, I would like to express my reservations as to some of the language in the bill, and to offer points for consideration.

First, the bill refers only to the legacy spelling of “Chamorro”; however, the alternative spelling of “Chamoru” has also been used in past legislation, policy, and public documents. If there is an intent to use “CHamoru” exclusively, the committee may wish to clarify that both spellings of the term (i.e. “Chamorro” and “Chamoru”) should be replaced with “CHamoru.”

Second, while proposed § 421(b) defines the legacy spelling ^{that} mandated to be replaced, it also sets forth exceptions. Specifically, there is no change for usage “in a historical or legally established context.” This standard is vague and lacks clear guidance for applying the exceptions, is open to interpretation. Therefore, it inherently involves the exercise of discretion in interpreting the usage. The unintended result would be the potential for conflicting or contradictory application of the exception, which would cause inconsistency and confusion regarding the appropriate use of CHamoru.

The Judiciary of Guam is an equal employment opportunity provider and employer.

Third, and most significantly for the Compiler's Office, is proposed subsection § 421(c), which states:

(c) The Compiler of Laws is authorized and directed to revise the Guam Code Annotated (GCA) and other codified government publications to replace all instances of the term "Chamorro" with "CHamoru," except in proper nouns, names of historic programs, or references where legal or historical accuracy requires retention of the legacy term.


As drafted, subsection (c) refers only to codified publications, such as the GCA and the Guam Administrative Rules and Regulations (GAR) online. However, the Compiler's Office is also responsible for publishing other primary sources of law, such as court decisions, which are not codified. If there is an intent to extend the authority and mandate to all publications from the Compiler's Office, the committee may wish to clarify the language to ensure that the language of the bill meets the intent of the legislation.

Proposed subsection § 421(c) also includes exceptions to the Compiler's mandate to replace; specifically, there is no change for: "proper nouns, names of historic programs, or references where legal or historical accuracy requires retention of the legacy term." While this language is somewhat more specific than proposed § 421(b), it still calls for interpretation and the exercise of discretion to determine whether to make the replacement. Again, applying the exceptions might result in inconsistency and confusion. One example is 17 GCA § 12103, Definitions, where § 12103(c) refers to the "Chamorro Language Immersion Program." This usage is both a proper noun and a historic program; therefore, the exception of proposed § 421(c) would apply, and consequently, the legacy spelling of "Chamorro" would not be changed by the Compiler. The irony of this example, is that applying the exception mean the program to preserve Guam's language and culture would retain the "Spanish colonial-era spelling."

On a fundamental level, I must express my concern that the tasks contemplated by Bill 218-38 extend beyond the Compiler's statutory authority regarding revision, and requires using vague standards to determine whether to alter statutory language. It is left to the Compiler, first, to identify all occurrences of the legacy spelling; second, to determine whether the exceptions apply, and significantly, whether to change statutory language that was originally passed by the Guam Legislature.

In conclusion, I respectfully request the committee members consider the concerns I have raised in my testimony. Please feel free to contact me for any further assistance.

Thank you for your time.



GERALDINE AMPARO CEPEDA
Compiler of Laws

DIPATTAMENTON I KAOHAO GUINAHAN CHAMORU



Lourdes A. Leon Guerrero
Maga'håga

Joshua F. Tenorio
Sigundo Maga'låhi

Department of CHamoru Affairs



Melvin Won Pat-Borja
Mås Ge'hilo

January 16, 2026

Senator Chris Duenas
Committee on Finance and Government Operations
Testimony from Department of CHamoru Affairs in support of Bill 218-38.

Håfa adai,

I na'ån-hu si Michael Lujan Bevacqua, Guahu i curator para I Museon Guåhan ya un hagas fafa'na'guen CHamoru gi halom i kumunidåt yan gi unibetsidåt na bånda. Lao guini gi este tinige'-hu, hu testiguguyi i che'cho'-hu DCA. I Dipattamenton Guinahan Kaohao Guinahan CHamoru (DCA), ha sapopotte este Bill 218-38, inentrega as Senadora Shelly Calvo.

Para åpmam na tiempo, i taotao-ta ta u'usa i sisteman otro para ta tuge' i lengguahi-ta, lao desde i 1960s anai ma'establesa i primet na Kumision i Fino' Chamorro, manmacho'cho'cho' i manmenhalom na taotao put manmanaliligao otro, mås propiu yan mås uma'aya na manera para ta chule' i sunedon i fino'-ta ya ta fama'tinige'. I chalan desde ayu na tiempo ti tunas, ti libianu, gi minagåhet, gof matahlek yan guaha nai gof mappot lökkue'

Lao todú i tiempo mangginigiha i taotao nu i ideha na debi di ta areklåyi i taotao-ta ni sisteman mandilitrereha, "orthography" ni' siña umayuda hit sumusteni mo'na i fino'-ta. Para meggai sientu años, maolek ha' na masångan ha' i lengguahi-ta, lao gi este tiempun på'go, ta tungo' na sen prisisu na u matuge' lökkue' i fino'-ta, ya taimanu matuge', "consistent."

When it comes to spelling, orthographies, letters and alphabets, certain things tend to garner the most attention, but may not be the most important. While there are three ways in which the name of the indigenous people of the Marianas is spelled today, "Chamorro," "Chamoru" and "CHamoru," and there are still a considerable number of people who may not like the way "CHamoru" looks because of the letter "CH," or because it is different than history, the most important thing to consider here is not appearances, but rather accuracy and consistency.



193 Chalan Santo Papa Juan Pablo Dos Hagåtña, Guam 96910
P.O. Box 2950 Hagåtña, GU 96932 Tel: (671) 989-2426 ♦ Fax: (671) 989-7219

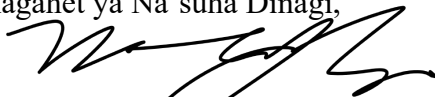


While C and H, might be separate letters in the English alphabet, they appear together for historical reasons as a single letter in the CHamoru alphabet. Because of this, to ensure consistent and accurate rules, “CHamoru” is how it should be spelled. This is what is at the heart of the work of I Kumision I Fino’ CHamoru and this bill, is the ensure accuracy and consistency, to help provide the foundation for the CHamoru language moving ahead. We have already long been hampered in our efforts to teach the CHamoru language in the Guam public school systems by insufficient instruction and contact time. The lack of consistency has only compounded this, as the key to learning things such as spelling, orthography is consistency and reinforcement.

While the CHamoru language itself is something we have inherited from our ancestors across thousands of years, the spelling “Chamorro” is something that is much more complicated. It comes as part of our colonial legacy, and part of the process of decolonization is engaging in discussion about what to do about colonial legacies, how to move ahead. Even though we can see that the spelling “Chamorro” has been used for centuries, the spelling “CHamoru” captures a closer pronunciation of the word and also reflects our own efforts to develop an orthography that matches the particularities for our language. Even if it may be some time before we can achieve formal political decolonization in terms of changing Guam’s political status, establishing an orthography that fits our own rules is nonetheless an important act of decolonization.

Guaguaha ha’ meggai mäs cho’cho’ para u macho’gue put i nina’lä’la’ yan i minanteni i Fino’ CHamoru, kosaki siña ta na’ siguro na este na lengguåhi sumisiha yan i taotao-ta mo’na, humåhagong, lumå’la’la’, gi un såkman gi tiempo, lao bonito na siña na ta huchom este na kapitulu gi hestoria-ta.

Sahuma Minagahet ya Na’suha Dinagi,



Michael Lujan Bevacqua
Curator, Guam Museum
Dipattamenton I Kaohao Guinahan CHamoru



**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

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JUDITH T. WON PAT, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Education

January 26, 2026

VIA E-MAIL

Office of Senator Shelly V. Calvo
Guam Congress Building
163 Chalan Santo Papa
Hagåtña, Guam 96910
Tel.: (671) 989-5682

officeofsenatorshellycalvo@guamlegislature.gov

Re: Written Testimony in Support of Bill No. 218-38 (COR)

Buenas! I write in support of Bill No. 218-38 (COR), an act to mandate the official use of the spelling "CHamoru" in place of "Chamorro" throughout all government agencies, entities, and public institutions. As evidenced by the Guam Department of Education's "CHamoru Studies and Special Projects Division, the spelling "CHamoru" has already been put to use in some areas of Government, to include the Guam Department of Education. This Bill takes into account the reality that no uniform spelling has been employed by our Government. As mentioned at the January 20, 2026 Public Hearing on the Bill, three (3) different spellings of "CHamoru" exist in our Government. This lack of clarity has led to confusion and evinced a poor expression of what should be a strong and unified expression of indigenous identity.

To remedy these inconsistencies, I would agree with, and was heartened to hear Mr. Peter Onedera's testimony in which he discussed the importance of the Atfabetu CHamoru and the disconnect between its being updated and the negative effect that people's not knowing the CHamoru alphabet has on our overall understanding of adopting "CHamoru" as the official spelling. I believe that education is the key to success for this endeavor, and would propose in unison with Mr. Onedera, that educational materials dedicated to clarifying the significance of adopting "CHamoru" as the official spelling be prepared for our school children, visitors, and fellow citizens of Guahan in order to implement this mandate, should it become a law. Our CHamoru Studies and Special Projects Division, in consultation with Dr. Clare Camacho with The University of Guam Global Learning & Engagement have very recently revisited how we teach our students how to learn both our written and spoken CHamoru language. Through this Bill, we can finally lead and teach by our example. It is time for this question to be resolved, but it must be done so with compassion, patience, and strong, clear guidance.

I look forward to our Deputy Director of Curriculum and Instruction and our CHamoru Studies and Special Projects Division, as well as our Board working cooperatively with the Department

Written Testimony in Support of Bill 218-38 (COR)

January 26, 2026

Page 2 of 2

of CHamoru Affairs and the Kumision I Fino' CHamoru in order to swiftly and sensibly implement this long overdue expression of consistency and unity.

Senseramente,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Judith T. Won Pat', enclosed within a hand-drawn oval.

Judith T. Won Pat, Ed.D.
Superintendent, GDOE



Office of Senator Christopher M. Dueñas
CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

COMMITTEE VOTE SHEET

Bill No. 218-38 (COR) – Shelly V. Calvo – “AN ACT TO ADD A NEW § 421 TO CHAPTER 4, TITLE 1, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO MANDATING THE OFFICIAL USE OF THE SPELLING “CHAMORU” IN PLACE OF “CHAMORRO” IN GUAM LAW, POLICY, AND PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, AND TO REQUIRE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS CHANGE BY ALL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PUBLIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS.”

Committee Members	Signature	TO DO PASS	TO NOT PASS	TO REPORT OUT ONLY	TO ABSTAIN	TO PLACE IN INACTIVE FILE
Senator Christopher M. Dueñas <i>Chairperson</i>				X		
Senator V. Anthony Ada <i>Vice Chairperson</i>	E-Vote 2/26/26			X		
Senator Frank F. Blas, Jr. <i>Member</i>	E-Vote 2/26/26			X		
Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane <i>Member</i>	E-Vote 2/26/26			X		
Senator Jesse A. Lujan <i>Member</i>	E-Vote 2/26/26			X		
Senator Vincent A.V. Borja <i>Member</i>	E-Vote 2/26/26			X		
Senator Tina Rose Muña Barnes <i>Member</i>						
Senator Joe S. San Agustin <i>Member</i>	E-Vote 2/26/26	X				



Karl Pangelinan <karl.p@guamlegislature.gov>

Urgent E-Vote for Bill #218-38 - CHamoru Bill (SVC)

7 messages

Karl Pangelinan <karl.p@guamlegislature.gov>
To: cmdcommittee@guamlegislature.gov
Cc: Senator Chris Duenas <senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov>

Thu, Feb 26, 2026 at 10:02 AM

Hafa Adai Committee Members:

Please find committee report attached for Bill #218 -38 - Sen. Shelly V. Calvo -
“AN ACT TO ADD A NEW § 421 TO CHAPTER 4, TITLE 1, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO MANDATING THE OFFICIAL USE OF THE SPELLING “CHAMORU” IN PLACE OF “CHAMORRO” IN GUAM LAW, POLICY, AND PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, AND TO REQUIRE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS CHANGE BY ALL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PUBLIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS.”

Your action on this measure is respectfully requested.

Kindly indicate your preferred course of action by selecting one of the following options:

TO DO PASS

TO NOT PASS

TO REPORT OUT ONLY

TO ABSTAIN

TO PLACE IN INACTIVE FILE

Please submit your response as soon as possible by **REPLY ALL** to this email. Your responses will be logged into the vote sheet, which will be submitted as part of the final Committee Report to the Committee on Rules.

Si Yu'os Ma'åse' for your prompt attention to this matter.

Respectfully yours,
Karl Pangelinan
Office of Senator Chris M. Duenas - Chairman Finance & Gov't Operation

Bill 218-38 CR.pdf
17984K

Senator Jesse Lujan <senator.lujan@guamlegislature.gov>
To: Karl Pangelinan <karl.p@guamlegislature.gov>
Cc: cmdcommittee@guamlegislature.gov, Senator Chris Duenas <senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov>

Thu, Feb 26, 2026 at 10:50 AM

To Report Out only

[Quoted text hidden]

--


Office of Majority Leader Jesse A. Lujan
Chairman, Committee on Transportation, Tourism, Customs, Utilities and Federal & Foreign Affairs
259 Martyr St., Hagatna, Guam 96910
senator.lujan@guamlegislature.gov
(671) 969-6525
Office of Legislative Secretary Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane

<office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov>

To: Karl Pangelinan <karl.p@guamlegislature.gov>

Cc: cmdcommittee@guamlegislature.gov, Senator Chris Duenas <senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov>

Thu, Feb 26, 2026 at

11:34 AM

To Report Out Only.

On Thu, Feb 26, 2026 at 10:03 AM Karl Pangelinan <karl.p@guamlegislature.gov> wrote:

[Quoted text hidden]

--


Office of Legislative Secretary
SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE
I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan | 38th Guam Legislature

Chairperson, Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs

163 W. Chalan Santo Papa, Hagåtña, Guam 96910

office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov

671-989-2572

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Joe S. San Agustin <senatorjoessanagustin@gmail.com>

Thu, Feb 26, 2026 at 11:42 AM

To: Office of Legislative Secretary Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane <office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov>

Cc: Karl Pangelinan <karl.p@guamlegislature.gov>, cmdcommittee@guamlegislature.gov, Senator Chris Duenas <senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov>

To Pass. Thank you!

The Office of Senator Joe S. San Agustin
I Mina'trentai Ocho na Liheslaturan Guåhan

38th Guam Legislature

Guam Congress Building, 163 Chalan Santo Papa, Hagåtña, Guam 96910

 T: (671) 989-5445 F: (671) 969-6737 E: senatorjoessanagustin@gmail.com

 Website: www.senatorjoessanagustin.com

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[Quoted text hidden]

Office of Senator Borja <contact@senatorvinceborja.com>

Thu, Feb 26, 2026 at 11:44 AM

To: "Joe S. San Agustin" <senatorjoessanagustin@gmail.com>
 Cc: Office of Legislative Secretary Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane <office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov>, Karl Pangelinan <karl.p@guamlegislature.gov>, cmdcommittee@guamlegislature.gov, Senator Chris Duenas <senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov>

TO REPORT OUT ONLY.

Respectfully,



Office of Senator Vincent A.V. Borja

Committee on Education, Libraries, & Public
 Broadcasting

38th Guam Legislature

Suite 502, DNA Bldg. [238 Archbishop Flores St.](#)

[Hagåtña, Guam 96910](#)

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E contact@senatorvinceborja.com

[Quoted text hidden]

Speaker Frank Blas Jr. <speakerblas@guamlegislature.gov>

Thu, Feb 26, 2026 at 2:00 PM

To: Office of Senator Borja <contact@senatorvinceborja.com>

Cc: "Joe S. San Agustin" <senatorjoessanagustin@gmail.com>, Office of Legislative Secretary Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane <office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov>, Karl Pangelinan <karl.p@guamlegislature.gov>, cmdcommittee@guamlegislature.gov, Senator Chris Duenas <senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov>

To Report Out Only



Speaker, Frank F. Blas, Jr.

I Mina'trentai Ocho na Liheslaturan Guåhan 38th Guam Legislature

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[Quoted text hidden]

Vice Speaker V. Anthony Ada <vicespeakertonyada@guamlegislature.gov>

Thu, Feb 26, 2026 at 3:22
 PM

To: "Speaker Frank Blas Jr." <speakerblas@guamlegislature.gov>

Cc: Office of Senator Borja <contact@senatorvinceborja.com>, "Joe S. San Agustin" <senatorjoessanagustin@gmail.com>, Office of Legislative Secretary Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane <office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov>, Karl Pangelinan <karl.p@guamlegislature.gov>, cmdcommittee@guamlegislature.gov, Senator Chris Duenas <senator.duenas@guamlegislature.gov>

To report out only



Office of Vice Speaker V. Anthony Ada

38th Guam Legislature

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COMMITTEE REPORT DIGEST – BILL #218-38 (COR)

[Public Hearing - Senator Christopher M. Duenas - January 20, 2026 2pm - YouTube](#)

COMMITTEE REPORT DIGEST

Committee on Finance and Government Operations

Senator Christopher M. Duenas – Chairman

I. **OVERVIEW**

Bill #218-38 was introduced by Senator Shelly V. Calvo on November 7, 2025, and referred to the Committee on Finance and Government Operations on November 17, 2025. The Committee held a public hearing on Tuesday, January 20, 2026 at 2:00pm in the Guam Congress Building Public Hearing Room.

Notices for the hearing were posted on the Government Public Notices Portal and distributed via email to all senators and major media outlets on January 12, 2026 (5-day notice) and again on February 17, 2026 (48-hour notice).

SENATORS PRESENT:

Christopher M. Duenas – Chairman

Shelly V. Calvo

William A. Parkinson

Telo T. Taitague

ORAL TESTIMONY:

Dr. Laura MT Sauder – *Kumision CHamoru*

Dr. Robert Underwood

Peter Onedera

Simone Bollinger – GCC

Geraldine Amparo Cepeda – Guam Compiler of Laws

Mayor (Yona) Brian J. Terlaje

John Howard

Ann Marie Arceo – *Hurao Academy Charter School*

WRITTEN TESTIMONY:

Mayor (Piti) Jesse Alig

Dr. Linda Natividad – UOG

Mariles D. Benevente

Peter Onedera

Simone Bollinger – GCC



COMMITTEE REPORT DIGEST – BILL #218-38 (COR)

[Public Hearing - Senator Christopher M. Duenas - January 20, 2026 2pm - YouTube](#)

Ann Marie Arceo - *Hurao Academy Charter School*

John Howard

Dr. Laura MT Sauder – *Kumision*

Dr. Robert Underwood

Geraldine Amparo Cepeda – Guam Compiler of Laws

Dr. Michael Lujan Bavacqua – Dept of *CHamoru* Affairs

Speaker Judith Won Pat - GDOE Superintendent

II. SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY & DISCUSSION

The **Public Hearing** was called to order at **2:01pm**

Chairman Duenas: Next on the agenda is bill number 218, this is bill 218-38 once again introduced by Shelly V. Calvo. I have introduced the title of it during the opening. So I will now ask the author of the bill to make her opening statement on the legislation. Senator Calvo, you're recognized.

Sen Shelly V. Calvo: *Si Yu'os Ma'ase*, Mr. Chair, good afternoon once again. Buenas everyone. thank you for being here. This is going to be quite a lengthy opening. The spelling *CHamoru* was decided long ago and has already been widely adopted by educators, language practitioners, scholars, and cultural experts. Bill 218-38 is not introducing something new. Rather, it is an initiative to formally affirm and recognize what is already in practice. Codifying the spelling plays a critical role in the education system, language preservation, information transmission, and even international relations. Here in Guam, three different spelling variations of the same identity are currently used, creating inconsistency and confusion. In contrast, other peoples and nations do not face this issue. We do not see multiple spellings for Americans, Japanese, Koreans, Taiwanese, and others. A unified spelling strengthens clarity, legitimacy, and recognition. We often speak about utilizing the uniqueness of Guam's heritage, culture, and identity to propel our tourism efforts. Yet, we fail to focus on strengthening the very commodity many seek to promote and sell in the global stage. Without a clear and affirmed cultural and linguistic foundation, these efforts lose authenticity and meaning. While this initiative may appear insignificant to those who do not understand the true intent of this initiative as well as the deeper context of language codification, it is in fact a necessary step to protect and preserve *CHamoru* language and island identity. for the international stage and for future generations. If we do not begin this work now, then when? Some would argue that codifying tomorrow would be costly. However, in today's digital age, this concern is largely unfounded. With modern



COMMITTEE REPORT DIGEST – BILL #218-38 (COR)

[Public Hearing - Senator Christopher M. Duenas - January 20, 2026 2pm - YouTube](#)

technology, agencies and organizations can update spelling and materials digitally for minimal to no additional cost. Websites, databases, documents, and educational resources can be revised efficiently without the financial burden often assessed. The cost of inaction, however, is far greater. Failing to codify and affirm *CHamoru* risks, continued confusion, weakened language preservation efforts, and the gradual erosion of cultural and island identity. It loses that cannot losses that cannot be easily or cheaply recovered. At its core, Bill 218-38 is a measure about clarity, consistency, and respect. It is about how we name ourselves in our laws, in our classrooms, in our public institutions, and what it means when we are not consistent in doing so. Consistent in doing so. Right now, as I mentioned earlier, across Guam government, we are using three different spellings interchangeably to describe the same people, the same language, and the same culture. We see the variance in spelling use across statutes, agency documents, educational materials, and public signage. That inconsistency is not just cosmetic. It creates confusion. It weakens standardization and it sends mixed messages especially to our youth especially the future generation about what is correct and what is official and what is respected. This bill seeks to address the inconsistency by formally adopting *CHamoru* as the standard spelling across the government while allowing reasonable exemptions for historical and legal accuracy. It also establishes an inter-agency working group led by the department of *CHamoru* affairs and the department of administration to provide technical guidance support agencies through implementation and ensure this transition is thoughtful, coordinated and practical. Orthographic rules need standards. Language, especially indigenous language, cannot be preserved or taught effectively without consistency. And our government, whether we intend to or not, sets standards by what it chooses to codify. I often liken this to what happens when somebody gets married and chooses to change their name. That process can feel cumbersome at first. There are forms to update, records to revise, and systems to adjust. But people go through that process because names matter, because identity matter. And once those administrative changes are made, clarity follows, consistency follows. Life moves on with fewer questions and fewer corrections. This bill does the same thing at an institutional level. It provides a clear standard, a reasonable phase-in period and collaboration with the very agencies best equipped to guide proper usage. It respects history. It preserves legal accuracy when needed and ensures that implementation is practical not disruptive. So the question before us today is not whether this change is already happening because the truth of the matter is this change it's already happening. The question is whether our government will lead with clarity or continue to lag behind with inconsistency. I look forward to the testimonies today and to hearing from our language experts, cultural leaders,



COMMITTEE REPORT DIGEST – BILL #218-38 (COR)

[Public Hearing - Senator Christopher M. Duenas - January 20, 2026 2pm - YouTube](#)

educators, and administrative agencies on how we can implement this thoughtfully and responsibly. Si Yu'os Ma'ase, Mr. chair.

Chairman Duenas: Senator Calvo, we have quite a group today to testify so we will start as I call your name all are in support as I call your name if you're preparing most of them do indicate but not all whether or not you'll be providing oral as well as written please come forward as I call your name so Dr. Laura MT Souder, Congressman Robert Underwood, and you're both, representing the *Kumision*, Geraldine Cepeda, Lucia Calvo, Lourdes Manglona, Peter R. Onedera, John Howard, Patricia Tuncap, or yeah, I think that's Patra or Piatra. Sorry, I might have messed that up. Piatra Tuncap, Jae'anilyn, Simone Bollinger, Lucille Lizama. Okay, we're not full yet, so we'll keep going. Mayor Brian J Terlaje, Olivia, and you're going to help to help me with this one. (inaudible), I think I can't read the rest of it. Miss Olivia, Elarida Cruz, Frank Muna, Juanita Cruz, Dr. Michael Bevakqua and Ann Marie Arceo, *ma'estran Huráo*. So, anyone who is planning for oral testimony I see everyone here that's planning for that to include now the arrival of Miss Ann Marie. So, with that, thank you for everyone else whose name hopefully I didn't murder. But for those who are in front of us I thank you now for coming forward. Dr. Sauder, why don't you go ahead and get us started.

Dr. Sauder: *Dǎngkolo na Si Yu'os Ma'ase' para todos hamyo. I manggé'hilo' I leheslatura. Otro ta'lo i taotao ni manégkungok gi manggaige guini yan ni' manegkungok gi gima' noh. Empottante este na mumento para hami i Kumisión. Put I testimony para bill number 218.* Thank you all for your presence, for your support. And ladies and gentlemen of the legislature, we thank you too for your continued support of our *CHamoru* Revitalization efforts. Senator Shelley Calvo, chair of the Legislative Committee for Culture, has introduced bill 218-38, which proposes the formal adaptation or adoption of the orthographically correct spelling *CHamoru* in place of Chamorro across Guam law, policy, and public documents. This measure reflects long-standing efforts advanced by the *Kumision* and other *CHamoru* language scholars, educators, and cultural institutions to promote and respect the accurate, culturally relevant official spelling cannon contained in Guahan's orthography and *CHamoru*. Personally, I applaud this long-awaited measure. From the vantage point of my role as *gé'helo'* of the *Kumision*, I am immensely grateful that the senator recognizes and understands the importance of the orthography in language revitalization and has honored our request to introduce this legislation. The orthographically aligned spelling of *CHamoru* has been used for decades by teachers and those learning how to read and write in our indigenous language. Because our children are not learning *CHamoru* as their first language, they learn in school or in classroom settings through written material. Our ancestors and



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elders who learned Chamorro as a spoken language through oral transmission did not need a spelling system to teach it to the next generation. However, the interruption of learning *CHamoru* that way due to English-only policies promulgated by the US government necessitated that we take a different approach. We have gone from orality to literacy. This requires understanding grammar and spelling rules. Teaching *CHamoru* as a second language has made standardization of spelling a critical need. Every dynamic modern language has a system of spelling and grammatical rules attached to it. *CHamoru* continues to be a living language because speakers through the centuries have made changes, incorporated new words, and customized them to the implicit rules contained in our spoken language. The orthographic spelling of *CHamoru* has been used for decades, but not consistently. This effort to standardized government usage is but another step to complete the process. Aligning our spelling and naming practices with the way words are pronounced in our spoken language is a sign of profound respect for the mother tongue that has been gifted to us by our indigenous ancestors. When we transform borrowed words or colonial terms so that they become part of our linguistic structure, we are engaged in decolonization. Such acts of cultural sovereignty move us away from the spotlight of doubt that is often caused by a colonial mindset. Why now is it so urgent? Simply put, incorrect spelling of proper names is not acceptable. If your name was misspelled, especially in official documents, wouldn't you do what it takes to seek legal redress and ensure that the correct spelling of who you are called is used moving forward? That is what this act represents. I commend Senator Calvo and the other members of the 38th Guam Legislature for their effort to ensure tomorrow language continuity and for introducing measures to provide second language learners of the *CHamoru* language with the spelling cannon or standards for consistency and predictability in pronunciation, reading and writing. In conclusion, the spelling change proposed in Bill 218-38 COR is no small thing. People have fought and died to protect, defend, and perpetuate their ancestral languages. Acts of cultural sovereignty, restorative justice, and decolonization are not acts in futility. Nor are they a waste of effort, money, or time. As nations throughout the world decolonize, they transform colonial spellings of what they are called to more authentic culturally relevant terms. So, Palau reverts to Belau. Peking reverts to Beijing. Bombay reverts to Mumbai. For us, Chamorro becomes *CHamoru*. Let's get this done.

Chairman Duenas: *Si Yu'os ma'ase para l'yomu* testimony si Dr. Laura Sauder for your testimony. Next, I will recognize Congressman Robert Underwood. Please proceed with your testimony.



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Dr. Rober Underwood: *Buenas tãtdes, todù hamyo*, Mr. chair and especially Senator Calvo for introducing this vital piece of legislation. I have a really well-written statement here that I'm sure all of you will read. And what I just wanted to say a few things about this. This is an incredibly important piece of legislation although some people might think of it as trivial or inconsequential that it doesn't really matter that much but it is very important. And I say this from someone who has been vitally, emotionally, and professionally interested in anything related to being *CHamoru* from the time I was a fifth grader in California trying to teach a few *CHamoru* words to my classmates to earlier this month using some borrowed English words into *CHamoru* like *Bogart* and *Mullard* to refer to some of our military leaders as well as some unusually cooperative political leadership. I avoided other words borrowed from English like *kuxika* which is another very important contribution to the growth and the flexibility of the *CHamoru* language. Now, along this path, there's been many successes and there's been many disappointments that I've had along the way. But almost all of these struggles reveal the strength of a very unique group of people who historically in human history, it's really important to understand this. People don't really recognize this. Historically, in human history, they are the first people to sail over the remote ocean. And they arrived here in Guahan almost 4,000 years ago. And also, in Saipan maybe a little bit ahead of the settlement in (inaudible). So, we're not talking about a group of people that are barely surviving into the 21st century. We're talking about a great people who have done great things in the past and established a civilization and a way of life that continues to inspire us 4,000 years later. The greatest gift that we have from this from these people is language. It is really truly a remarkable feature of our existence today that we can use words which are comprehensible to those first people. I think of words like *pakyu*, *tugas*, and *mama'on* and I am instantly transported through millennia of existence and pride. We're here to formalize the spelling of the name of these people, at least here in *Guahan*. There will be arguments about whether tomorrow itself is the right term and about why change its spelling when it has been written *CH a m o double r o* for at least 200 years. It is amazing that with all of our capacity to understand human history and 4,000 years of history, we remain stuck on spelling as the definer of who we are. There's been a lot of ridiculous chatter aimed at Senator Calvo that this is symbolic and doesn't address more substantive issues like economic or political matters. Of course, it is symbolic. That's exactly the point. That is why it is important. We do so many things ritually and symbolically. It defines, reinforces and inspires our sense of purpose and identity. When we say the words of the pledge of allegiance or we say the *inifresi*, those words are just symbolic, but they remind us of who we are and what we are and what we should strive for. When the words liberty and justice for all are repeated by millions of children every day, I wonder whether the adults are really trying



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to carry out that mission. When thousands of children sing *fanhogue CHamoru*, I wonder whether the adults are really standing up for the tomorrow people. Today is one of those days when we symbolically stand up for the tomorrow people of Guam. Of course, changing the spelling itself or actually recognizing the spelling courtesy of efforts like many here, including my good friend Peter Onedera, changing the spelling doesn't itself promote the language or culture. Of course, arguments about spelling and those dreaded orthographic rules seem pointless and almost academic. This is one of the few communities where people use the word orthography regularly as some kind of weapon. The same could be used said for orthographic rules for English. But the rules themselves are necessary. I try to smile when members of the *Kumision* who have been entrusted by you and the community of the island to make rules are dismissed as academics or pointy-headed intellectuals making decisions over the public. *Guahan* has a public body to make this determination for American English. Most of you don't even know how these rules are made. How do you spell words in English? Well, for American English, the rules are made by dictionaries and the modern language association. Basically, English language academics makes those decisions. That's who makes them. And we don't know who they are. But the good news for *Guahan* is every one of you can talk to anybody on the *Kumision* to talk to somebody who actually makes rules about spelling. That's the good news. They have regular and public meetings every month. I doubt if anyone here today knows anyone who makes rules about how to spell words in American English. In order to facilitate the use of the language, in order to encourage reading and writing, we need a system that we all utilize. Spelling rules may or may not make sense to the millions who use it, but they use the rules in any event. Fortunately, we live in a world where type setting, document presentation, digitization, and spelling corrections by English teachers are no longer necessary. Computer programs will do it for you right away. Spellcheck will do it for you right away. And here's the good news. Spellcheck is coming in *CHamoru* to a computer near you before too long. In this particular instance, the legislation requires you that it be spelled *CHAMORU*. This is not a new idea, nor is it going to cause a heart attack, nor will it cause language disorientation. In fact, it is spelled *CHamoru* more frequently now than the older, more familiar forms for us older tomorrow speakers. This is how it is taught in schools. This is how people use it in the internet. This is the preferred form for anyone in the younger generations. So, all I think Senator Calvo is asking you to do is to recognize that I am a proud member of the *Kumision CHamoru* and Dr. Sauder has already presented the *Kumision's* position on this matter but I just want to make this point. Previous commissions basically avoided this issue by proclaiming that orthography doesn't apply to proper nouns. In that days, in those days when it first began, Chamorro with a double r o is a



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proper noun. But every one of them knew since the very beginning that it isn't pronounced Chamorro. They all knew it was *CHamoru*. They always knew that it's about time that the spelling reflect the reality of pronunciation and popular usage today. The *Kumision* has other legal obligations in addition to making spelling rules as determined by the Guam legislature. It has responsibilities in deciding place names. There are more controversies to become for you as when the commission addresses whether Nimitz Hill, Marbo, *Agafagumas* and Camp Wusstig amongst others should revert back to their original forms. That is a charge given to the *Kumision*. It's a public charge. Now I want to stress that *Kumision* is open to the public. It is a public charge. And I'm sure that there will be added conversation on those items as well. *Pues, si Yu'os Ma'åse' nu i tiempon-miyu ya un nã'i yu' este na pribilehu para bai-hu sãngan dídidi put I eksperiensia-ku guini na kinalamten lao siempre un li'e' guini gi manåtatte siempre na fitme este na hinengge na dinanche este na bidáda-ña si Senadót Calvo. Si Yu'os Ma'åse'.*

Chairman Duenas: *Si Yu'os Ma'åse' para hågu lokkue' Congressman Underwood, yan unu na mås metgot CHamoru giya Guåhan. Para hågu pa'go si Siñot Onedera konsigi hågu un rekognisa pã'go. Siñot Peter Onedera:*

Peter Onedera: *Si Yu'os Ma'åse' yan Håfa Adai, guahu si Peter Onedera. Gaigi-yu guini na ha'ãni para bai hu fannã'i testimonio para sinapotten priniponi dos disi'ocho – trentai ocho para u ma adapta tatkomu.* This spelling is near and dear to my heart because I was the executive director at the time. The nine members of nine-member board of directors of the *Kumision* *fino CHamoru* took this issue at hand and made a decision on it. And it is still clear to me to this very day who those nine members of the *Kumision* were. The late Dr. Bernardita Camacho Dungca, the late Anna Borja Garcia, the late Dr. Jeffrey Tainatongo Barcinas, the late Josephina Perez Barcinas, the late Francisco St. Nicholas and still alive today, Juanita Toves Peredo, Sister Bernardette Quintanilla, Rosa Salas Palomo and William Paulino because they unanimously decided to obey the rules of the *CHamoru* Orthography that was established in 1983. In looking over my records of those days, the motion was made by Sister Bernardette Quintanilla, seconded by the late Dr. Jeff Barcinas and unanimously approved by the members present. I learned the mandate of the orthography and the list of 17 rules that were its provisions. There were two points made clear by the orthography. First, its main purpose was to follow the rule as to how to spell words in the language. It didn't change our language in any way such as grammar and structure and it didn't recommend how the language was to be used. The explanation given was how to conduct correct spelling of words. The second point which can be considered important was that the orthography



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wouldn't work if it wasn't used at all. For the *CHamoru* language to thrive, then it has to be seen in print and to use the correct process. When a new law established the present *Kumision* on *CHamoru* language and the teaching of the history and culture of the indigenous people of Guam, their board of directors continue the use of the spelling. And it was this that prompted Senator Shelley V. Calvo from the 38th Guam legislature to propose that the word *CH* be officially adopted to reflect *kapitalisa CH- a- m- o- r- u*. Thus, bill #218-38 formally proposes the spelling to be accepted so that it will be a law on Guam on government publications and materials that would also follow suit to ensure publication. Indeed, it has been 40 years since this spelling has been in effect and been utilized, including myself, who I've embarked already on completing 10 books. I have written and had a column in the Pacific Daily News and currently I also submit two weekly articles in *Kandit News* on Facebook and so I have written in entirely in the *CHamoru* language in English as well as well as in a bilingual format. I know that there will be feelings often about this bill. Some will be bothered. Some will be educated on the word and its reason for adoption, and some will be confused. But at long last, it will be before the people of Guam will be informed in order for a decision to be made whether to accept it or negate it. From this, I'll touch upon some perceived reactions regarding the matter. There will be questions from our brothers and sisters to the north of us, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas. They have been separate from us for practically more than a century. And even though we have now become closely associated because of our status as sister territories of the United States, we will not be together on this move, especially as the issue affects us together. We, since the beginning of time are *CHamoru* and will forever be. Once this bill becomes law again, it will only affect us affect only those of us who live in Guam and not the *CHamoru* of Rota, Tinian, Saipan and the island farther north. The spelling will not be acceptable to them. In addition, they do not follow our *CHamoru* orthography and have embarked on their own to craft and create theirs. In addition, a group of scholars and linguists in the CNMI have been working on their own official dictionary contrary to the ones written by the late Dr. Donald Topping, Dr. Bernardita Camacho, And Tun Pedro Ogo, who was from Luta. All three are now deceased. In addition, the one written, printed, and distributed by the Department of Chamorro affairs in recent times was our latest compilation of the dictionary. I'm not sure the CNMI dictionary work has been completed and is now in full use in the Commonwealth. There will also be reactions from our relatives, brothers, sisters, and descendants who now live in the 50 states of the union when I stayed for a be a brief period (actually four years in San Diego). I presented the issue of the spelling to those *CHamoru* who enrolled in the *CHamoru* Language Foundation classes that I established while living there. It was a school where I had huge enrollments from nearby surrounding cities. Many were aghast and denied that such a move was decided



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by nine members of the island of Guam. Many were extremely upset while others were indifferent as they claimed that they have no more ties to the island and neither to the language. Now I was aghast at that too. And it hit me like a slap in the face. The biggest question that resulted in my attempt to educate them was why fix something that wasn't broken in the first place. I tried my best to let them know that an official orthography for the island was what brought this about. As a final thought, many said that that they will keep the traditional and conventional spelling of CH-a-mo--re-re-o until they leave this earth. I support this bill. I've taught this spelling that I adopted from the *CHamoru* Language Commission to my years as an instructor at UOG and GCC as well as in the books that I've written in the Tomorrow Language academic articles, news columns in both the Pacific Daily News and presently like I said with *Kandit* News and Facebook. However, there must be an addendum where I would like to urge its inclusion. The *atfabeton CHamoru* must also be included to explain the capitalization of two letters made up of two characters. The *kapitalisa "CHe" dikiki letra "che"* and the *kapitalisa "NGe" and the dikiki letra "nge"*. All proper nouns such as *CHamoru*, *CHapanis*, *CHino* as well as *ngãnga'* like in the also known as family name are capitalized as well as when they begin sentences to for example *"CHule' i eskoba yan i lampãsu. CHonnek I sahyang huyong gi katsãda. Mungga' yu' pot fabót put I ngingok I babui. NGinge' I Saina-mu todú I tiempo. (Nobena song sung audibly)*. Right. In short, the *atfabeton CHamoru* is taught in the school system, but still not everyone is aware of its existence. Everyone in the island must be made aware that the *atfabetu* has been in existence too since 1983 when the orthograph was established simultaneously. This way everyone would be educated. I'm not sure at this very moment if anyone among you seated up there know your *atfabeton CHamoru*. Learn it too. And in case you didn't know, there are 24-letters that are pronounced differently from what you are accustomed to in the English alphabet. In closing, here is the alphabet in all its glory. Those of you who are here and are either members or employees of the *Kumision CHamoru* I fino *CHamoru* and senators, please recite along with me. (*Recites CHamoru Alphabet*)

Chairman Duenas: Si Yu'os Ma'ãse' hãgu lokkue' si Siñot Pedro Onedera, yan magãhet lokkue' na metgot na *CHamoru* hao yan magof yu' na gaige hao guini. Dispensa para todú I panel siha ni' manggaige bai-hu introdusi sa' mallefa ti u introdusi este Senator Parkinson. Ti iyo-ku pãri lao guiya iyo-ña pãri pãri bill lao magof yu' na gaigi si Senadot Parkinson. Welcome, Senator Parkinson. Okay, so we will just continue to the left now. Ma'am, I'll recognize you and please go ahead and introduce yourself for the record and proceed with your testimony



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Simone Bollinger: *Håfa Adai todus hamyo, guåhu si Simone Perez Bollinger, familiån Bonyu. Prufesót yu'gi Kulehon Kominidåt Guåhan.* I'm happy to speak today and give my perspective as we discuss bill 218-38 relative to mandating the official use of the spelling *CHamoru* in place of *Chamorro*. My perspective is partially informed by my official capacity as associate professor and chairperson of the English department which houses the *CHamoru* track of the liberal studies program at Guam Community College. I also speak as a student of the *CHamoru* language as someone who delights in learning the grammar and orthography of my mother's first language. At GCC we have classes such as *CHamoru* composition which seeks to improve literacy levels in *CHamoru* and Utuguihan *CHamoru Guahan*, which examines the local orthography. Both courses use the official Guahan orthography including the spelling *CHamoru*. In our classes we discuss the role of an orthography and specifically the spelling of *CHamoru*. Some people still hold on to the Spanish spelling of the word that many of us grew up with and argue the importance of producing speakers over questions of spelling. They're not wrong. We desperately need young, fluent speakers. However, now we have the GDOE immersion program *Fan'iyakan Sinihuk* and the *Magalahaen Harao* Academy Charter School, both of which are producing fluent *CHamoru* speakers. The need is shifting. We need consistency. But it's not only fluent speakers or academics who need consistency. This morning on our way to school, my daughter asked what I was up to today. When I told her I was coming here to support this bill, she smiled and said, "Of course you are." She was tickled that our language was being discussed at such a high level of government. "It makes sense," she said. "We don't have a C in our alphabet." So even GDOE students who are not fluent in the language recognize that there is an inconsistency in the old spelling. This really is a time for us to *CHamorus* on *Guahan* to come together on this topic. It's about defining or redefining ourselves. Just like in English or any other language, the way we spell matters and defines us. Language is dynamic, shifting in word usage, pronunciation, and even spelling. It's amazing. But for many, these changes can feel personal. Our passion for the language is so strong that sometimes it feels as if there are landmines in any conversation about orthography or how to say something the correct way in *CHamoru*. Landmines discourage conversation and can make it feel unsafe for people who desire to learn the language. What I hope to offer today is lighter perspective on the "Che" spelling of *CHamoru* and our unique orthography. If you'll indulge me as an English professor, I'd like to use a short poem to do this. Written by my former colleague at GCC and good friend Desiree Taimanglo Ventura. This poem speaks to the unique power of the *CHamoru* language and its orthography and the desire of many of us who have to study a language we wish was our mother tongue. It's called *Professora Fino*



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Engles in the book *Kinalampten gi Pacifiku*. I can't use a bad word, right? There's a slightly I'll skip it.

(Reading Poem): Can be found at time stamp **56:16** [Public Hearing - Senator Christopher M. Duenas - January 20, 2026 2pm - YouTube](#)

Thank you for hearing me out. Just want to remind us that as we move forward in this discussion which as *Sinot Onedera* stated will come with a lot of backlash from people who feel very strongly that there's a light way to look at it too, and I hope we can all enjoy this discussion of language in the public and here as well. *Si yu'os ma'ase*.

Chairman Duenas: *Si yu'os ma'ase para hagu Senora Simone Bollanger baihu sigiha ni este nag of metgot hao na CHamorita...CHamoru. Si yu'os ma'ase ta'lo.* Ma'am, please proceed and introduce yourself.

Geraldine Amparo Cepeda – Guam Compiler of Laws: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair. Vice Chair and Vice Speaker Ada. Let me see our judiciary chair who I'll welcome her when she comes back. Senator Calvo and also Senator Parkinson. My name is Geraldine Amparo Cepeda. I'm the compiler of laws for Guam and I offer testimony today. I'll be reading my written testimony into the record, but I'll also submit it and welcome questions afterwards.

(Ms. Cepeda reads written testimony into record which is appended to this Committee Report)

(Continues after reading) And again, I will remain for any questions. One point to clarify Mr. Chair, based on my position as the compiler I have not made a position whether in favor or against the bill. Thank you.

Chairman Duenas: *Si Yu'os Ma'ase' para hagu si Siñora Geraldine Cepeda* and in consideration of your testimony I'll wait for the questions from the panel. But that may include then in a markup, and we'll invite the *Kumision* and others too, but maybe those points will be clarified today but thank you for allowing us to understand the legal basis going forward and how we move forward. But like I said, I think we can sort these things out. *Si yu'os ma'ase. Konsigi Mayot. Hagu u rekognisa pa'go.*

Mayor Brian J. Terlaje: *Ti metgot yu' na CHamoru'yu?*

Chairman Duenas: *Hunggan. An monhayan hao ni' testimonio...*

Mayor Brian J. Terlaje: *Hu chechek ha'yu'. Pues nangga esta ki monhayan yu' noh? Minagof talu'ani para tod u hamyu na onoraple Senadot yan Senadora siha..* I have to say in English



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that I'm very honored to sit here in this panel because many of these many of my *Man'ina* that are sitting up here have molded me and shaped me to who I am as a *CHamoru* speaker today. So *si yu'os ma'ase para todū hamyu man'maninahu. Buenas yan Hafa Adai taotao guahan*, I respectfully submit this testimony in unwavering support of bill 218-38, a measure that seeks to mandate the official spelling of the word *CHamoru*, *kapitalisa Ch- a- m- o- r- u*, in place of Chamorro, *kapitalisa*...and require its use across all government of Guam agencies and public education institutions. For more than 20 years, I have served as an educator of the *CHamoru* language and culture with the department of public of the department of education in the Guam public school system. During that time, I dedicated my life to teaching our children not only how to speak the language, but how to understand its meaning, its spirit, and its deep connection to who we are as a people. I taught using the standardized orthography established by the *Kumision gi fino CHamoru*, a body whose members devoted their lives to protecting the integrity, accuracy, and legacy of our precious language. Their work was not casual or arbitrary. It was intentional, researched, debated, and grounded in cultural responsibility. This bill is deeply personal to me. Like many of our people today, I struggled with my identity. I know firsthand what it feels like to grow up navigating multiple narratives about who we are, who I am, our history filtered through colonization, our language altered by outsiders, and our identity often defined for us rather than by us. For many people, the struggle continues today. Our children, in particular, are trying to anchor themselves in a world shaped by technology, globalization, and constant cultural noise while still yearning to belong to something rooted, authentic, and real. This testimony is not about arguing what is correct versus incorrect. It is not about dismissing anyone's lived experiences or memories. Rather, it is about unity, consistency, and adaptation. Language evolves, but it must do so with intention. Uniformity in the use of *CHamoru kapitalisa Ch- a- m- o- r- u*, across government and educational institutional institutions provides clarity strengthens cultural pride and reinforces a shared identity especially for future generations who will look to these institutions for guidance and legitimacy. Today, I continue this work not only as an educator by at heart and in the community, but now as the honorable mayor of the municipality of the southern village of *Yona*. In this capacity, I remain committed to perpetuating and educating the correct orthographic *CHamoru* language, not only within my office, but throughout our village community. Whether through official correspondence, community engagement, cultural events, or daily interactions, I strive to lead by example and ensure that the language is honored, respected, and accurately represented. When government institutions model cultural responsibility, it sends a powerful message that our language matters, that our scholars are valued, and that our identity is worth protecting. Bill 218-38 does exactly that.



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It affirms the work of our language experts, supports educators, and most importantly gives our people, especially our youth, a consistent and respectful foundation upon which to build their sense of self. If we truly wish to preserve the legacy of our ancestors for generations beyond our time, then we must begin by standing together today. Let us choose unity over division. intention over ambiguity and legacy over convenience. Let us do this not just for ourselves but for those who have yet to come *Para todū siha u manmamaila'* who will one day inherit this land, this language and this identity. For these reasons, I wholeheartedly support Bill 218-38 and respectfully encourage my brothers and sisters to do the same. *Sen dankalo na Si Yu'os Ma'ase.*

Chairman Duenas: *Dǎngkolo na Si Yu'os Ma'āse' para hǎgu lokkue' na Mayot Tertaje, nu I Mayot Yo'ña ya magāhet, metgot hao na CHamoru. (Laughter). Si Yu'os Ma'āse'. Hǎgu Siñot Konsigi, hǎgu u rekognisa hao pǎ'go.*

John Howard: Tirow. Respect to the people's house. Honorable Senator Chairman, Senator Christopher Duenas, Senator Shelly Calvo, Vice Speaker Anthony Ada, Senator William Parkinson, and Senator Telo Taitague. My name is John Howard. I'm from Chuuk and I'm here to provide testimony in support of bill number 218-38. As a speaker of one of the indigenous languages of Micronesia, I understand how critical it is to preserve and perpetuate our mother tongue that our ancestors gifted to us. All the Micronesian languages including *CHamoru* were taught generation to generation orally. Children used to learn their indigenous language as their first language. Today many island youth are learning English first and to not learn their indigenous language as they did in the past. So, we must teach our languages as second languages. This requires that we go from orality to literacy and depend on the reading and writing of our languages in order to teach them to the next generation. We now have to teach the grammar and spelling rules of our languages. Micronesians can learn from the experience of the *CHamoru* people. As our children are not learning to speak their mother tongue in the way that many that my generation and those before us learned from birth. I support the work of the *CHamoru* Language Commission to standardize the spelling of the *CHamoru* language beginning with the term *CHamoru*. I fully support the effort by Senator Shelly Calvo to recognize this by making it public policy. Thank you. John Howard.

Chairman Duenas: *Si Yu'os Ma'āse' nu Siñot John Howard. Yan nu para hǎgu metgot Micronesian hao yan un na' magof yu' manggaige hao guini para ta suppoti este na priniponi para I CHamoru lao Micronesian hao. Guāha ilek-ña na todū Micronesian-ham lao enao ha' siempre ha' mās. Nu...and now before I get myself in trouble Siñora Anne Marie Arceo, konsigi hǎgu hu rekognisa hao pǎ'go.*



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Ann Marie Arceo: [Public Hearing - Senator Christopher M. Duenas - January 20, 2026 2pm - YouTube 1:14:43](#) *Buenes...*(the entire beginning of her testimony in *CHamoru* can be found on this hyperlink at the timestamp indicated. The written portion of her testimony is appended to this Committee Report)

(Continued...)

Most of the times in the past I've been very firm about using and I will not apologize but I do regret having to proceed in the use of English instead of *CHamoru* to ensure my message is clearly understood today on this particular subject, as it has been over 30 years that I've had to face this orthographic reform. Legislating the spelling of tomorrow is not merely a matter of orthography. It is an affirmation of our identity, our history, our culture, our culture and the survival of our peoplehood. Language is foundational to who we are as a people and it cannot be separated from culture, values and our worldview. It is linked to our existence as a people. Although the orality and storytelling of our ancestors is what has carried the survival of our language through time, we must also adapt and coexist with the evolution of time and the concept of a writing system in order for our language to survive. I witnessed the evolvement of the *Kumisión Fino' CHamoru* for the past 35 years. I not only watched and learned as a young advocate on this mission of revitalization, I also held the position of director and administrator. I was so blessed to have the beautiful experience in the real and very committed work of our *mañaina*. At the age of 24, I faced many orthographic reforms particularly for the spelling of the word *CHamoru*. I am now 58 and we are still trying to get this right. So, I have every reason to be a responsible *CHamoru* to come before you in representation of our children. To stand for this legislation that may seem to be unimportant for some but yet so vital to the future of our revitalization. For example, as many have said, as the others have said before me, the capital *CH* reflects the distinct phonetics of our language and how it distinguishes our people from colonial misinterpretations that have long minimized our presence. By codifying the spelling into law, we provide clarity in education, government, and public records while honoring the resilience of the *CHamoru* people. This consistency strengthens the language revitalization efforts by reinforcing correct usage, supporting curriculum development, and normalizing *CHamoru* in official spaces. In doing so, we create a stronger foundation for the future generations to learn, speak, and proudly carry their language and identity forward. Imagine our children learning the official orthography of *Guahan* in school and then living in our community, seeing all the different ways we spell words in *CHamoru*, reading all the various official signage and promotions that do not align with what they are learning in school. When the children ask the question, why? "*Sa hâfa, Saina? Sa hâfa na ti parehu?*" I can only try to



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support them by saying “*En chá’chagi famagu’on-hu na maolek para en na’ dinanche. Despensa ham.*” I pray for the day to come that I will not have to keep saying that. Some examples that they bring up, particularly our sixth graders, who are very conscious of their learning of trying to mold who they are our license plate for years. I've been at the Kumision as a director at 24 and at 50 at 52 and still the license plates are *tano y man Chamorro* spelled unorthographical and or unaligned with our orthography and the children asked ‘*Saina, sa’ háfa*’? Kind of running out of excuses for us adults. Our village road names. One village spells *Châlan Paraisu* one way and another village spells *Châlan Paraisu* another way. Our seal of Guam spells with Chamorro. And so, the kids ask. “*Saina, na ti lai este? Ya háfa na ti ha tattítyi i lai?*” So, before I close, I just want to orally add that, you know, our I think what's happening in our community is we're forgetting our *CHamoru* social system of *Saina*, *Che’lu* and *Pátgon*. There's been many conversations about this. My biggest fear is our *mañaina* sitting at the *Kumision*, our elders are getting older. They're all in their 70s and above. If we do not...they exist for a reason. They've done this work for years. And although sometimes they agree, they have to agree to disagree, they're the reason that our language is still alive today. They're the reason that many of us after them are able to continue to do this work so that our children have we give we have something to leave with our children. And so if we don't begin to respect the *Kumision* and their findings and their decisions whether we agree with them or not find we need to find our place. If we're not *Saina* and they're our *Saina* then we need to find that place and just *gai respetu*, we're losing that in our community. We treat our *Saina*'s like there are *Chelu* or that we're more *Saina* than them. Granted we don't we may not agree but there's a way to hold that respect for them which is what is the way of our ancestors. And so I want to honor them and treasure them today because that's my greatest fear, is that we will lose them faster than we can take their knowledge to be able to pass it on to our children. That's my greatest fear because time is fast and in doing in running the charter school right now the kids are growing up and they have more questions than ever for us. *Unu gi famagu’on i’lek-ña*, “*Saina, fana’na’an na engkóbokáka hamyo guini, Mañaina*. Is that how we want to look? They actually said, I think you're confused, you elders are confused. I have to say, we're trying, *Famagu’on-hu*. We're trying. We're trying to get it together. So, time is of essence. I've been watching this same issue for over 35 years. One of the things that I always ask myself in making every decision for the kids in this journey that I've been on for the last 20 years is how would it benefit or hurt our children? So, as we sit here today to make this decision once and for all, I ask us as elders in this community, as leaders in this community to think about that, to think about what we're going to leave behind for our children. Will we leave more? Will we leave many more years for them to question their identity to live in a questionable identity? And I'll finish with this. We must always be



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open to recalibrating as we grow as a people. And most importantly, as the *manaina* leading the next generations, we must put our differences aside and move with what will benefit our children the most. And I believe in my heart after all the years of working and watching our *manaina* work and watching the history and through the journey of this revitalization that the spelling of *CHamoru CH a m o r u*, or is just the beginning. But once we do that, I believe everything else will fall into place as far as place names, as far as original pronunciations or correct pronunciations. I hope and I pray that I've represented our children well today as I know that they depend on all of us and we hold their future right here in our hands. *Si yu'os ma'ase.*

Chairman Duenas: *Si Yu'os Ma'ãse' para hãgu lakkue' nu Siñora Ann Maria Arceo, nu ma'estra hao noh gi Huráo, yan i prensip át, noh? (Ann Marie Arceo responds: Hunggan.) Todo i dos? (Ann Marie Arceo responds: Hunggan, che'lu.) Ná' magof ho' na gaige hao guini yan megãhet, metgot hao na CHamorita yan CHamoru. Pues pã'go na hu rekknisa este na Senadót komu guaha kuestiona para hamyo todú na manggaige guini.* Senator Calvo, would you like to go first or last in question in closing? Your option.

Sen Shelly Calvo: I can, I only have one question. Okay. Actually, yeah.

Chairman Duenas: So, I'll just have you close then if you don't have any questions. I'll go to the others.

Sen Shelly Calvo: One question, please. Yeah. Just for the record. Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you again to the panel for being here and for the majority of obviously of positive testimonies, Congressman Underwood, Mr. Peter, Miss Simone, Miss Geraldine, Auntie Laura, Mayor BJ, Mr. John, and Miss Ann Marie. Over decade ago, I took *CHamoru* lessons with Ann Marie and she actually christened me with my *CHamoru* name which many people don't know. Anyway, my question is just one it's really with regards to the timeline if it's truly reasonable that the 18-month phase out period provided sufficient time for agencies to update digital systems, signages and templates. I know in the digital databases digital...that's easy, because pretty much...and there's no expense on that but realistically speaking I'd like to, for the record, I'd like to get your everyone's opinion if 18-months is sufficient enough as a phase-out period. Anybody could answer please.

Dr. Sauder: Can I answer Senator? I think it's a very generous period. When people want to do something, they can do things immediately, right? So, I've seen miracles happen that way. I mean sign...signage on buildings can change very, very quickly. For example, the University of Guam when it made a decision to use *CHamoru* names for the buildings, they went up in



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a few months, right? And so it takes commitment. It takes if your heart is there, if your head is there, your money will be there too. And you know a lot of people might be concerned about expense but people are constantly refurbishing you know their signs fall apart with because they become *put lilu* in the weather or you know a strong wind brings them down and they get resurrected very quickly. So those are just you know I think that if we're predisposed to think of obstacles, obstacles will pop up in our path. But if we're if we're committed to transformation then you know we approach the tasks in a very different way. And I understand that this is not just going to be, as you well pointed out, our compiler of laws, it's not going to be with a click of a computer key because there are many layers and ramifications and clarifications on what constitutes an exception. And those need to be worked out. But, by and large, I think you're being very generous by giving folks 18-months to make the transformation.

Peter Onedera: I just want to say that that issue has come up before, when the late Senator Mark Forbes introduced the bill to spell Agana to Hagatna. There was a flurry of negative letters to the editor at the time and so forth, but it happened. It took place...it happened anyway. And I don't think it took that long for Agana to be replaced by *Hagatna*. So this has happened before already and I'm sure it will happen again. And as far as I'm concerned, as Dr. Souder has said, you're quite generous with the 18-month leeway into that kind of adjustment. I think it would be less than that if anything. So, like I said, it has happened before and it's nothing new quite honestly. That's the way I think.

Sen Shelly Calvo: Thank you for your answer. Congressman?

Dr. Robert Underwood: You know anytime anybody wants to do something they can do it pretty quickly. And I think that 18-month...I don't...I really can't say that 18-months is sufficient or insufficient. But as Mr. Onedera has pointed out, here you know...I remember the seeming controversy over Hagatna dissipated as soon as the legislation was passed. It all just sort of went away. And I predict that this is what will happen with this. Simply because it's already in use. It's already in use widely, not only in educational institutions. So, in a way it's a catchup legislation. So, you know, and I'm really interested also in working it out with the compiler of laws because, you know, I just had a brief conversation with her earlier today and it sort of reminded me that, you know, bureaucracies have to have a timeline and have to have a reasonable set of expectations as well. So, I think that conversation and that recognition of that would solve all these issues. Thank you.

Sen Shelly Calvo: Yes, thank you, Congressman. Miss Geraldine?



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Geraldine Amparo Cepeda – Guam Compiler of Laws: Thank you. Thank you, Senator. One thing to consider is my concern was the discretion and by the language of the legislation is drafted requires determination exercise of discretion. Whereas, it could be a find and replace if you said or if the language was such that every instance of Chamorro is changed, no exceptions because in that case there's no discretion. I'd like to point the body to section 420 which was introduced by Senator Forbes which removed the use of “territorial” in the government. We are still now finding uses of territory and territorial and we are actively removing them and this is decades later after the enactment. So 18-months, I hope to find and we do have better technology now than when Senator Forbes introduced that legislation. But requiring the exercise of discretion and requiring the extra step of determining is this going to apply...that's what would take time. A simple replacement and statement of this is the spelling period. Then there would be no confusion there would be no inconsistency which I think was the main concern so a blanket state a blanket change. And if the concern would be well this is confusing and this doesn't recognize the history in that case as a compiler publication there would be an annotation that says as enacted this contained a legacy spelling and that would solve of the, you know, the preservation of what it used to say. But a misspelling is a misspelling. That's right. You know, so why would why would we have to preserve a misspelling? If my name was spelled with a “J”, 50 years from now, I don't want that “J” in my name. It should be correctly spelled. And a recognition of the incorrect spelling could be somewhere, but if the name was spelled wrong, then it needs to be corrected going forward. Period. So that that's my position.

Sen Shelly Calvo: Thank you. Thank you, Miss Geraldine. Congressman?

Dr. Robert Underwood: Yeah. I just want to point out how refreshing it is to hear an administrator seek clarity and just, you know, and to not hold on to any prerogatives in the name of clarity. I just want to congratulate her. I know you wish everybody every administrator came on with that kind of attitude in front of you. Thank you. Sen Shelly Calvo: Thank you. Thank you for that. Anybody want? Mayor? Does anybody want to pitch in? Thank you so much Miss Ann Marie?

Ann Marie Arceo: *Komu in tutuhon guini, tulaika eyo hulu' (pointing up), ensigidas para un pãsa i lai...(rest of answers) (1:37:36 - [Public Hearing - Senator Christopher M. Duenas - January 20, 2026 2pm](#))*

We leave no room or no choice for others. When you leaders, when we as leaders, wherever we are, where we affect a difference, just start with us and we do it and everyone else will follow. *Si yu'os ma'ase.*



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Sen Shelly Calvo: Thank you, Miss Ann Marie. That's all, Mr. Chair. Thank you,

Chairman Duenas: *Si yu'os ma'ase* Senator Calvo, and I just have a little anecdote here. I think that perhaps the late, great Speaker Forbes, a very good friend of mine, had some advantages by having a brother Paul Eric Forbes who not only prayed probably over that but is good, in fact he has his own program to teach us how to speak *CHamoru*. So maybe he had a little ace in his hand. Senator Terlaje...excuse me, Senator Taitague, you're recognized at this point.

Sen Telo Taitague: No worries. Someone called me Taitano earlier today too. So still in the same T, but thank you Mr. Chair for recognizing me. I think everyone at this table knows how deeply I feel about you continuing the language as been working with the *Kumision* to change all the village names you know introduce legislation for that. I mean it's a beginning. It's a start. We might have gotten kicked back by a couple villages, but giving up is the end. And the thing is we can't give up because once we do, then it is really the end. So, I'm glad to see that none of you here today are giving up and moving forward on keeping our language alive. The one thing that identifies who we are is our language. So, it's very important. I know that the fiscal note that was provided here really did not get in-depth on the cost that it would take. I know the compiler law I tried to read what you wrote in your testimony. I wish I had this earlier and I had a lot of questions with regards to this and as the oversight chair and judicial I wanted to ensure that you know that if you're if you do this process I mean is it going to cost the judicial additional funding? You mentioned 18-months and I kept trying to look in the bill where it says 18-months. I believe it's like one year that a report will be given to the legislature but I'm trying to see that section where it says 18-months to implement this. Do you see that Miss Cepeda?

Geraldine Amparo Cepeda – Guam Compiler of Laws: Thank, thank you Miss Chair. This would be under line 25 of page two.

Sen Telo Taitague: Oh, there it is. Section there it is. Phase existing material within 18-months of the enactment. Okay, there I see it. And yet there's also documentation in here that a report will be provided to the legislature actually in 12-months time from the time of enactment. So you know it should be done sooner than one year if you're going to put any kind of report together because what you have just a few months after that to meet that 18-month requirement and may need some additional help. So there might be some amendment in there to, you know, extend it or lessen the one-year requirement because then it'll give you more time to maybe come to this body to see if there's any additional assistance that we can provide you. Not everything is really quick, especially when it comes to the



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legislature. So, we want to make sure we cross our T's and dot our I's. Now the, what I'm concerned too is that this has a lot to do with having DCA. Is anyone here from DCA at all?

Dr. Sauder: Miguel was here but he had to leave.

Sen Telo Taitague: Okay. So, did he provide testimony? Do you know?

Dr. Sauder: Yes, senator. He did written testimony.

Sen Telo Taitague: Okay. I don't have a copy of that. Okay. The other one is to also DOA which is hand-in-hand with DCA to move this forward. It'd be good to also seek testimony from DOA because again they would be tasked with seeing this through creating the working group. So, we want to see what the hurdles they have so that when we do go to the session floor with this bill that we know exactly what they need to move forward or their concerns as well. But other than that, it's going to cost this will cost some funding to make these changes. I mean, when you're in digital mode, it's easier to do. It's just a strike of a you know, finger. But even the Guam Legislature, which I'm surprised not in here, we need to change the sign then. And that's over the Speaker chair, it's spelled differently. So, we need to change that. And any other kind of signage and who's going to collect all that and find out how much this is going to cost. So, for me it's all you know about providing that good information is important so that we can move forward and not just let it slide. Okay. So, other than that I thank you. I thank you so much for continuing the fight and like I said once you give up then it ends. So please, please don't give up. Thank you.

Chairman Duenas: *Si yu'os ma'ase* Senator Taitague. Senator Parkinson, you're recognized.

Sen Parkinson: Thank you very much. I stand in full support of this legislation. I am not *Chamoru*, but I am a Filipino-American and as somebody who has my own set of cultural identity issues to work through, I understand the importance of language. Myself and my wife, we are involved locally in doing our best to make sure that children are able to learn about their language and have resources and a place to do it. I just doing it on the Filipino end because that's, you know, that's where I that's what that's the first language I learned how to speak. And so, uh, I fully encourage, the work that you folks are doing because I see how important it is. I'm doing it in my own life. And so, uh, beyond the work that you find folks are really doing in the trenches here, I would encourage everybody in the public to, you know, you don't have to go out there and change the world. I mean, that's something I've been thinking about when I think about some of the advice we were given growing up and coming into the world. You know, go out there and change the world. But you really don't need to go out there and change the world. You just got to go out there and build a community. And you



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could build the community around language. Language is one of the first things we do build community around. It's one of the oldest things we build community around. Before the time of writing, language is what bonded people together. And so it's especially one that is as ancient as the *CHamoru* language is steeped in such oral tradition. It's very important that we get it right. And so, I commend the effort. I support the effort and this vote this bill has my vote and I look forward to supporting it. So, thank you for the work and keep doing what you're doing. I appreciate it. Thank you so much. With that, Mr. Chair, I yield the rest of my time. Thank you.

Chairman Duenas: *Si yu'os ma'ase* Senator Parkinson. I only have one question for the compiler and then I just share a couple comments before we close on the bill, my thoughts. But first of all, as I read your testimony and as I think it's been discussed either in markup or understanding what's going to have to happen because of the timeline, maybe we can do two things at once. The committee will meet with the senator and see how she wants to proceed. But I just wanted to make sure that I'm understanding clearly the testimony is it's not necessarily in opposition to the bill but letting us know that there is work to be done beyond just the passing of the law that recognizes the spelling and the orthography.

Geraldine Amparo Cepeda – Guam Compiler of Laws: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My kids are *familian Kokura Cepeda* and *familian Tugon Blas*. So, I recognize the need to preserve the language and the culture, but my concern was strictly with regard to the language of the bill because what I wanted to do is make sure it was achieving what the intent is. And so, although it isn't written as I recognized earlier a blanket change or more specifically the removal the of the exceptions would be achieving what I think is sought to be achieved. I'm not sure if that answered your question but in terms of changing...I'm not against the bill. I'm not in opposition. I don't take a position primarily because I would like my concerns to be addressed before you know stating any support or opposition to the bill as drafted. I have concerns which I've expressed that that answers the question.

Chairman Duenas: You know, sometimes our role and particularly for me, I ask a question to elicit the testimony because sometimes when there's testimony that demonstrates the need for correction, clarification or the like, it can be misinterpreted by others. And so, I do that so that we have it on the record when we prepare the committee report and prepare going forward with the bill that the notification to us was to be thorough and as the good congressman said yes, I do appreciate administrators who come here and give it to us straight.



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Geraldine Amparo Cepeda – Guam Compiler of Laws: Well, that that would be me that would be me. You one point, and this is not in my testimony, and actually I would like to seek the guidance from the *Kumision* and also from the legislature. I am, as the compiler, I take the work of this body and I compile it into the GCA. Yes. My question is probably cosmetic but it is concern to me and it's the use of italics. Is the term *CHamoru* to be italicized or not? That's something that that I think about right now at the compiler's office. We follow the lead of the legislature in that village names are always italicized. I don't know if this is something to be continued. I don't know if this is cosmetic. I do know for a fact that as an attorney, the blue book, the uniform system of citation italicizes foreign words, which I've always found interesting because *CHamoru* is not a foreign language for us. It's one of our it's our national language. It's the language of Guam. Do we italicize in that case? I don't know. I would like clarification and I think the legislation could make that clearer for me as we process and as we go forward with a with a code. Thank you.

Chairman Duenas: Well, I'm going to take advantage of subject matter experts that are in front of me. So, I'm going to go to Dr. Sauder, first and then I'm going to see if Congressman Underwood would like to add to that as well. Dr. Sauder.

Dr. Sauder: Thank you and thank you so much for raising that issue. Number one, I think I heard you loud and clear that a universal application of the change would address the issue of discretionary concerns and so amending the language of the law to make it a universal application would bring us great joy. The second is the italicization of the *CHamoru* language. And I'm glad that you actually quoted the blue book law or whatever that is it blue book? It's the blue book which says that you italicize foreign words. *Put fabot*. Let us put that nonsense to rest. *CHamoru* is one of the two official languages of Guam. It should never be considered a foreign language here on our land and by un-italicizing. if we can do that with great clarity then please include that in the law as well.

Chairman Duenas: I think *Senot Onedera* is chomping at the bit for that one too.

Peter Onedera: I just want to add on to that that when I write bilingually in *CHamoru* and in English...I italicize English. (Laughter) Yeah, that's where I stand.

Chairman Duenas: I think in our *CHamoru* language we call that *kassi*, right? Okay. Congressman or you're good.

Dr. Underwood: No to italicization.



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Chairman Duenas: Okay. *Klaru enoa* you know I want to close by first of all thanking more than likely Congressman Underwood as well as professor and mayor for putting up with my use of *CHamoru* language that sometimes, you know, of course is not completely correct. I actually from time to time when I'm shopping or going around have a lot of very proficient *CHamoru* speakers that pull me aside and go "you know what boy, you know work on it a little more...but I like it because I understand it and I know what you're saying and it means a lot to us that particularly when you want to make a point you use as much *CHamoru* as you can in the best way you can. In order to be clear for us who really like to watch the legislature while we make our lunch or prepare for our kids or our grandkids or whatever else we're doing." So, thank you for giving me a little bit of latitude on there. I promise to try better going forward. Another thing is as the Chairman of Governmental Operations, but as well as Finance and Operations, finance and accountability, I'm aware, keenly aware of the issues that we face on Guam and the importance of so many things we have to do. And I will not shirk that responsibility. I don't think I have. But I also am not afraid of moving forward on legislation that some may seem to not address what is perceived to and believe to be of importance. I find myself, particularly moved today by Mr. John to come forward as a Micronesian and to not only express his testimony that this is the right thing to do for the *CHamoru* people of Guam, but also because, if I heard your testimony correctly, you're concerned that the Micronesian islands are also now approaching the difficulty of their generations younger not being able to understand or maybe even write your language going forward. And while I think that all of our brothers and sisters from Micronesia are here and everywhere else trying to have a better life and make a better life, I see that I think you join island peoples trying to preserve whatever you can of their past and going into the future. Another thing is wherever we go on Guam, whether we go to a grocery store, a hardware store, have to be at the hospital for some reason or any other public or private venue, I can tell you probably not one day goes by that I hear the spoken language of another culture. That tells me that those individuals still are deeply concerned, and also feel better speaking in their fluent language. And I don't...personally never take it offensively and I personally think it's an expression of individuals who believe that it's important for them to continue to use their language to communicate in even with young people as we know like you said professor and we're going to have some differences with the CNMI but we don't have to do but a hop skip and a jump and if you want to immerse yourself in the versions of Chamorro and *CHamoru*. You can do it quickly because for the most part it's still used on a daily basis from toddlers all the way up to seniors. So, I will move this bill forward without any hesitation. We're working with the committee to ensure that the final version is something and I said as I said in a in a need for a markup, we may call the *Kumision* for a round table if necessary if



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we believe that everything else can be worked out with the committee and it's more prudent to put it on the floor I will defer to the author on that but I want to thank each and every one of you for showing up today to allay, I think some people's concern that this is not important but to once again reinforce that is very important to many folks of our island and I think that folks of other cultures deeply respect what we're doing going forward too simply by their demonstration of consistently keeping their culture and their language alive. So, with that, I will say now that bill #218-38 (COR) has been duly heard and will receive full attention in the committee moving forward and hopefully make the March session and we would look forward to doing that. We will keep you abreast of the progress going forward. I want to thank you all once again for your attention and being here and have a great afternoon and evening. God bless you. Oh, I'm sorry. I made a mistake. *Lachi'yu*, let me allow the author to close. My fault. *Ai bidahu* (Laughter).

Sen Shelly Calvo: Mr. Chair, I wanted to put it out on the record. I wanted *Kumision* to be a vital part of the implementation working group. So that would be probably something that we can add during the markup as well. And on that note, let me just close. Thank you, *Si Yu'os Ma'ase*, Mr. Chair for hearing this bill...*biba biba* Bill #218. And I would like to thank again everyone who took the time to provide testimonies today. What we heard throughout this hearing reinforces why this bill is before us. We heard that the orthographic spelling of *CHamoru* is already being taught in our classrooms and being used extensively out there. We heard that cultural institutions and language authorities are already using standardized orthography. We heard that agencies can implement this change through phased administrative updates, not abrupt or costly overhauls. And we heard that preserving historical references and legal accuracy can be done responsibly without erasing history or creating confusion. One of the recurring themes today was consistency. And that brings me back to the question I often ask. What price do we pay when we are not consistent? We pay the price of confusion when students learn one spelling in school but see another in law. We pay the price of inconsistency when agencies send mixed messages through official documents. And we pay the price of not fully recognizing our identity when our own government cannot settle on how to properly name the people, language, and culture it represents. This bill does not rush agencies. It does not erase history, and it does not mandate perfection overnight. What it does is provide a standard because orthographic rules need standards. It provides structure, coordination and time so that government usage reflects accuracy, respect and alignment with the community it serves. Language carry's identity. And when our government chooses to be precise and consistent in its language, it strengthens that identity rather than diluting it. Bill 218-38 is a measured, thoughtful step



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toward clarity, not just in spelling, but in how we recognize ourselves in law, in our community, and as an island as a whole. I appreciate the dialogue today, and I thank our Chair Senator Chris Duenas for hearing this bill, the expertise shared here and the willingness of our agencies to engage in implementation discussions as well as my colleagues: Vice Speaker Anthony Ada was here. Senator Telo Taitague and of course Senator Will Parkinson. Thank you so much for being here. I look forward to continuing this conversation and I look forward to the markup session, and as the bill moves forward. Thank you once again, Congressman Underwood, Mr. Peter, Miss Simone, Miss Geraldine, Auntie Laura, earlier, Mayor BJ was here, Mr. John, and Miss Ann Marie. I got a message earlier asking me what was my what was I christened? What was my *CHamoru* name? I'm going to reveal it everyone. It's *Bonita*. Thank you, Miss Ann Marie. I'm going to start carrying that again. Thank you again, Mr. Chair. Appreciate the time.

Chairman Duenas: (Applause) *Si Yu'os Ma'ase*. And now that will conclude the testimony on 218 bill 218-38 (COR). Thank you once again everyone for coming and please have a great afternoon and evening and God bless you. We've got work to do. So, we will move on to the final piece of legislation.

(COMMITTEE GOES ON RECESS TO PREPARE FOR NEXT BILL OF PUBLIC HEARING)

III. Committee Findings & Recommendations

After careful review of the bill, the public hearing testimony, and the written submissions from cultural institutions, educators, linguists, and government officials, the Committee finds the following:

1. The spelling “*CHamoru*” is already widely adopted in education, cultural institutions, and linguistic practice.

Testimony from the *Kumision i Fino' CHamoru*, educators, and scholars consistently affirmed that the orthographically correct spelling **has been in use for decades**. As Dr. Laura M.T. Souder stated, “The orthographically aligned spelling of *CHamoru* has been used for decades by teachers and those learning how to read and write in our indigenous language.”

2. Inconsistency across government documents creates confusion and undermines language preservation.

Multiple testifiers—including educators, the Compiler of Laws, and cultural practitioners—highlighted that government agencies currently use **three different spellings**



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interchangeably. Senator Calvo noted this inconsistency “creates confusion...weakens standardization...[and] sends mixed messages especially to our youth.”

3. Standardization is essential for effective teaching, literacy, and revitalization of the *CHamoru* language.

Testifiers emphasized that because *CHamoru* is now taught primarily as a second language, **orthographic consistency is necessary**. As stated in testimony, “We have gone from orality to literacy. This requires understanding grammar and spelling rules.”

4. The bill aligns with long-standing cultural, historical, and decolonization efforts.

Several testifiers, including Congressman Robert Underwood and Sinot Peter Onedera—framed the bill as part of a broader movement to reclaim indigenous identity. Congressman Underwood testified that adopting *CHamoru* is “symbolic...and that is why it is important.”

5. Implementation is feasible and cost-manageable.

Testimony indicated that digital updates can be made with minimal cost, and physical signage can be phased in over time. Dr. Souder stated that agencies already replace signage periodically and that “if your heart is there...your money will be there too.”

6. The 18-month phase-out period is reasonable.

Most testifiers agreed that 18 months is more than sufficient for agencies to update materials. Historical precedent—such as the transition from “Agana” to “Hagåtña”—was cited as evidence that such changes can be implemented efficiently.

7. The Compiler of Laws identified technical considerations but no substantive objections.

The Compiler of Laws raised concerns about discretionary determinations and recommended clarifying language to ensure a **uniform, non-discretionary replacement**. She also requested guidance on italicization, noting that *CHamoru* should not be treated as a foreign word. These concerns are technical and can be addressed during markup.

8. The bill has overwhelming community support.

Every oral testifier at the public hearing supported the measure. Testimony came from *CHamoru* scholars, educators, cultural leaders, the *Kumision*, the Mayor of Yona, and members of the broader Micronesian community. Their statements consistently



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emphasized unity, identity, and the importance of codifying what is already widely practiced.

Committee Recommendations

Based on the testimony and evidence presented, the Committee finds that:

- Bill No. 218-38 (COR) is **consistent with Guam’s cultural preservation goals,**
 - **Reflects current educational and linguistic standards,**
 - **Supports the revitalization and normalization of the *CHamoru* language,** and
 - **Provides a clear, reasonable, and implementable framework** for government-wide adoption.
-

Final Recommendation

The Committee therefore reports Bill No. 218-38 (COR) - Shelly V. Calvo - AN ACT TO ADD A NEW § 421 TO CHAPTER 4, TITLE 1, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO MANDATING THE OFFICIAL USE OF THE SPELLING “CHAMORU” IN PLACE OF “CHAMORRO” IN GUAM LAW, POLICY, AND PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, AND TO REQUIRE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS CHANGE BY ALL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PUBLIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS, as heard with the recommendation TO REPORT OUT ONLY.

I MINA'TRENTAI OCHO NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN
2025 (FIRST) Regular Session

Bill No. 218-38 (COR)

Introduced by:

Shelly Vargas Calvo 

AN ACT TO ADD A NEW § 421 TO CHAPTER 4, TITLE 1, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO MANDATING THE OFFICIAL USE OF THE SPELLING “CHAMORU” IN PLACE OF “CHAMORRO” IN GUAM LAW, POLICY, AND PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, AND TO REQUIRE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS CHANGE BY ALL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PUBLIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS.

1 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF GUAM:**

2 **SECTION 1. Legislative Findings and Intent.** *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* finds
3 that the term *CHamoru* more accurately reflects the pronunciation and orthography
4 of the Indigenous people, language, and culture of Guam and the Mariana Islands.
5 The term *Chamorro* is a Spanish colonial-era spelling that does not align with the
6 orthographic conventions adopted by CHamoru language scholars, educators, and
7 community advocates.

8 *I Liheslatura* further finds that the adoption of *CHamoru* over *Chamorro* has
9 been widely embraced by cultural institutions, educational curricula, and CHamoru
10 language revitalization efforts. Therefore, to affirm Guam’s commitment to
11 cultural preservation and Indigenous self-determination, the official spelling used

1 in statutes, government publications, educational materials, and signage shall be
2 updated to *CHamoru*.

3 Therefore, it is the intent of *I Liheslaturan* to provide justification and cultural
4 context supporting the formal adoption of the spelling “CHamoru” in place of
5 “Chamorro” across official government documents, statutes, educational materials,
6 and agency names.

7 **SECTION 2.** A new §421 is hereby added to Chapter 4, Title 1, Guam Code
8 Annotated, to read as follows:

9 **§421. Adoption of “CHamoru” Orthography in All Official Uses Within**
10 **the Government of Guam**

11 (a) “For the purposes of this Act, “CHamoru” shall mean the people,
12 language, and culture indigenous to Guam and the Mariana Islands.

13 (b) “Chamorro” shall refer to the legacy spelling to be replaced, except
14 where used in a historical or legally established context.

15 (c) The Compiler of Laws is authorized and directed to revise the Guam
16 Code Annotated (GCA) and other codified government publications to replace all
17 instances of the term “Chamorro” with “CHamoru,” except in proper nouns, names
18 of historic programs, or references where legal or historical accuracy requires
19 retention of the legacy term.

20 (d) All line agencies, autonomous and semi-autonomous government
21 entities, and public educational institutions shall:

22 (1) Use the term *CHamoru* in all official documents, signage,
23 websites, correspondence, and programs going forward;

24 (2) Phase out usage of *Chamorro* in existing materials within eighteen
25 (18) months from the enactment of this Act;

26 (3) Collaborate with the Department of CHamoru Affairs and the
27 Commission on CHamoru Language and the Teaching of the

1 History and Culture of the Indigenous People of Guam for correct
2 orthographic usage.

3 (e) The Office of Technology and the Department of Administration shall
4 coordinate with all agencies to ensure that digital systems and communications
5 reflect the updated terminology.”

6 **SECTION 3. Creation of an Implementation Working Group.**

7 There is hereby established an interagency Working Group on CHamoru
8 Terminology Implementation (WGCTI), to be co-chaired by the Department of
9 CHamoru Affairs and the Department of Administration. The WGCTI shall:

- 10 (1) Issue technical guidance on orthographic usage;
11 (2) Provide training or informational materials to agencies and educators;
12 (3) Submit a report to *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* no later than one (1) year from
13 enactment on progress and challenges in implementation.

14 **SECTION 4. Funding.** Funding for implementation may be drawn from
15 existing agency operational budgets, cultural preservation grants, or appropriated
16 through subsequent legislation. Agencies are encouraged to incorporate these costs
17 into budget requests.

18 **SECTION 5. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon enactment.

19 **SECTION 6. Severability.** If any provision of this Act or its application to
20 any person or circumstance is found invalid, the remainder of this Act or the
21 application of the provision to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected.



COMMITTEE ON RULES

Vice Speaker V. Anthony Ada, Chairperson
I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan
38th Guam Legislature

November 25, 2025

To: **Rennae V. C. Meno**
Clerk of the Legislature

From: **Vice Speaker V. Anthony Ada** 
Chairperson, Committee on Rules

Subject: **Fiscal Note for Bill No. 218-38 (COR)**

Håfa Adai!

Find the attached, Fiscal Note for the following bill:

Bill No. 218-38 (COR).

I also request that the same be sent to the respective Chairperson of the Standing Committee, to which this bill has been referred. Kindly copy the same to Management Information Services (MIS) for posting on our website.



**Bureau of Budget & Management Research
Fiscal Note of Bill No. 218-38 (COR)**

AN ACT TO ADD A NEW § 421 TO CHAPTER 4, TITLE 1, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO MANDATING THE OFFICIAL USE OF THE SPELLING "CHAMORU" IN PLACE OF "CHAMORRO" IN GUAM LAW, POLICY, AND PUBLIC DOCUMENTS, AND TO REQUIRE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS CHANGE BY ALL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PUBLIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS.

Department/Agency Appropriation Information	
Dept./Agency Affected: Department of CHamoru Affaris	Dept./Agency Head: Melvin Won Pat-Borja, President
Department's General Fund (GF) appropriation(s) to date: Operations (\$2,579,633); Guam Cultural Repository (\$1,627,126)	\$4,206,759
Department's Other Fund (Specify) appropriation(s) to date:	\$0
Total Department/Agency Appropriation(s) to date:	\$4,206,759

Fund Source Information of Proposed Appropriation			
	General Fund:	(Specify Special Fund):	Total:
FY 2025 Unreserved Fund Balance		\$0	\$0
FY 2026 Adopted Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0
FY 2026 Appro. (P.L. 38-60)	\$0	\$0	\$0
Sub-total:	\$0	\$0	\$0
Less appropriation in Bill	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total:	\$0	\$0	\$0

Estimated Fiscal Impact of Bill						
	One Full Fiscal Year	For Remainder of FY 2026 (if applicable)	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030
General Fund	1/	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Special Fund	1/	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	1/	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

- Does the bill contain "revenue generating" provisions? / / Yes / X / No
If Yes, see attachment
- Is amount appropriated adequate to fund the intent of the appropriation? / X / N/A / / Yes / / No
If no, what is the additional amount required? \$ _____ / X / N/A
- Does the Bill establish a new program/agency? / X / Yes / / No
If yes, will the program duplicate existing programs/agencies? / / N/A / / Yes / X / No
Is there a federal mandate to establish the program/agency? / / Yes / X / No
- Will the enactment of this Bill require new physical facilities? / / Yes / X / No
- Was Fiscal Note coordinated with the affected dept/agency? If no, indicate reason: / / Yes / X / No
/X/ Requested agency comments not received by due date / / Other:

Analyst: <u>AOR</u> Aubrey Olivia Reyes, BMA I	Date: <u>11/24/2020</u>	Director: <u>[Signature]</u> Lester L. Carlson, Jr., Director	Date: <u>NOV 25 2020</u>
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Notes:
1/ See attached comments.

BUREAU OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT RESEARCH
COMMENTS ON BILL NO. 218-38 (COR)

The proposed legislation intends to provide justification and cultural context supporting the formal adoption of the spelling “CHamoru” in place of “Chamorro” across official government documents, statutes, educational materials, and agency names. Per the proposed legislation’s findings and intent, the term *CHamoru* more accurately reflects the pronunciation and orthography of the Indigenous people, language, and culture of Guam and the Mariana Islands. To affirm Guam’s commitment to cultural preservation and Indigenous self-determination, the official spelling used in statutes, government publications, educational materials, and signage shall be updated to *CHamoru*.

Section 2 of the proposed legislation states that the Compiler of Laws is authorized and directed to revise the Guam Code Annotated (GCA) and other codified government publications to replace all instances of the term “Chamorro” with “CHamoru,” except in proper nouns, names of historic programs, or references where legal or historical accuracy requires retention of the legacy term. Moving forward, should the Bill become law, all line agencies, autonomous and semi-autonomous government entities, and public educational institutions shall: 1) use the term *CHamoru* in all official documents, signage, websites, correspondence, and programs; 2) phase out usage of *Chamorro* in existing materials within eighteen (18) months from enacted of this Act; and 3) collaborate with the Department of CHamoru Affairs (DCA) and the Commission on the CHamoru Language and the Teaching of the History of Culture of the Indigenous People of Guam for correct orthographic usage. The Office of Technology (OTECH) and the Department of Administration (DOA) shall also coordinate with all agencies to ensure that all digital systems and communications reflect the updated terminology. In line with the mentioned objectives and stated in Section 3, an interagency Working Group on CHamoru Terminology Implementation (WGCTI) is to be co-chaired by the DCA and DOA to issue technical guidance on orthographic usage, provide training or informational materials to agencies and educators, and submit a report to *I Liheslaturan Guahan* no later than one (1) year from enactment on progress and challenges in implementation. Funding for implementation of the proposed legislation may be drawn from existing agency operational budgets, cultural preservation grants, or appropriated through subsequent legislation, as stated in Section 4.

As part of the proposed legislation is to establish the WGCTI, additional staff may be required from both the DCA and DOA, as they are to be co-chairs of the working group. Additionally, the WGCTI is to provide training or informational materials to agencies and educators, which may result in additional administrative costs to produce and distribute accordingly. As such, the enactment of the proposed legislation has the potential to affect the operations of DCA, however, absent comment from the department, the Bureau is unable to ascertain the specific impact of Bill No. 218-38.



COMMITTEES

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Rules

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 30, 2025

Senator Calvo on Why Language, Consistency, and Identity Matter in Bill 218-38

(Hagåtña, Guam) – Senator Shelly V. Calvo, Chairperson for the Committee on Arts, Culture, Historic Preservation, and Hagåtña Restoration, today issued the following statement to clarify the intent and importance of Bill 218-38, legislation addressing the official use of the spelling “CHamoru” in Guam law and government documents.

As public discussion continues, Senator Calvo emphasized that the bill is focused on government consistency and cultural accuracy – not redefining identity or revisiting long-settled history.

“For generations, the people of Guam have carried identity through language and through the names used to describe history, culture, and place.” Senator Calvo said. *“Yet today, our government refers to the same Indigenous people and language using three different spellings: “Chamorro,” “Chamoru,” and “CHamoru” – often interchangeably, even within the same body of law.”*

The Senator noted that this level of inconsistency is unusual in government practice and creates unnecessary confusion in public records, education, and policy. More importantly, she emphasized, it weakens the role of government in affirming identity with care and intention.

“When a government cannot speak consistently about its own Indigenous people, it signals uncertainty where clarity should exist,” she said. *“That inconsistency distracts from what truly matters: preserving identity and ensuring it is carried forward accurately for future generations.”*

In response to comments questioning whether this issue warrants legislative attention, Senator Calvo noted that her work as a lawmaker has consistently addressed a broad range of community needs.

“Protecting our culture and language is not separate from addressing the challenges our island faces,” she said. *“It is part of the responsibility I carry as a legislator – to ensure progress that does not lose sight of who we are.”*



"This legislation is not about forcing change," Senator Calvo added. "It is about responsibility. The government has a duty to lead with clarity, especially when it comes to how we name and recognize our people."

The Senator further emphasized that the effort reflected in Bill 218-38 is not new. Conversations about orthography, pronunciation, and cultural accuracy have taken place over many years among educators, language experts, and cultural institutions. The bill represents a continuation of that work, not its beginning.

"Language carries consequences," she said. "How the government uses it shapes understanding, policy, and memory. Bill 218-38 is about aligning our official records with the values we often speak of: respect for culture, care for identity, and responsibility to future generations."

For more information, please contact the Office of Senator Shelly V. Calvo at (671) 989-5682/3 or email officeofsenatorshellycalvo@guamlegislature.gov.

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