

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
192-38 (COR)	Sabrina Salas Matanane Therese M. Terlaje William A. Parkinson Frank F. Blas, Jr. Jesse A. Lujan Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao V. Anthony Ada Christopher M. Dueñas Shelly V. Calvo Tina Rose Muña Barnes Vincent A. V. Borja Joe S. San Agustin Telo T. Taitague Chris Barnett	AN ACT TO <i>AMEND</i> §67100, § 67101, §67103, AND §67107 AND TO REPEAL § 67107.1 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER, THE COMPOSITION AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, AND THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN.	9/22/25 4:44 p.m. ^10/8/25 11:43 a.m.	10/8/25 5:02 p.m.	Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs.	Request: 10/8/25 10/16/25	10/16/25 9:00 a.m.	11/7/25 As Amended.	



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

October 23, 2025

The Honorable Frank Blas Jr., Speaker
I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan
163 Hagåtña, Guåhan
Chalan Santo Papa

VIA: **The Honorable V. Anthony Ada, Vice Speaker** 
Chairperson, Committee on Rules

RE: **Committee Report on Public Hearing relative to Bill No. 192-38 (COR)** as amended by the Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs– Sabrina Salas Matanane - AN ACT TO *AMEND* §67100, §67101, §67103, AND §67107 AND TO *REPEAL* § 67107.1 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER, THE COMPOSITION AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, AND THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN.

Håfa Adai Speaker Blas,

Transmitted herewith is the Committee Report on Public Hearing relative **Bill No. 192-38 (COR)** as amended by the Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs– Sabrina Salas Matanane - AN ACT TO *AMEND* §67100, §67101, §67103, AND §67107 AND TO *REPEAL* § 67107.1 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER, THE COMPOSITION AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, AND THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN.

Committee votes are as follows:

 7 TO DO PASS
 TO NOT PASS
 TO REPORT OUT ONLY
 TO ABSTAIN
 TO PLACE IN INACTIVE FILE

Sincerely,
Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane 

Chairwoman, Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs



COMMITTEE ON RULES

RECEIVED:
October 30, 2025 5:24 p.m.
Marie Crisostomo

Revisions Received:
November 5, 2025 11:16 a.m.



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

COMMITTEE REPORT

Public Hearing

Bill No. 192-38 (COR) as amended by the Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs – Sabrina Salas Matanane - AN ACT TO *AMEND* §67100, §67101, §67103, AND §67107 AND TO *REPEAL* § 67107.1 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER, THE COMPOSITION AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, AND THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN.



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

October 23, 2025

To: **ALL MEMBERS**
Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs

From: **Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane**
Chairwoman, Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs

Subject: Committee Report on **Bill No. 192-38 (COR)** As amended by the Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs. – Sabrina Salas Matanane - AN ACT TO *AMEND* §67100, §67101, §67103, AND §67107 AND TO *REPEAL* § 67107.1 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER, THE COMPOSITION AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, AND THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN.

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- Copy of Referral of Bill No. 192-38 (COR)
- Notice of Hearing
- Hearing Agenda
- Hearing Sign in-Sheet
- Submitted Testimonies and Supporting Documents
- Committee Report Vote Sheet
- Committee Report Digest
- Copy of Bill No. 192-38 (COR)
- Copy of Bill No. 192-38 (COR) As amended
- Copy of Bill No. 192-38 (COR) Markup
- Fiscal Note



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

Please take appropriate action on the attached vote sheet. Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Office of Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane.

Sincerely,

Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane *Smat*
Chairwoman, Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs



COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

October 8, 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. 192-38 (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. 192-38 (COR)** – Sabrina Salas Matanane, Therese M. Terlaje, William A. Parkinson, Frank F. Blas, Jr., Jesse A. Lujan, Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao, V. Anthony Ada, Christopher M. Dueñas, Shelly V. Calvo, Tina Rose Muña Barnes, Vincent A. V. Borja, Joe S. San Agustin, Telo T. Taitague, Chris Barnett. – “AN ACT TO AMEND §67100, §67103, AND §67107 AND TO REPEAL § 67107.1 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER, THE COMPOSITION AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, AND THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN.”

Please ensure that the subject bill is referred to the Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs chaired by Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane. 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.





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

October 9, 2025

MEMORANDUM

To: All Senators, Stakeholders, Media

From: Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane
Chairperson, Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs

Subject: Notice of Public Hearing: Thursday October 16, 2025, 9:00 A.M.

Håfa Adai! The Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs will conduct a Public Hearing on Thursday, October 16, 2025, beginning at 9:00 A.M., in the Public Hearing Room of the Guam Congress Building.

The Committee will hear and accept testimony on the following:

9:00 A.M.

Bill No. 192-38 (COR) – Sabrina Salas Matanane - AN ACT TO *AMEND* §67100, §67103, AND §67107 AND TO *REPEAL* § 67107.1 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER, THE COMPOSITION AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, AND THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN.

How to Participate: Written testimony may be delivered to the Office of Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane at the Guam Congress Building, 163 *Chalan Santo Papa Hagåtña*, Guam 96910 or via email to Office.SenatorBri@guamlegislature.gov. The Committee requests that testimonies be submitted at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the scheduled hearing.

Please confirm your attendance by contacting the Office of Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane via email at Office.SenatorBri@guamlegislature.gov or via voice call at (671) 989-2572.

Special Accommodations: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals requiring assistance or accommodations should contact Annie San Nicolas, at the Office of Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane.

Watch Live/Record: The hearing will be broadcast on local television, GTA Channel 21, Docomo Channel 117, and streamed online via *I Liheslaturan Guåhan's* live feed on YouTube. After the hearing, a hearing recording will also be available online via Guam Legislature Media on YouTube.



Sabrina Salas Matanane <office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov>

Notice of Public Hearing: Thursday October 16, 2025, 9:00 A.M

2 messages

Office of Legislative Secretary Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane

Thu, Oct 9, 2025 at 8:00 AM

<office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov>

To: phnotice@guamlegislature.gov, Ed Pocaigue <sgtarms@guamlegislature.gov>, mis@guamlegislature.gov, 38th Committee On Rules <committeeonrules@guamlegislature.gov>, Audio / Video <av@guamlegislature.gov>

Bcc: Isaiah Aguon <isaiah.aguon@guamlegislature.gov>, ann.sn@guamlegislature.gov, senator.sabrina@guamlegislature.gov

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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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 **FN SN Notice 2025.10.16 Veterans 192-38.pdf**
383K

Ed Pocaigue <sgtarms@guamlegislature.gov>

Thu, Oct 9, 2025 at 8:03 AM

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

Hafa Adai,

Posted on calendar.

[Quoted text hidden]

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Edward S. Pocaigue, Jr.
Sergeant-at-Arms

I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guahan
Guam Congress Building, 1st Floor
163 Chalan Santo Papa
Hagåtña, Guam 96910



1-671-969-3514



sgtarms@guamlegislature.gov

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Notice of Public Hearing: Thursday October 16, 2025, 9:00 A.M.

 PRINT

**Notice of Public Hearing: Thursday October 16,
2025, 9:00 A.M.**

PUBLIC HEARING



 **Posted on:** 10/09/2025 08:33 AM

 **Posted by:** Annie San Nicolas, Administrative Office/Committee
Director

 **Public Hearing Date:** 10/16/2025 09:00 AM

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

 **Division(s):**
OFFICE OF SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE (/notices?
division_id=295)

 **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)

 **Share this notice**

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Bill No. 192-38 (COR)

([https://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%20192-38%20\(COR\).pdf](https://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%20192-38%20(COR).pdf)) – Sabrina Salas Matanane - AN ACT TO AMEND §67100, §67101, §67103, AND §67107 AND TO REPEAL § 67107.1 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER, THE COMPOSITION AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, AND THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN.

([http://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%20192-38%20\(COR\).pdf](http://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%20192-38%20(COR).pdf))

How to Participate: Written testimony may be delivered to the Office of Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane at the Guam Congress Building, 163 *Chalan Santo Papa Hagåtña*, Guam 96910 or via email to Office.SenatorBri@guamlegislature.gov (<mailto:Office.SenatorBri@guamlegislature.gov>). The Committee requests that testimonies be submitted at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the scheduled hearing.

Please confirm your attendance by contacting the Office of Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane via email at Office.SenatorBri@guamlegislature.gov (<mailto:Office.SenatorBri@guamlegislature.gov>) or via voice call at (671) 989-2572.

Special Accommodations: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals requiring assistance or accommodations should contact Annie San Nicolas, at the Office of Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane.

Watch Live/Record: The hearing will be broadcast on local television, GTA Channel 21, Docomo Channel 117, and streamed online via *Li Liheslaturan Guåhan's* live feed on YouTube. After the

online via [Legislature of Guam's live feed on YouTube](#). After the hearing, a hearing recording will also be available online via Guam Legislature Media on YouTube.



**GUAM LEGISLATURE
AUDIO VISUAL DEPARTMENT
PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT REQUEST FORM**

Office Submitting Request: Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane

Date of Request: October 9, 2025 - October 16, 2025

POINT OF CONTACT

Name: Annie San Nicolas

Contact #: [REDACTED]

Email: ann.sn@guamlegislature.gov

PUBLIC HEARING DETAILS

Notice Type: ☒ Public Hearing ☐ Informational Briefing ☐ Roundtable Discussion

☐ Oversight Hearing ☐ Committee Meeting ☐ Other: _____

Notice Title / Bill(s) / Resolution(s) / Appointment: 192-38

Date of Event: October 16, 2025 **Start Time:** 9:01 AM/PM

End Time: 11:14 AM/PM

Location: Guam Congress Building, Public Hearing Room

MEDIA HANDLING

Recording Format: ☒ MP4 ☐ MP3 ☐ Other: _____

Delivery Method: ☒ Email ☐ USB Drive ☐ Cloud Link ☐ Other: _____

CERTIFIED BY AV:

Name: Joseph Fredrick B. Termulo

Signature: 

Posted on/Air Date: 10/09 - 10/16



Notice of Public Hearing
Thursday, October 16, 2025, 9:00 A.M.

The Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs will conduct a Public Hearing on Thursday, October 16, 2025, beginning at 9:00 A.M., in the Public Hearing Room of the Guam Congress Building.



Bill No. 192-38 (COR) – Sabrina Salas Matanane - AN ACT TO AMEND §67100, §67103, AND §67107 AND TO REPEAL § 67107.1 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER, THE COMPOSITION AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, AND THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN.

SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND VETERANS AFFAIRS



How to Participate: Written testimony may be delivered to the Office of Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane at the Guam Congress Building, 163 *Chalan Santo Papa Hagåtña*, Guam 96910 or via email to Office.SenatorBri@guamlegislature.gov. The Committee requests that testimonies be submitted at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the scheduled hearing.

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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

October 14, 2025

MEMORANDUM

To: All Senators, Stakeholders, Media

From: Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane
Chairperson, Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs

Subject: Notice of Public Hearing: Thursday October 16, 2025, 9:00 A.M.

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Sabrina Salas Matanane <office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov>

Notice of Public Hearing: Thursday October 16, 2025, 9:00 A.M

4 messages

Office of Legislative Secretary Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane

Tue, Oct 14, 2025 at 8:15 AM

<office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov>

To: phnotice@guamlegislature.gov, Ed Pocaigue <sgtarms@guamlegislature.gov>, 38th Committee On Rules <committeeonrules@guamlegislature.gov>, mis@guamlegislature.gov, Audio / Video <av@guamlegislature.gov>

Bcc: Isaiah Aguon <isaiah.aguon@guamlegislature.gov>, ann.sn@guamlegislature.gov, senator.sabrina@guamlegislature.gov

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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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FN SN Notice 2025.10.16 Veterans 192-38.pdf
383K

Monty McDowell <monty.mcdowell@amiguam.com>

Tue, Oct 14, 2025 at 11:44 AM

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

From: Sabrina Salas Matanane <office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov>

Date: Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 8:15 AM

To: <phnotice@guamlegislature.gov>, Ed Pocaigue <sgtarms@guamlegislature.gov>, 38th Committee On Rules <committeeonrules@guamlegislature.gov>, <mis@guamlegislature.gov>, Audio / Video <av@guamlegislature.gov>

Subject: Notice of Public Hearing: Thursday October 16, 2025, 9:00 A.M

Håfa Adai!

Håfa Adai Senator Matanane,

Please see my testimony as the 2nd attachment to this email. I support Bill No. 192-38.

--

Senseramente (Sincerely),

Monty A. McDowell

U.S. Navy-Retired / VETERAN

Phone: (671) 649-6488, Fax: (671) 646-3739, Cell: 858-4318,

Guam USA is +10 GMT-

[Quoted text hidden]

2 attachments



FN SN Notice 2025.10.16 Veterans 192-38.pdf
383K



Testimony_Bill_192-38 - Monty McDowell.pdf
86K

Office of Legislative Secretary Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane

<office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov>

Tue, Oct 14, 2025 at 12:21

To: Monty McDowell <monty.mcdowell@amiguam.com>

PM

Good Afternoon Mr. McDowell,

Confirming receipt of your testimony.

Thank you

[Quoted text hidden]

--

Annie San Nicolas

Administrative Officer/Committee Director



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

[Quoted text hidden]

Monty McDowell <monty.mcdowell@amiguam.com>

Tue, Oct 14, 2025 at 12:22 PM

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

Buen Probechu

[Quoted text hidden]

Notice of Public Hearing: Thursday October 16, 2025, 9:00 A.M.

 PRINT

**Notice of Public Hearing: Thursday October 16,
2025, 9:00 A.M.**

PUBLIC HEARING



 **Posted on:** 10/14/2025 08:35 AM

 **Posted by:** Annie San Nicolas

 **Public Hearing Date:** 10/16/2025 09:00 AM

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

 **Division(s):**
OFFICE OF SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE (/notices?
division_id=295)

 **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)

 **Share this notice**

Håfa Adai! The Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs will conduct a Public Hearing on Thursday, October 16, 2025, beginning at 9:00 A.M., in the Public Hearing Room of the Guam Congress Building.

The Committee will hear and accept testimony on the following:

9:00 A.M.

Bill No. 192-38 (COR)

([https://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%20192-38%20\(COR\).pdf](https://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%20192-38%20(COR).pdf)) – Sabrina Salas Matanane - AN ACT TO AMEND §67100, §67103, AND §67107 AND TO REPEAL § 67107.1 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER, THE COMPOSITION AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, AND THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN.

([http://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%20192-38%20\(COR\).pdf](http://guamlegislature.gov/38th_Guam_Legislature/Bills_Introduced_38th/Bill%20No.%20192-38%20(COR).pdf))

How to Participate: Written testimony may be delivered to the Office of Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane at the Guam Congress Building, 163 *Chalan Santo Papa Hagåtña*, Guam 96910 or via email to Office.SenatorBri@guamlegislature.gov (<mailto:Office.SenatorBri@guamlegislature.gov>). The Committee requests that testimonies be submitted at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the scheduled hearing.

Please confirm your attendance by contacting the Office of Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane via email at Office.SenatorBri@guamlegislature.gov (<mailto:Office.SenatorBri@guamlegislature.gov>) or via voice call at (671) 989-2572.

Special Accommodations: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals requiring assistance or accommodations should contact Annie San Nicolas, at the Office of Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane.

Watch Live/Record: The hearing will be broadcast on local television, GTA Channel 21, Docomo Channel 117, and streamed online via *Liibeslaturan Guåhan's* live feed on YouTube. After the

online via [Legislature of Guam's live feed on YouTube](#). After the hearing, a hearing recording will also be available online via Guam Legislature Media on YouTube.



**GUAM LEGISLATURE
AUDIO VISUAL DEPARTMENT
PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT REQUEST FORM**

Office Submitting Request: Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane

Date of Request: October 9, 2025 - October 16, 2025

POINT OF CONTACT

Name: Annie San Nicolas

Contact #: [REDACTED]

Email: ann.sn@guamlegislature.gov

PUBLIC HEARING DETAILS

Notice Type: ☒ Public Hearing ☐ Informational Briefing ☐ Roundtable Discussion

☐ Oversight Hearing ☐ Committee Meeting ☐ Other: _____

Notice Title / Bill(s) / Resolution(s) / Appointment: 192-38

Date of Event: October 16, 2025 **Start Time:** 9:01 AM/PM

End Time: 11:14 AM/PM

Location: Guam Congress Building, Public Hearing Room

MEDIA HANDLING

Recording Format: ☒ MP4 ☐ MP3 ☐ Other: _____

Delivery Method: ☒ Email ☐ USB Drive ☐ Cloud Link ☐ Other: _____

CERTIFIED BY AV:

Name: JOE SIR Joseph Termulo

Signature: 

Posted on/Air Date: 10/09 - 10/16



Notice of Public Hearing
Thursday, October 16, 2025, 9:00 A.M.

The Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs will conduct a Public Hearing on Thursday, October 16, 2025, beginning at 9:00 A.M., in the Public Hearing Room of the Guam Congress Building.



Bill No. 192-38 (COR) – Sabrina Salas Matanane - AN ACT TO AMEND §67100, §67103, AND §67107 AND TO REPEAL § 67107.1 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER, THE COMPOSITION AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, AND THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN.

SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND VETERANS AFFAIRS



How to Participate: Written testimony may be delivered to the Office of Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane at the Guam Congress Building, 163 *Chalan Santo Papa Hagåtña*, Guam 96910 or via email to Office.SenatorBri@guamlegislature.gov. The Committee requests that testimonies be submitted at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the scheduled hearing.

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Office of Legislative Secretary
SENATOR SABBINA SALAS MATANANE
I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan | 38th Guam Legislature
Chairperson, Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs

October 10, 2025

TRANSMITTED VIA EMAIL:

Joe San Agustin, Director
Guam Office of Veterans Affairs—
Jose.sanagustin@gvao.guam.gov

Sgt. Major Vicente Santiago

Joe San Agustin, President
3rd Marine Div
[REDACTED]

Chris Toran, President
American Legion

Albert Parke, President
Brotherhood of Veterans Motorcycle Club

Scott Duenas, President
Fleet Reserve BR 73

Roy Gamboa, Chairman
Got your Six (671)

Stan Ko, President
Korean Vietnam Vets

Lee Webber, President
Navy League

Joseph Yatar

Tom Ada

Al Mosser, Commander
VFW-1509

Bill Cundiff, President
Air Force Association

David Aguon, Commander
Barrigada Veterans

Joe San Nicolas, President
Dededo Veterans

Tony Lukeala, Representative
Gold Star Mothers and Families

Anthony Taijeron and Corina Ballesata
H.M.I.

Nick Francisco, Commander
M.O.P.H./VVA668

Brian Merenda, Commander
VFW 2917

Rose Sharon Blend
Tim Puzan

Subject: Invitation to Public Hearing on Thursday October 16, 2025, at 9:00 A.M.

Håfa Adai,

The Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs has scheduled a Public Hearing on Thursday, October 16, 2025, beginning at 9:00 A.M., in the Public Hearing Room of the Guam Congress Building. Your attendance is requested to provide insights on the following agenda item:



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

Bill No. 192-38 (COR) – Sabrina Salas Matanane - AN ACT TO *AMEND* §67100, §67103, AND §67107 AND TO *REPEAL* § 67107.1 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER, THE COMPOSITION AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, AND THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN.

The Committee requests that all written testimony and presentations be submitted forty-eight (48) hours prior to the hearing. Additionally, you are welcome to invite other officials who may be able to contribute to the discussion.

If your office requires any assistance or accommodation that can be provided by my office or the 38th Guam Legislature, please contact my office via email or voice call.

Should you have any questions or concerns, you may contact my office at 671-989-2572 or email office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov.

Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane
38th Guam Legislature

Cc: John Taitano
Tom Devlin
Robert Kelly
Joseph meno



Sabrina Salas Matanane <office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov>

Invitation to Public Hearing on Thursday October 16, 2025, at 9:00 A.M.

3 messages

Office of Legislative Secretary Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane

<office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov>

To: Jose San Agustin <jose.sanagustin@gvao.guam.gov>,

Fri, Oct 10, 2025 at

10:00 AM

Håfa Adai,

The Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs has scheduled a Public Hearing on Thursday, October 16, 2025, beginning at 9:00 A.M., in the Public Hearing Room of the Guam Congress Building. Your attendance is requested to provide insights on the following agenda item:

Bill No. 192-38 (COR) – Sabrina Salas Matanane - AN ACT TO *AMEND* §67100, §67103, AND §67107 AND TO *REPEAL* § 67107.1 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER, THE COMPOSITION AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, AND THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN.

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Should you have any questions or concerns, you may contact my office at 671-989-2572 or email office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov.

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Smat".

Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane

38th Guam Legislature



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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Invitation to Public Hearing 2025.10.16 Veterans.pdf

372K

Mail Delivery Subsystem <mailer-daemon@googlemail.com>

Fri, Oct 10, 2025 at 10:01 AM

To: office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov



Address not found

Your message wasn't delivered to **joe.meno@gvao.guam.gov** because the address couldn't be found, or is unable to receive mail.

[LEARN MORE](#)

The response was:

550 5.1.1 The email account that you tried to reach does not exist. Please try double-checking the recipient's email address for typos or unnecessary spaces. For more information, go to <https://support.google.com/mail/?p=NoSuchUser> 5614622812f47-44198841539sor329897b6e.1 - gsmt

Final-Recipient: rfc822; joe.meno@gvao.guam.gov

Action: failed

Status: 5.1.1

Diagnostic-Code: smtp; 550-5.1.1 The email account that you tried to reach does not exist. Please try

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550 5.1.1 <https://support.google.com/mail/?p=NoSuchUser> 5614622812f47-44198841539sor329897b6e.1 - gsmt

Last-Attempt-Date: Thu, 09 Oct 2025 17:01:20 -0700 (PDT)



noname

4K

Lee Webber <Lee@mdaguam.com>

Fri, Oct 10, 2025 at 10:06 AM

To: "office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov" <office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov>

Cc: Jose San Agustin <jose.sanagustin@gvao.guam.gov>, , "joe.meno@gvao.guam.gov" <joe.meno@gvao.guam.gov>

Sorry but I am in all day Crime Conference all day 15-16-17

Lee

"Never mistake motion for action"- Ernest Hemingway - sent from my iPhone - may contain some typos given the tiny keyboard!

On Oct 10, 2025, at 10:02, Office of Legislative Secretary Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane <office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov> wrote:

Håfa Adai,

The Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs has scheduled a Public Hearing on Thursday, October 16, 2025, beginning at 9:00 A.M., in the Public Hearing Room of the Guam Congress Building. Your attendance is requested to provide insights on the following agenda item:

Bill No. 192-38 (COR) – Sabrina Salas Matanane - AN ACT TO *AMEND* §67100, §67103, AND §67107 AND TO *REPEAL* § 67107.1 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER, THE COMPOSITION AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, AND THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN.

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If your office requires any assistance or accommodation that can be provided by my office or the 38th Guam Legislature, please contact my office via email or voice call.

Should you have any questions or concerns, you may contact my office at 671-989-2572 or email office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov.

<image.png>

Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane
38th Guam Legislature

**Office of Legislative Secretary****SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE***I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guahan | 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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<Invitation to Public Hearing 2025.10.16 Veterans.pdf>



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

Public Hearing

Thursday October 16, 2025, 9:00AM
Public Hearing Room, Guam Congress Building

Agenda

Bill No. 192-38 (COR) As amended by the Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs – Sabrina Salas Matanane - AN ACT TO *AMEND* §67100, §67101, §67103, AND §67107 AND TO *REPEAL* § 67107.1 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER, THE COMPOSITION AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, AND THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN.

This Public Hearing will broadcast on local television, GTA Channel 21, Docomo Channel 117 and stream online via I Liheslaturan Guåhan's live feed.



The Office of the Legislative Secretary
SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE
I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan | 38th Guam Legislature
Chairwoman, Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs

PUBLIC HEARING

Thursday October 16, 2025, 9: 00 A.M
Public Hearing Room, Guam Congress Building

The Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs and the Committee on Finance and Government Operations will conduct a Public Hearing on Thursday, October 16, 2025, beginning at 9:00 A.M., at the Guam Congress Building

[Bill No. 192-38 \(COR\)](#) as amended by the Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs– Sabrina Salas Matanane - AN ACT TO AMEND §67100, §67101, §67103, AND §67107 AND TO REPEAL § 67107.1 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER, THE COMPOSITION AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, AND THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN.

Check all that apply. Please provide staff with written testimony for photocopying.

Name (Please Print)	Agency /Organization	Contact Information	Bill No./Doc No.	Participation	Stance
Chris Toran	American Legion		192-38 (COR)	☐ Observing ☐ Written ☐ Verbal	☐ In Support ☐ Not In Support
Dennis Polis	VFW 2967		192-38 (COR)	☐ Observing ☐ Written ☐ Verbal	☐ In Support ☐ Not In Support
Roy Gamboa	GY671		192-38 (COR)	☐ Observing ☐ Written ☐ Verbal	☐ In Support ☐ Not In Support
Vince Santiago	3rd Marine Assn		192-38 (COR)	☐ Observing ☐ Written ☐ Verbal	☐ In Support ☐ Not In Support
Johnny “atulai” Taitano	Vet Talk		192-38 (COR)	☐ Observing ☐ Written ☐ Verbal	☐ In Support ☐ Not In Support
Jose San Agustin	GOVA		192-38 (COR)	☐ Observing ☐ Written ☐ Verbal	☐ In Support ☐ Not In Support
Daniel Cogar	VVA668		192-38 (COR)	☐ Observing ☐ Written ☐ Verbal	☐ In Support ☐ Not In Support
Brien Merenda	VFW 2917		192-38 (COR)	☐ Observing ☐ Written ☐ Verbal	☐ In Support ☐ Not In Support
Ron McNinch	Self		192-38 (COR)	☐ Observing ☐ Written ☐ Verbal	☐ In Support ☐ Not In Support



The Office of the Legislative Secretary
SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE
I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan | 38th Guam Legislature
 Chairwoman, Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs

Rose Indalecio Blend	3rd Marine Div.		192-38 (COR)	☐ Observing ☐ Written ☐ Verbal	☐ In Support ☐ Not In Support
Enrique Torres	Self		192-38 (COR)	☐ Observing ☐ Written ☐ Verbal	☐ In Support ☐ Not In Support
Charlie Hermosa	Self		192-38 (COR)	☐ Observing ☐ Written ☐ Verbal	☐ In Support ☐ Not In Support
Nick Francisco	MOPH VVA		192-38 (COR)	☐ Observing ☐ Written ☐ Verbal	☐ In Support ☐ Not In Support
Benny Fernandez	WA		192-38 (COR)	☐ Observing ☐ Written ☐ Verbal	☐ In Support ☐ Not In Support
Marlene Fernandez	WA		192-38 (COR)	☐ Observing ☐ Written ☐ Verbal	☐ In Support ☐ Not In Support
Joe Mafnas	G.O. Va Liaison		192-38 (COR)	☐ Observing ☐ Written ☐ Verbal	☐ In Support ☐ Not In Support
Vincent Herrera	GY 671		192-38 (COR)	☐ Observing ☐ Written ☐ Verbal	☐ In Support ☐ Not In Support
			192-38 (COR)	☐ Observing ☐ Written ☐ Verbal	☐ In Support ☐ Not In Support
			192-38 (COR)	☐ Observing ☐ Written ☐ Verbal	☐ In Support ☐ Not In Support



Vincent C. Santiago

Sergeant Major, United States Marine Corps (Retired)

Sergeant Major Santiago is from Malesso, Guam. He graduated from the Guam Community College/High School-Automotive Technician program in 1989. A second-generation Marine, Sergeant Major Santiago served in the Marine Corps from September 1989 until his retirement in March 2021. He currently serves as the Senior Marine Instructor (Officer Billet) for the Marine Corps JROTC at Okkodo High School, Dededo, Guam. Sergeant Major Santiago is the current President of the 3rd Marine Division Association-Guam Chapter and also serves as the Second Vice Chairman of the Guam Veterans Affairs Commission.

Sergeant Major Santiago completed Recruit Training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, CA, where he was meritoriously promoted to Private First Class. He then completed Marine Combat Training and Infantry Training as an 0341-Mortarman at the School of Infantry (West), Camp Pendleton, CA. He has served in units across the Marine Air Ground Task Force, including Guam with Marine Barracks, Marine Corps Security Forces, where he was meritoriously promoted to Corporal; California with 3d Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, deploying to Okinawa, and subsequently deployed with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, Special Operations Capable; and Drill Instructor Duty at Marine Corps Recruit Depot serving as a Drill Instructor, Senior Drill Instructor, and Series Gunnery Sergeant where he was meritoriously promoted to Staff Sergeant; Okinawa, Japan with 3rd Maintenance Battalion, 3d Force Service Support Group; and Annapolis, MD as an Assistant Marine Officer Instructor, Senior Enlisted Leader for 19th Company and the Drill Master for the United States Naval Academy and honorary member of the class of 2003.

From 2004 through 2021, he served as a Command Senior Enlisted Leader at diverse levels. As a Company First Sergeant in Hawaii, he served with Company K, 3d Battalion, 3d Marine Regiment, where he deployed to combat with the battalion in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom; Combat Service Support Group-3, 3d Marine Logistics Group; Headquarters and Service Company, CSSG-3; and Combat Logistics Company 35.

As a Battalion, Squadron, and Regimental Sergeant Major, he served with the Infantry Training Battalion, School of Infantry-West; 3d Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, CA where the battalion deployed as the Battalion Landing Team for the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, Special Operations Capable; Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 24, HI; and the Regimental Sergeant Major for 3d Marine Regiment, HI.

In June 2015, Sergeant Major Santiago was selected to serve at the General Officer Level. He assumed the duties as Sergeant Major for the 3rd Marine Division, Okinawa, Japan. In February 2018, Sergeant Major Santiago became the first Command Senior Enlisted Leader for the Department of Defense, Security Cooperation Agency, Foreign Military Sales (Joint Assignment), Washington, D.C.

Sergeant Major Santiago graduated from several military and civilian schools, colleges, and universities, earning a Bachelor of Arts –Summa Cum Laude- in the Forbes School of Business, Ashford University in 2016.

Sergeant Major Santiago's personal decorations include: the Defense Superior Service Medal; the Legion of Merit; the Meritorious Service Medal with two gold stars, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with two gold stars, the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with two gold stars, and the Marine Corps Combat Action Ribbon with gold star.

Sergeant First Class Rose Sharon Indalecio Blend

United States Army (Retired)

Corporal, United States Marine Corps, Veteran

Sergeant First Class (Retired) Rose Sharon Indalecio Blend is from Agana Heights, Guam, and a 1985 graduate of Guam Community College/High School – Drafting Program. A proud Marine and Soldier, she served a combined 24 years of honorable military service before retiring in October 2011. She continues her service to country as a civilian with the Department of Homeland Security, United States Coast Guard, Guam.

Sergeant First Class Blend enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in January 1987. She completed Recruit Training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, South Carolina, followed by the Legal Service Specialist and Notereader/Transcriber Course at Camp Del Mar, Camp Pendleton, California. Her Marine Corps assignments included service with the Legal Service Support Team, 3rd Force Service Support Group, Okinawa, Japan, and Marine Barracks Guam. Upon completion of her obligated active-duty service in January 1991, she was transferred to the Marine Corps Reserve Support Center, Overland Park, Kansas, to fulfill her inactive ready reserve commitment. During her Marine Corps service, she also held collateral duties as Official Driver for the Staff Judge Advocate, 3rd Marine Division, 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade, and as Secretary to the Commanding Officer, Marine Barracks Guam.

From 1991 to 1995, Sergeant First Class Blend served the people of Guam as an electronic court reporter for the Superior Court of Guam. In 1995, she returned to military service, enlisting in the Guam Army National Guard in reserve status before transitioning to Active Duty National Guard. Over the course of her Army career, she served in a variety of leadership positions including:

- Security Noncommissioned Officer, Plans and Operations Training Office (G3)
- Administrative Noncommissioned Officer, Military Personnel Office (G1)
- Recruiting and Retention Noncommissioned Officer, Recruiting and Retention Division, Guam
- Operations Noncommissioned Officer, 94th Civil Support Team, Weapons of Mass Destruction
- Senior Human Resources Noncommissioned Officer, 105th Troop Command

Following her retirement in 2011, Sergeant First Class Blend continued serving the military community as a civilian employee, holding positions including:

- Operations Specialist II, Contractor, Battelle Memorial Institute/Joint Region Marianas Guam
- Protocol Assistant, Commander, Joint Region Marianas
- Secretary to the Executive Officer, U.S. Naval Hospital Guam
- Security Specialist, J3, Commander, Joint Region Marianas
- Secretary to the Sector Commander, Forces Micronesia Sector Guam, United States Coast Guard
- Transition Relocation Manager, Base Guam/Oceania District, United States Coast Guard

Since 2021, she has also served as Secretary of the Third Marine Division Association, Guam Chapter.

Decorations and Awards

Sergeant First Class Blend's personal decorations and awards include: the Meritorious Service Medal; Army Commendation Medal (3rd Award); Army Achievement Medal (3rd Award); Army Good Conduct Medal; Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal; National Defense Service Medal (2nd Award); Global War on Terrorism Service Medal; Humanitarian Service Medal (2nd Award); Armed Forces Reserve Medal; NCO Professional Development Ribbon (3rd Award); Army Service Ribbon; Army Overseas Service Ribbon; Navy Sea Service Deployment Ribbon; and the Army National Guard Master Recruiter Badge.

ROY GAMBOA

Hagåtña, Guam

Roy Gamboa is a native of Guam, a father of four, and a proud United States Marine. He currently serves as the Deputy Director of the Guam Department of Agriculture, where he contributes to the development and implementation of programs that support the island's agricultural sustainability and food security.

Mr. Gamboa previously served with the Guam Department of Labor and the Guam State Clearinghouse, bringing with him extensive experience in public administration and interagency coordination. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Management from the University of Maryland Global Campus and has more than a decade of honorable military service.

A Combat Veteran of the United States Marine Corps, Mr. Gamboa served tours in Fallujah and Ramadi, Iraq. Following his military service, he co-founded Got Your Six 71, a nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the mental and physical well-being of veterans. He currently serves as the Vice Chairperson of the Guam Veterans Commission and leads its Committee on PTSD Awareness and Suicide Prevention. He is also the Public Information Officer for Third Marine Division Association, Guam Chapter.

Mr. Gamboa remains deeply committed to advancing opportunities for the people of Guam through education, training, and purposeful community engagement. His guiding principle is to foster an environment that encourages growth, development, and self-improvement—paving the way for a stronger and more prosperous future for the island and its people.

Testimony
Bill 192-38
to
Update the Guam Veterans Commission Legislation
Tom Ada
Oct. 16, 2025

Introduction

Hafa Adai, Madam Chair and members of the Committee.
My name is Tom Ada, and I am here to testify in support of Bill 192-38.

I am a U.S. Army Veteran. I also serve on the Veterans Commission as a representative for the American Legion Post 01 since February 2025. And in a previous life, I served as Legislative Oversight Chair or as a member of the Committee for Veterans Affairs.

Today, I will be testifying as a Veteran-At-Large, bringing both personal experience and organizational perspective, which have shaped my understanding of the veterans' community and the challenges it faces in achieving meaningful recognition and support.

My testimony comes in two parts:

- (1) The necessity of Bill 192-38 and the amendments being proposed, and
- (2) Other technical amendments that should be considered.

The Establishment of the Guam Veterans Commission

I want to start by giving a brief background on the establishment of the Veterans Commission. It should be noted that the primary sponsor of the two initial pieces of legislation, P.L. 29-09 and P.L. 30-86, which established the Commission, was Speaker Frank Blas Jr.

Twenty years ago, the Legislature took deliberate action to establish the Guam Veterans Commission as a direct response to federal statutes that constrained the authority of the Guam Office of Veterans Affairs (GOVA).

During that time, GOVA's main role was helping veterans start and submit their disability claims. However, if a veteran wanted to appeal a decision made by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs about those claims, the process was very limited. Appeals could only be filed through one of five federally recognized Veteran Service Organizations.

These five organizations, known for their long-standing service and advocacy for veterans, include the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), and Disabled American Veterans (DAV).

By establishing the Veterans Commission with members selected from the local chapters of these federally recognized veteran organizations, the Legislature created a pathway that offers veterans a more immediate and accessible way to pursue appeals and ensures their voices are effectively heard. [Ref, Legislative Findings, P.L. 28-46].

Over the past twenty years, the Commission has expanded. Its membership now includes local veteran organizations, and it provides a platform for veterans to voice concerns and challenges about the gaps between benefits earned through military service and their delivery.

Ideally, the Commission should be the strongest advocate for Guam's veterans and lead efforts to close these gaps. In a landscape filled with competing priorities, this advocacy is essential. Veterans must not wait passively to receive the benefits they've earned; they need to actively voice their concerns to ensure they are heard. The Commission should act as one of the channels for these concerns.

Since the Commission acts as a conduit for the voice of the Veteran community, it currently lacks the influence needed to be effective. It can and should serve as a valuable resource, offering advice to the Governor and the Veterans Affairs Office on issues affecting veterans' interests, concerns, and challenges.

Unfortunately, the current law does not promote a collaborative relationship between the Commission and the Veterans Affairs Office. Although both serve the same constituents, their mission perspectives sometimes differ.

As long as the law only requires the Director of the Veterans Affairs Office to "consider" the Commission's recommendations, their implementation can often be inconsistent. I believe a better approach would be to require the Office of Veterans Affairs, after thorough deliberation, to implement policy-level recommendations proposed by the Commission. This can be achieved without usurping the Governor's authority over the Executive branch.

Examples Illustrating the Need for Change

I present two recent examples that illustrate these concerns. These examples highlight the interactions between the Commission and GOVA and are not intended to undermine the good-faith efforts of GOVA's staff and management.

During several Commission meetings, I repeatedly recommended improvements in the reporting of reimbursements from the National Cemetery Administration, aiming for a report that is more informative and actionable.

Despite follow-ups, GOVA reminded me of the Commission's advisory role, which is to suggest and recommend rather than prescribe. That aligns with what § 67103(g) of the current law states; the GOVA Director only needs to "receive and consider" Commission recommendations. I believe that should change.

In 2022, GOVA submitted a \$14 million grant application to the U.S. National Cemetery Administration to increase burial capacity at the Veterans Cemetery in Piti and to address flood risks at the Agana Naval Cemetery.

The NCA favorably considered the application and issued a grant opportunity to GOVA. This paved the way for final approval of the application, contingent upon the submission of an A&E design, which would serve as the basis for the subsequent construction.

However, in February 2025, GOVA withdrew from the grant opportunity, opting instead to return and reapply in the next cycle. GOVA's unilateral decision surprised the Commission, the Legislative Oversight Committee, and the Governor. I argue that if the Commission had been involved in the planning process, the project would have proceeded in the 2025 grant cycle.

Legislative Changes Needed.

Here are some essential legislative amendments that are recommended:

1. I believe that amending § 67103(g) to require the GOVA Director to 'implement', and not just consider, a **policy recommendation** that has been thoroughly deliberated, would help ensure better representation of veteran interests. This can be achieved while still respecting the Governor's final authority over the delivery of services by government agencies.
2. To ensure the Commission acts as a credible advisor to both the Governor and GOVA, representatives should be vetted by the Governor's office. This process would help the Governor know who the Commission representatives are, fostering confidence that those

selected to represent the veterans' community are individuals likely to act in the community's best interests and serve as dependable advisors. Currently, the law does not specify such vetting, leaving the Governor unaware of who the Commissioners are on the Commission.

GOVA manages many responsibilities: overseeing local laws related to veterans, collaborating with the U.S. VA on veteran issues, assisting with claims, and ensuring veterans have a respectful final resting place at the Veterans Cemetery. It's easy for the office to become overwhelmed, jaded, and disconnected from the daily challenges faced by veterans.

This is where the Commission's role becomes crucial. An effective Commission should understand veterans' challenges and actively pursue solutions, whether at the local or federal level. The response must be a coordinated effort between GOVA and the Commission. Differences in viewpoint will occur, and when we are at a deadlock, the law should clearly state that GOVA shall 'implement,' not merely 'consider,' rational Commission policy recommendations.

The Commission acts as a crucial advocate and voice for veterans, closing the gap between expectations and actual service. It should also advise the Governor on veterans' issues. The proposed amendments will strengthen the Commission's role as a conduit and advocate for veterans' concerns.

Other Technical Amendments to Bill 192-38

In the second part of my testimony, I respectfully ask the Committee to consider the following technical amendments:

1. Amend § 67101(c), Chapter 67 of Title 10 GCA. Revise the definition of a Veteran for consistency with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs:
"A veteran means a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable. Veterans include those from the Guam Combat Patrol, the United States Insular Force, the Philippine Scouts, and the United States Armed Forces."

2. Section 4, page 5, Line 2:

§67107(a)(3), Ch 67 of Title 10 GCA. Approved Veteran Organizations.

Previous public laws clearly required member organizations on the Commission to be registered with Guam DRT as bona fide non-profit organizations.

At some point, the words “and/or” were added. The words “and/or” could be understood to mean that a local chapter of a national veteran organization does not have to register with the Guam Department of Revenue and Taxation as a 501(c) organization due to its affiliation with a national organization.

In my research, I was unable to find any previous public laws that exempted local chapters of national veteran organizations from needing to register with the Guam DRT.

I recommend that all veteran organizations wishing to join the Commission be 501(c) nonprofit organizations registered with the Guam DRT. Registration with the Guam DRT aims to ensure accountability of NPOs.

3. Section 4, page 6, Line 3:

§67107(b)(1), Ch 67 Title 10 GCA. Commission Membership Terms and Conduct of Business.

The provision should read: “... *to be transmitted to / Maga’hågan/Maga’låhen Guåhan for approval to serve on the Commission...*”

Closing

Si Yu’os Ma’ase for the introduction of Bill 192-38 and for the opportunity to speak on this matter.



BIOGRAPHY



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE (RETIRED)

COLONEL TIMOTHY A. PUZAN (Ret)

Colonel Timothy A. Puzan last served in uniform as the J3, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans, Joint Force Headquarters, Guam National Guard. He was responsible for operational planning and execution for the Guam National Guard, to include Domestic Operations, Strategic Partner Program with the Philippines, future force structure, Federal deployments, strategic planning, exercise planning and execution, anti-terrorism, force protection, and land and air operations for the Guam National Guard. He also provided critical management for the COVID pandemic response for the Guam National Guard.

Colonel Puzan began his military career in 1976 at the age of 17, when he enlisted in the United States Air Force. He served in the Logistics career field, with assignments to FE Warren AFB, Wyoming, Lajes Field, Azores, Portugal, and Andersen AFB, Guam. He separated from the US Air Force in Aug 1986 and enlisted in the Guam Air National Guard the following day as the first Public Affairs NCO for the Guam ANG.



Colonel Puzan was commissioned in the Guam Air National Guard in May 1992 as the Social Actions Officer, 254th Air Base Group. Subsequently he became the Director of Personnel, Active Guard Reserve from 2002 to 2006. From 2006 to 2007, Colonel Puzan served as the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Program Officer in the Joint Force Headquarters, Guam National Guard. Colonel Puzan deployed to Kabul, Afghanistan from April 2007 to October 2007 as Chief of Operations, Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan, and was responsible for monitoring Coalition, Afghan, and Taliban activities throughout the AOR. Colonel Puzan served as the Director of Personnel for the 254th Air Base Group, and then assigned to the Guam Joint Force Headquarters as Director of Air Staff from January 2009 to August 2013 and from August 2015 to February 2016. He also served as Joint Director of Human Resources for the Guam Army and Air National Guard from September 2013 to July 2015. Colonel Puzan then served as the Commander of the 254th Air Base Group, until December 2018 and his last assignment. Colonel Puzan has over 43 years of continuous military service in both Title 10 and Title 32 status. Upon his retirement on 1 July 2020, he was among the longest continuous serving members of the Total Air Force.

Colonel Puzan was born in Chicago, Ill. He attended high school at Quigley Preparatory Seminary North, and graduated from the University of Maryland in 1986 with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology, and earned a Master's Degree in Counseling from the University of Guam in 1989. He is married to Marife De Luna Puzan and has six children, Tim Jr (USN), Christopher, Theresa, Jonathan, Jarod, and Isabella. His parents are Walter and Evelyn Puzan (deceased). Colonel Puzan has worked as an educator on Guam for 15 years within the Guam Public School System and as an Associate Professor for Guam Community College. He also served as vice-president on the DODEA Guam District School Board from 2008 – 2010 and was elected to serve 2 additional terms until 2017.

Upon his military retirement, Colonel Puzan continued to serve the Guam's military and veterans in several capacities, He is the Antiterrorism Program Manager for the Guam National Guard, a volunteer Ombudsman for the Guam-CNMI Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Committee, acting Commander for the Guam United States Air Force Veterans (GUSAFV), and member of the Guam Veterans Commission. He is also presidentially appointed to serve as Director for the Selective Service System for Guam. In his spare time, he is attending Electrician classes at the Guam Trades Academy.

EDUCATION

1986 Bachelor of Science, Psychology, University of Maryland
1989 Master of Education, Counseling, University of Guam
1996 Squadron Officer School, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama
2007 Air Command and Staff College, Correspondence
2015 Air War College, Correspondence

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Legion of Merit, 1 Device
Defense Meritorious Service Medal
Meritorious Service Medal, 7 Devices
Air Force Commendation Medal, 1 Device
Army Commendation Medal
Air Force Achievement Medal Air Force Meritorious Unit Award
Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, 1 Device
Air Force Good Conduct Medal, 3 Devices
Air Reserve Forces Meritorious Service Medal, 10 Devices
National Defense Service Medal, 1 Device
Afghanistan Campaign Medal, 1 Device
Global War on Terrorism Service Medal
Humanitarian Service Medal, 2 Devices
AF Overseas Ribbon Short
AF Overseas Ribbon Long, 1 Device
Air Force Expeditionary Service Medal with Gold Border
Air Force Longevity Service Ribbon, 10 Devices
Armed Forces Reserve Medal, 10 Devices
Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon, 1 Device
Air Force Training Ribbon, 1 Device
NATO Medal

(Current as of July 2025)

TESTIMONY OF Veteran Monty A. McDowell, U.S. Navy-Retired

October 14, 2025

**Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane
Chairperson, Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs
163 W. Chalan Santo Papa
Hagåtña, Guam 96910**

Håfa Adai, Madam Chair and honorable members of the Legislature—si yu'os ma'åse' for the opportunity to testify in strong support of Bill No. 192-38, with a few constructive refinements.

I speak today as a member of Guam's veteran community and as a neighbor who has stood at too many flag-draped farewells, counseled families in the maze of benefits, and seen the everyday victories and struggles of those who served. This bill recognizes a simple truth: good intent is not enough; our systems must be built to deliver.

—

Why Bill 192-38 Matters Now

For decades, the Guam Office of Veterans Affairs (GOVA) has been tasked with an expansive mission—advocating, assisting, and guiding our veterans and their families. The Guam Veterans Commission (GVC), created to be a partner and a voice, has grown into an essential forum where needs are identified and priorities are set. But structure determines speed and success. Bill 192-38 modernizes the relationship between GOVA and the Commission, clarifies roles, and reduces friction so that the needs voiced in community halls and kitchen tables translate into action at agency desks and budget hearings.

This bill does three big things:

- 1) Clarifies leadership and accountability so the Veterans Affairs Officer can administer effectively while engaging the Commission's voice and expertise.
- 2) Reshapes the Commission to be more nimble while preserving broad representation and public accountability.
- 3) Sets expectations for meeting cadence, open-government practice, ethics training, and timely responses—practical guardrails that turn intentions into outcomes.

—

Aligning with Mr. Anthony Taijeron's Approach—And Going Further

I appreciate Mr. Anthony Taijeron's thoughtful notes recognizing that a leaner Commission can move faster and that each service branch must be seen and heard. I echo and build on his themes with the following recommendations to strengthen the bill's promise while addressing concerns we've heard in the community.

1) Representation With Purpose

Keep it nimble, keep it complete. Reducing the minimum number of Commission members

can reduce gridlock, but the statute should expressly protect representation for all services—Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, and Coast Guard—as well as Guam’s officially chartered multi-service Veteran Service Organizations (VFW, American Legion, MOPH, VVA, etc.). Where there are multiple chapters, the nominating process should prevent fragmentation while honoring grassroots voices. A shorter table must still have a seat for every uniform.

Practical language to add:

- Guarantee at least one seat representing each branch, including Coast Guard and Space Force, to avoid unintentional gaps.
- Maintain the primary-and-alternate structure so continuity is preserved if a representative rotates out or deployments affect availability.

2) Ex-Officio Members—Respect Without Confusion

Recognizing allied veterans who fought alongside U.S. forces is a dignified gesture. To avoid confusion, reaffirm that ex-officio roles are strictly non-voting, tethered to transparent eligibility (residency, organized presence on Guam, and good standing), and limited in number. Their presence should symbolize friendship and shared sacrifice without clouding local decision-making.

3) Timely Responses & Transparent Follow-Through

Veterans and their families deserve predictability. I support written timelines for GOVA responses to Commission requests and recommend a simple public tracker: each formal request logged with a status, due date, and outcome. Sunshine is the cheapest accountability tool we have.

Practical language to add:

- Require GOVA to publish quarterly dashboards summarizing requests received, response dates, resolutions, and any time-extension justifications.
- Direct the Commission to publish meeting agendas, minutes, and actions in an accessible online location within a fixed number of days after each meeting.

4) Ethics Training That’s Real

Ethics training should be scenario-based and veteran-specific: gift rules around fundraising, conflicts when serving both in a VSO and as a Commissioner, confidentiality of claims assistance, and open-meeting law pitfalls. Require completion within six months of appointment and periodic refreshers every two years, with certification posted publicly.

5) A Defined Grievance Path—From Voice to Remedy

The Commission is where grievances surface, but remedies should be documented and trackable. Establish a Veterans’ Ombudspath—a clear intake → triage → referral → resolution loop—with time limits and appeal steps. Pair it with quarterly public reports that anonymize sensitive details but illuminate systemic issues (e.g., delays in service connection claims, travel reimbursements, or access to behavioral health care).

6) Beyond Structure—Invest in Outcomes

Mr. Taijeron is right: structure without resources is a promise that breaks. We must aim higher:

- **Health & Long-Term Care:** Partner with the U.S. VA to expand on-island specialty clinics, telehealth, and a pathway toward a dedicated veterans' medical center or expanded CBOC capacity. Include culturally competent mental health services and peer-led supports for PTSD, moral injury, and caregiver respite.
- **Economic Mobility:** Stand up veteran entrepreneurship grants, procurement preferences for veteran-owned businesses, and skill-bridge style training with Guam employers for transitioning service members and Guard/Reserve. Pair this with a one-stop "Veterans Economic Opportunity" navigator housed within GOVA.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Allow donations to a dedicated Veterans Fund with transparent governance to unlock philanthropic and business support for housing, transportation to care, adaptive equipment, and emergency relief.

—

Addressing Common Concerns

"Fewer Commissioners means fewer voices."

Not if representation is guaranteed by statute and meetings amplify public comment. Smaller bodies can decide faster; broad input can still be mandatory by design. Put both in law.

"Ex-officio allies might dilute focus."

Not if voting remains with Guam's veterans and allied roles are capped, non-voting, and clearly defined. This is about honor, not leverage.

"Timelines will strain a small staff."

Then let's pair timelines with realistic staffing plans and the authority to request federal technical assistance. Clarity helps leaders secure resources.

—

Implementation Roadmap (Within 12 Months of Enactment)

1. Month 0–2: Finalize Commission membership; deliver ethics training calendar; publish meeting schedule for the year.
2. Month 0–3: Launch an online Commission-GOVA request tracker with public read-only access; standardize templates for requests and responses.
3. Month 0–6: Establish the Veterans' Ombudspath; begin quarterly public reporting on grievances and resolutions.
4. Month 3–9: Stand up the Veterans Economic Opportunity navigator; publish a directory of veteran-preferred vendors and training programs.
5. Month 6–12: With the VA, produce a joint Access to Care Plan for Guam outlining near-term telehealth expansions, visiting specialist rotations, behavioral health capacity, and a long-term facility roadmap.

Measurable Outcomes We Should Expect

- Faster issue resolution: 80% of Commission requests answered within the statutory window; 90% of grievances triaged within 10 business days.
- Stronger participation: Average Commission meeting attendance above quorum by 30%, with published minutes within 7 days.
- Better access to care: Year-over-year increase in completed VA appointments on-island and reduced off-island travel for routine care.
- Economic lift: Growth in registered veteran-owned businesses and job placements facilitated by the navigator.

Closing

Our veterans did not hesitate when called. We should not hesitate now. Bill 192-38 is a decisive step toward a system that is lean where it should be, inclusive where it must be, and relentlessly focused on outcomes that families can feel.

Let us pair structure with standards, representation with results, and symbolism with services. Pass Bill 192-38 with the refinements outlined above, and let's deliver the Guam our veterans have already earned.

Si yu'os ma'åse'. I am happy to answer any questions and to work with the sponsors, GOVA, the Commission, and our VSOs to turn these words into durable change.

Senseramente,



Monty A. McDowell, Veteran, U.S. Navy-Retired

Email: monty.mcdowell@amiguam.com

Phone: Cell [REDACTED]

Hafa Adai,

These are the talking points for my legislative testimony this Thursday morning in consideration for renaming and reforming the current Guam Veterans Commission.

Accountability

Periodicity

Compensation

Knowledge Manager

Eligibility of Officers

Respectfully,

Dennis Polli



543 Guma Yu'os Lane Tamuning, Guam 96913

671.688.3607

veterans.hmiguam@gmail.com

www.hmiguam.com

Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane
Chair, Veterans Committee
Guam Legislature
163 Chalan Santo Papa
Hagatña, Guam 96910

Dear Senator Salas Matanane,

Subject: Moving Forward Together: Ensuring a Lasting Legacy of Support for Guam's Veterans

On behalf of HMI, a veteran nonprofit dedicated to supporting Guam's veteran community, we wish to extend our deepest gratitude for your leadership and tireless commitment as Chair of the Veterans Committee, particularly in advancing Bill No. 192-38.

This legislation marks a crucial and much-needed step toward restructuring the Guam Office of Veterans Affairs and securing a brighter, more supportive future for our veterans.

We would be remiss not to acknowledge the foundational work of Tom Ada and the Guam Veterans Task Force, whose efforts were instrumental in getting the Guam Veterans Commission back on track. The amendments initiated by Tom Ada, in collaboration with your office and Senator San Nicolas's office alongside the Veterans Task Force, represent a key component of this bill's development. The insights gathered from the updated veteran surveys conducted by the Task Force and HMI provided the essential data that prompted these important amendments.

As this working group reviewed and submitted recommendations, we respectfully urge the Veterans Committee to consider the following enhancements to Bill No. 192-38 to maximize its inclusivity and long-term effectiveness:

Explicit, balanced representation across all military branches, including the Coast Guard and Space Force, within the Commission structure.

Inclusion of non-voting Ex-Officio members from allied nations as a meaningful expression of international goodwill, enriching our veteran community without compromising local priorities.

Provisions for sustainable funding, including exploring public-private partnerships and incentives to develop critical infrastructure such as dedicated veterans' medical centers, mental health services, and long-term care facilities tailored to the unique challenges of island isolation.

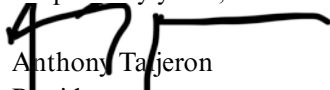
Veteran economic empowerment initiatives, including entrepreneurship programs and job placement services, along with transparent governance and clearer grievance processes.

We view Bill No. 192-38 as a strong foundation—an evolving framework that must adapt to meet the changing needs of Guam's veterans across generations.

We sincerely hope these recommendations will be given full consideration as we collectively work toward meaningful, lasting progress for our veterans.

Thank you again for your invaluable leadership and advocacy on behalf of Guam's veteran community.

Respectfully yours,


Anthony Tajeron
President
HMI



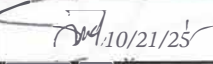
Office of Legislative Secretary

SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE

I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan | 38th Guam Legislature
Chairperson, Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs

COMMITTEE VOTE SHEET

Bill No. 192-38 (COR) As amended by the committee on Health and Veterans Affairs– Sabrina Salas Matanane - AN ACT TO *AMEND* §67100, §67101, §67103, AND §67107 AND TO *REPEAL* § 67107.1 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER, THE COMPOSITION AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, AND THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS	SIGNATURE AND DATE	TO DO PASS	TO NOT PASS	TO REPORT OUT ONLY	TO ABSTAIN	TO PLACE IN INACTIVE FILE
Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane Chairperson	 10/21/25	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Vice Speaker V. Anthony Ada Vice Chair, Committee on Health	 10/21	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Senator Vincent A.V. Borja Vice Chair, Committee on Veterans Affairs	 10/21/25	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Speaker Frank F. Blas, Jr. Member		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Senator Jesse A. Lujan Member	 10/21/25	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Senator Shelly V. Calvo Member	E-vote 10.22.2025	X	☒	☐	☐	☐
Senator Christopher M. Duenas Member	 10/21/25	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Senator Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao Member	E-vote 10.22.2025	X	☐	☐	☐	☐
Senator Tina Rose Muna Barnes Member		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



Sabrina Salas Matanane <office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov>

URGENT: Request for e-vote: Committee Reptot relative to Bill No. 192-38 (COR)

3 messages

Office of Legislative Secretary Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane

Wed, Oct 22, 2025 at

<office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov>

4:59 PM

To: Senator Tina Muna Barnes <senator.munabarnes@guamlegislature.gov>, Senator Shawn Gumataotao

<office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>, Office of Senator Shelly Calvo

<officeofsenatorshellycalvo@guamlegislature.gov>

Bcc: ann.sn@guamlegislature.gov

Hafa Adai Committee Members:

Please see attached Amended Committee Report relative to **Bill No. 192-38 (COR)** – Sabrina Salas Matanane -
- AN ACT TO AMEND §67100, §67101, §67103, AND §67107 AND TO REPEAL § 67107.1 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER, THE COMPOSITION AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, AND THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN.

Please indicate your preferred action, based on the following options:

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

Please submit your response **ASAP**. 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.

Please contact our office if you have any questions or concerns.shelly

--

Annie San Nicolas

Administrative Officer/Committee Director

**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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**Committee Report PH 2025.10.16 (1) (2) (1) copy (1) (1).pdf**

10407K

Senator Shawn Gumataotao <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Wed, Oct 22, 2025 at 5:08 PM

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

Cc: Senator Tina Muna Barnes <senator.munabarnes@guamlegislature.gov>, Office of Senator Shelly Calvo <officeofsenatorshellycalvo@guamlegislature.gov>

Hafa adai,

TO DO PASS.

Si Yu'os ma'åse!

[Quoted text hidden]

--

Office of Senator Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao

Chairman, Committee on Public Safety, Emergency Management, and Guam National Guard

38th Guam Legislature

[120 Father Duenas Avenue](#) Capitol Plaza Building, Suite 103, Hagåtña, Guam 96910

(671) 647-1409/1411

Office of Senator Shelly Calvo <officeofsenatorshellycalvo@guamlegislature.gov>

Wed, Oct 22, 2025 at 5:15 PM

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

Cc: Senator Tina Muna Barnes <senator.munabarnes@guamlegislature.gov>, Senator Shawn Gumataotao <office.senatorshawn@guamlegislature.gov>

Hafa Adai,

To Do Pass

Si Yu'os Ma'åse

Respectfully,

**Office of the People • Senator Shelly V. Calvo**

Majority Whip & Chairwoman

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

38th Guam Legislature

163 Chalan Santo Papa, Hagåtña, Guam 96910

T +1 (671) 989-5682**E** officeofsenatorshellycalvo@guamlegislature.govOn Wed, Oct 22, 2025 at 4:59 PM Office of Legislative Secretary Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane <office.senatorbri@guamlegislature.gov> wrote:

[Quoted text hidden]



The Office of the Legislative Secretary
SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE
I Mina'trentai Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan | 38th Guam Legislature
Chairwoman, Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs

COMMITTEE REPORT DIGEST

I. OVERVIEW:

The Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs conducted a Public Hearing on Thursday October 16, 2025, scheduled to begin at 9:00 A.M., in the Public Hearing Room of the Guam Congress Building.

Among other items, on the agenda for discussion: [Bill No. 192-38 \(COR\)](#) as amended by the Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs – **Sabrina Salas Matanane -AN ACT TO AMEND §67100, § 67101, §67103, AND §67107 AND TO REPEAL § 67107.1 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER, THE COMPOSITION AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, AND THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN.**

Public Notice Requirements

In accordance with Open Government Law, the public notice for this public hearing was disseminated via email to all senators and main media broadcasting outlets on October 9, 2025, and October 14, 2025. This public notice was also posted on the Guam Legislature website and the Public Notice Portal.

Senators Present

Senator Sabrina Salas Matanane, Chairperson of the Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs
Vice Speaker Tony Ada
Senator Shawn Gumataotao
Senator Therese M. Terlaje

Appearing before the Committee:

Tom Ada-Veterans Commission Member
Chris Toran-American Legion Commander
Dennis Polli-Veterans Commission Member
Roy Gamboa-Chairperson Of Veterans Commission
Brian Merenda-Vfw Post 2917 Commander
Rose Blend-Secretary For Third Marine Division Association
Vince Santiago-Veterans Commission Second Chair
Ron Mcninch
Nick Francisco
Joe Mafnas
Charlie Hermosa
Jose San Agustin
Enrique Torres

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Thursday October 16, 2025, at 9:00 A.M.
Public Hearing Room, Guam Congress Building

II. SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY AND DISCUSSION:

This Public Hearing was called to order at 9:01 A.M.

PUBLIC HEARING - SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE - OCTOBER 16, 2025 9AM

SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE-CHAIRPERSON OF HEALTH AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

BUENAS AND HAGA ADAL. THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND VETERANS AFFAIRS IS NOW IN SESSION. THE TIME IS 9:01. IT IS THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16TH, 2025. THANK YOU FOR JOINING US TODAY. WHETHER YOU'RE HERE AT THE GUAM CONGRESS BUILDING OR WATCHING US ONLINE THROUGH THE YOUTUBE LIVESTREAM. THIS MORNING'S HEARING IS ON BILL 192-38 WHICH I INTRODUCED ALONG WITH SEVERAL OF MY COLLEAGUES. THIS BILL MAKES CHANGES TO HOW THE OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION ARE RUN, HOW THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER IS APPOINTED, WHAT THEIR POWERS AND DUTIES ARE, HOW THE VETERANS COMMISSION IS MADE UP, AND EVEN HOW WE DEFINE WHO IS A VETERAN UNDER GUAM LAW. BEFORE WE BEGIN, JUST A QUICK NOTE. PUBLIC NOTICE OF THIS HEARING WENT OUT TO SENATORS, STAKEHOLDERS, AND THE MEDIA AS REQUIRED BY LAW. IT WAS ALSO POSTED ON THE LEGISLATURES' WEBSITE AND PUBLIC NOTICE PORTAL. COPIES OF THE AGENDA AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS ARE ONLINE, AND IF ANYONE HERE WOULD LIKE A PRINTED COPY, PLEASE LET US KNOW. THE VIDEO OF TODAY'S HEARING WILL ALSO BE POSTED ONLINE LATER. I'D LIKE TO TAKE A MOMENT TO RECOGNIZE MY COLLEAGUES FROM THE COMMITTEE WHO ARE HERE WITH US TODAY. SENATOR SHAWN GUMATAOTAO AS WELL AS SENATOR THERESE TERLAJE. THANK YOU. FOR MY COLLEAGUES JUST A REMINDER, EACH SENATOR WILL HAVE FIVE MINUTES FOR QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS SO THAT EVERYONE GETS A FAIR CHANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN TODAY'S HEARING. IF YOU ARE HERE FROM THE PUBLIC AND WOULD LIKE TO TESTIFY ON BILL 192, PLEASE HAVE A SEAT AT THE TABLE AND WE WILL CALL FOR TESTIMONY. HOWEVER, BEFORE WE BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY, I'D LIKE TO SHARE A FEW COMMENTS ABOUT BILL 192. I'LL START BY REMINDING US WHY WE ARE HERE. TO DO BETTER FOR OUR VETERANS. LIKE SO MANY OF YOU, MY FATHER WAS A VETERAN, SO I'VE BEEN AND SEEN FIRSTHAND BOTH THE HONOR AND CHALLENGES THAT COME WITH SERVICE. THAT IS WHY I INTRODUCED THE EARLIER VERSION OF THIS LEGISLATION, THE VETERANS EMPOWERMENT ACT, OR BILL 85. BUT AFTER THAT BILL WAS INTRODUCED, A NUMBER OF VETERANS FROM VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS CAME TO ME UPSET AND CONCERNED. THEY FELT THAT THE ORIGINAL DRAFT DIDN'T FULLY REFLECT THEIR VOICE. AND SO INSTEAD OF DIGGING IN, I SAT DOWN WITH THEM AND GOT AN EARFUL. BUT TOGETHER, WE WORKED ON THIS NEW MEASURE, BILL 192. IT WAS BUILT ON COLLABORATION, COMPROMISE, AND THE GOAL OF STRENGTHENING THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION AND THE OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS. IT WAS PRIMARILY WRITTEN BY VETERANS FOR VETERANS WHO I WOULD LIKE TO RECOGNIZE RIGHT NOW FOR THEIR TIME AND EFFORT FOR PUTTING THIS LEGISLATION TOGETHER. AND IF YOU ARE PRESENT TODAY, PLEASE STAND UP AND BE RECOGNIZED. ROY GAMBOA FROM GOTYOUR671. VINCENT SANTIAGO, THIRD MARINE DIVISION ASSOCIATION, GUAM CHAPTER. CHRIS TORAN, AMERICAN LEGION, MID PACIFIC POST ONE. JOSEPH YATAR, VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, CHAPTER 668. TIMOTHY PUZON, GUAM, US AIR FORCE VETERANS. ROSE BLEND, THIRD MARINE DIVISION ASSOCIATION, GUAM CHAPTER. FORMER SENATOR TOM ADA, AMERICAN LEGION, MID PACIFIC POST ONE. LEE WEBER SR. US NAVY LEAGUE. AND MR. NICK FRANCISCO, MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART. THANK YOU SO MUCH. I APPRECIATE YOUR

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TIME AND EFFORT YOU PUT INTO THIS BILL. NOW, I RECOGNIZE NOT EVERY VETERANS GROUP WILL BE HAPPY WITH EVERY LINE OF THIS LEGISLATION. THAT IS EXPECTED. BUT THAT IS EXACTLY WHY WE ARE HOLDING THIS PUBLIC HEARING. THIS IS THE PLACE TO BRING FORWARD YOUR IDEAS, YOUR DISAGREEMENTS, AND YOUR SOLUTIONS. WHAT WE SHOULDN'T, HOWEVER, SPEND THIS TIME TEARING ONE ANOTHER DOWN. I WANT TO SAY THIS FIRMLY. WE ARE NOT HERE TO TAKE SHOTS AT ONE ANOTHER. WE HAVE TO STOP FIGHTING AMONGST OURSELVES AND START BUILDING SOMETHING STRONGER TOGETHER. OUR VETERANS DESERVE BETTER THAN DIVISION. THIS BILL IS NOT A FINAL PRODUCT. IT IS A STARTING POINT. AND I WANT TO NOTE THAT A TECHNICAL ERROR WAS LEFT OUT A SECTION THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN INCLUDED. I WILL BE ADDING THAT BACK IN AS AN AMENDMENT DURING THE MARKUP. SPECIFICALLY, I WILL BE AMENDING IT TO INCLUDE THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN. IT WILL STATE A VETERAN'S MEANS A PERSON WHO SERVED IN THE ACTIVE MILITARY, NAVAL, OR AIR SERVICE AS WAS DISCHARGED OR RELEASED THERE FROM UNDER CONDITIONS OTHER THAN DISHONORABLE. VETERAN INCLUDED VETERANS OF THE GUAM COMBAT PATROL, THE UNITED STATES INSULAR FORCE, PHILIPPINE SCOUTS, AND THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES. THAT WAS IN THE ORIGINAL BILL THAT WAS SENT TO ME. SO I WILL BE INCLUDING IT IN THE FINAL VERSION. SO AGAIN, LET US USE TODAY'S HEARING TO MOVE FORWARD, NOT BACKWARDS. LET US LISTEN, LEARN, AND REFINE THIS BILL TOGETHER. AT THE END OF THE DAY, OUR GOAL SHOULD BE SIMPLE, TO ENSURE THAT THE VOICES OF GUAM'S VETERANS ARE RESPECTED AND THAT THE SYSTEMS MEANT TO SERVE THEM ACTUALLY WORK. WE WILL NOW BEGIN WITH TESTIMONY ON BILL 192. I ASK THAT YOU SPEAK CLOSELY INTO THE MICROPHONE AND BEGIN WITH IDENTIFYING YOURSELF. WE WILL START FROM MY RIGHT, MR. MCNINCH. SENATOR TOM ADA.

TOM ADA THANK YOU. Hafa Adai Madame Chair and Members of the Committee. My name is Tom Ada and I am here to testify in support of Bill 192-38. I am a US Army Veteran and I also serve on the Veterans Commission as a representative of the American Legion Post One since February 2025. And in a previous life, I served as the Legislative Oversight Chair or as a member of the Committee, Legislative Committee for Veterans Affairs. Today I will be testifying as a Veteran at large, bringing both personal experience and organizational perspective which have shaped my understanding of the Veterans community and the challenges it faces in achieving meaningful recognition and support. My testimony comes in two parts. The necessity of Bill 192-38 and the amendments being proposed and other technical amendments that should be considered. The establishment of the Guam Veterans Commission. I want to start by giving a brief background on the establishment of the Veterans Commission. It should be noted that the primary sponsor of the two initial pieces of legislation, Public Law 29-09 and Public Law 30-86, which established the Commission with Speaker Frank Blas Jr. 20 years ago, the Legislature took deliberate action to establish the Guam Veterans Commission as a direct response to federal statutes that constrain the authority of the Guam Office of Veterans Affairs. During that time, the Office of Veterans Affairs main role was helping Veterans start and submit their disability claims. However, if a Veteran wanted to appeal a decision made by the US Department of Veterans Affairs about those claims, the process was very limited. Appeals could only be filed through one of five federally recognized Veteran service organizations. These five organizations known for their longstanding service and advocacy for Veterans include the American Legion,

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VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS, MILITARY ORDER, THE PURPLE HEART, THE VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA, AND THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS. BY ESTABLISHING THE VETERANS COMMISSION WITH MEMBERS SELECTED FROM THE LOCAL CHAPTERS OF THESE FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS, THE LEGISLATURE CREATED A PATHWAY THAT OFFERS VETERANS A MORE IMMEDIATE AND ACCESSIBLE WAY TO PURSUE APPEALS AND ENSURES THEIR SERVICES ARE EFFECTIVELY HEARD, THEIR VOICES ARE EFFECTIVELY HEARD. THIS CAN BE FOUND IN THE LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS IN PUBLIC LAW 28-46. OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS, THE COMMISSION HAS EXPANDED. ITS MEMBERSHIP NOW INCLUDES LOCAL VETERAN ORGANIZATIONS AND IT PROVIDES A PLATFORM FOR VETERANS TO VOICE CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES ABOUT THE GAPS BETWEEN BENEFITS EARNED THROUGH MILITARY SERVICE AND THEIR DELIVERY. IDEALLY, THE COMMISSION SHOULD BE THE STRONGEST ADVOCATE FOR GUAM'S VETERANS AND LEAD EFFORTS TO CLOSE THESE GAPS. IN A LANDSCAPE FILLED WITH COMPETING PRIORITIES, THIS ADVOCACY IS ESSENTIAL. VETERANS MUST NOT WAIT PASSIVELY TO RECEIVE THE BENEFITS THEY'VE EARNED. THEY NEED TO ACTIVELY VOICE THEIR CONCERNS TO ENSURE THEY ARE HEARD. THE COMMISSION SHOULD ACT AS ONE OF THE CHANNELS FOR THESE CONCERNS. SINCE THE COMMISSION ACTS AS A CONDUIT FOR THE VOICE OF THE VETERAN COMMUNITY, IT CURRENTLY LACKS THE INFLUENCE NEEDED TO BE EFFECTIVE. IT CAN AND SHOULD SERVE AS A VALUABLE RESOURCE OFFERING ADVICE TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE ON ISSUES AFFECTING VETERANS INTERESTS, CONCERNS, AND CHALLENGES. UNFORTUNATELY, THE CURRENT LAW DOES NOT PROMOTE A COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COMMISSION AND THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE. ALTHOUGH BOTH SERVE THE SAME CONSTITUENTS, THEIR MISSION PERSPECTIVES SOMETIMES DIFFER. AS LONG AS THE LAW ONLY REQUIRES THE DIRECTOR OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE TO CONSIDER THE COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS, THEIR IMPLEMENTATION CAN OFTEN BE INCONSISTENT. I BELIEVE A BETTER APPROACH WOULD BE TO REQUIRE THE OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AFTER THOROUGH DELIBERATION TO IMPLEMENT POLICY LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS PROPOSED BY THE COMMISSION. THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT USURPING THE GOVERNOR'S AUTHORITY OVER THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH. EXAMPLES, I WOULD LIKE TO CITE SOME TWO RECENT EXAMPLES ILLUSTRATING THE NEED FOR CHANGE. I PRESENT TWO RECENT EXAMPLES THAT ILLUSTRATE THESE CONCERNS. THESE EXAMPLES HIGHLIGHT THE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE COMMISSION AND THE OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND ARE NOT INTENDED TO UNDERMINE THE GOOD FAITH EFFORTS OF GOVA'S STAFF AND MANAGEMENT. DURING SEVERAL COMMISSION MEETINGS, I REPEATEDLY RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS IN THE REPORTING OF REIMBURSEMENTS FROM THE NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION, AIMING FOR A REPORT THAT IS MORE INFORMATIVE AND ACTIONABLE. DESPITE FOLLOW-UPS, GOVA REMINDED ME OF THE COMMISSION'S ADVISORY ROLE, WHICH IS TO SUGGEST AND RECOMMEND RATHER THAN PRESCRIBE. THAT ALIGNS WITH WHAT SECTION 67103G OF THE CURRENT LAW STATES. THE GOVA DIRECTOR ONLY NEEDS TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS. I BELIEVE THAT SHOULD BE CHANGED. IN 2022, THE OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS SUBMITTED A \$14 MILLION GRANT APPLICATION TO THE US NATIONAL CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION TO INCREASE BURIAL CAPACITY AT THE VETERANS CEMETERY IN PITI AND TO ADDRESS FLOOD RISKS AT THE AANA NAVAL CEMETERY. THE NCA FAVORABLY CONSIDERED THE APPLICATION AND ISSUED A GRANT OPPORTUNITY TO GOVA. THIS PAVED THE WAY FOR FINAL APPROVAL OF THE APPLICATION CONTINGENT UPON THE SUBMISSION OF AN A&E DESIGN WHICH WILL SERVE AS THE BASIS FOR THE SUBSEQUENT CONSTRUCTION. HOWEVER, IN FEBRUARY 2025, THE OFFICE OF VETERANS

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AFFAIRS WITHDREW FROM THE GRANT OPPORTUNITY, OPTING INSTEAD TO RETURN AND REAPPLY IN THE NEXT CYCLE. THE UNILATERAL DECISION TO WITHDRAW SURPRISED THE COMMISSION, THE LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE, AND THE GOVERNOR. I ARGUE THAT IF THE COMMISSION HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING PROCESS, THE PROJECT WOULD HAVE PROCEEDED IN THE 2025 GRANT CYCLE. LEGISLATIVE CHANGES THAT I THINK THAT ARE ESSENTIAL TO BRING ABOUT THE CHANGES THAT WOULD IMPROVE THE SITUATION. I BELIEVE THAT AMENDING 67103G TO REQUIRE THE OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DIRECTOR TO IMPLEMENT AND NOT JUST CONSIDER A POLICY RECOMMENDATION THAT HAS BEEN THOROUGHLY DELIBERATED WOULD HELP TO ENSURE BETTER REPRESENTATION OF VETERAN INTERESTS. THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED WHILE STILL RESPECTING THE GOVERNOR'S FINAL AUTHORITY OVER THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES. TO ENSURE THE COMMISSION ACTS AS A CREDIBLE ADVISOR TO BOTH THE GOVERNOR AND THE OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, REPRESENTATIVES SHOULD BE VETTED, REPRESENTATIVES TO THE COMMISSION SHOULD BE VETTED BY THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE. THIS PROCESS WILL HELP THE GOVERNOR KNOW WHO THE COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVES ARE, FOSTERING CONFIDENCE THAT THOSE SELECTED TO REPRESENT THE VETERANS COMMUNITY ARE INDIVIDUALS LIKELY TO ACT IN THE COMMUNITY'S BEST INTERESTS AND SERVE AS DEPENDABLE ADVISERS. CURRENTLY, THE LAW DOES NOT SPECIFY SUCH VETTING, LEAVING THE GOVERNOR UNAWARE OF WHO THE COMMISSIONERS ARE ON THE COMMISSION. THE OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MANAGES MANY RESPONSIBILITIES, OVERSEEING LOCAL LAWS RELATED TO VETERANS, COLLABORATING WITH THE US VETERANS ADMINISTRATION ON VETERAN ISSUES, ASSISTING WITH CLAIMS, AND ENSURING VETERANS HAVE A RESPECTFUL FINAL RESTING PLACE AT THE VETERANS CEMETERY. IT'S EASY FOR THE OFFICE TO BECOME OVERWHELMED, JADED, AND DISCONNECTED FROM THE DAILY CHALLENGES FACED BY VETERANS. THIS IS WHERE THE COMMISSION'S ROLE BECOMES CRUCIAL. AN EFFECTIVE COMMISSION SHOULD UNDERSTAND VETERANS' CHALLENGES AND ACTIVELY PURSUE SOLUTIONS WHETHER AT THE LOCAL OR FEDERAL LEVEL. THE RESPONSE MUST BE A COORDINATED EFFORT BETWEEN THE OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND THE COMMISSION. DIFFERENCES IN VIEWPOINTS WILL OCCUR AND WHEN WE ARE AT A DEADLOCK, THE LAW SHOULD CLEARLY STATE THAT THE OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS SHALL IMPLEMENT AND NOT MERELY RECONSIDER RATIONAL COMMISSION POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS. THE COMMISSION ACTS AS A CRUCIAL ADVOCATE AND VOICE FOR VETERANS, CLOSING THE GAP BETWEEN EXPECTATIONS AND ACTUAL SERVICE. IT SHOULD ALSO ADVISE THE GOVERNOR ON VETERANS ISSUES. THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS WILL STRENGTHEN THE COMMISSION'S ROLE AS A CONDUIT AND ADVOCATE FOR VETERANS CONCERNS. I HAVE A COUPLE OF TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS THAT I HOPE THE COMMITTEE WILL CONSIDER WITHIN BILL 192. I HAVE REFRAINED, THERE ARE MANY OTHER AMENDMENTS THAT CHAPTER 67 COULD USE, BUT FROM EXPERIENCE I FOUND THAT IF WE TRY TO COME IN FOR A COMPREHENSIVE REFORM OF A PARTICULAR CHAPTER, IT HAS A TENDENCY TO BOG THE LEGISLATION DOWN AND WE WANT TO GET AT LEAST A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE THROUGH THE PROCESS. ONE OF THE CHANGES THAT I WOULD PROPOSE A TECHNICAL AMENDMENT IS ON SECTION 4 PAGE 5 LINE TWO OF THE BILL ITSELF. AND BASICALLY 67107A3 OF CHAPTER 67 PERTAINS TO THE APPROVED, WHO ARE THE APPROVED VETERAN ORGANIZATIONS. PREVIOUS PUBLIC LAWS CLEARLY REQUIRED MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS ON THE COMMISSION TO BE REGISTERED WITH THE GUAM DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE AND TAXATION AS BONAFIDE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS. AT SOME POINT ALONG THE WAY, THE WORDS AND OR WERE ADDED. AND THE WORDS AND OR COULD BE UNDERSTOOD TO MEAN THAT A LOCAL CHAPTER OF A

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NATIONAL VETERANS ORGANIZATION DOES NOT HAVE TO REGISTER WITH THE GUAM DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE AND TAXATION AS A 501C ORGANIZATION DUE TO ITS AFFILIATION WITH A NATIONAL ORGANIZATION. IN MY RESEARCH, I WAS UNABLE TO FIND ANY PREVIOUS PUBLIC LAWS THAT EXEMPTED LOCAL CHAPTERS OF NATIONAL VETERAN ORGANIZATIONS FROM NEEDING TO REGISTER WITH THE GUAM DRT. I RECOMMEND THAT ALL VETERAN ORGANIZATIONS WISHING TO JOIN THE COMMISSION BE 501C NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS REGISTERED WITH THE GUAM DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE AND TAXATION. REGISTRATION WITH THE GUAM REVENUE AND TAXATION AIMS TO ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY OF NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS. AND FINALLY, ON SECTION 4, PAGE 6, LINE THREE OF THE BILL, 67, SECTION 67B1, CHAPTER 67, COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP TERMS AND CONDUCT OF BUSINESS. THE PROVISION SHOULD READ TO BE TRANSMITTED TO MAGA'LAHAN GUAHAN FOR APPROVAL TO SERVE ON THE COMMISSION. MADAME CHAIR, THANK YOU FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK ON THIS MATTER AND FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF BILL 192-38. AND THAT COMPLETES MY TESTIMONY. THANK YOU.

SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE-CHAIRPERSON OF HEALTH AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

THANK YOU, SENATOR ADA. AND AGAIN, THANK YOU FOR YOUR INPUT AND YOUR WORK ON BILL 192. I WILL GO WITH THE SIGNUP SHEET FOR THE ORDER OF THOSE WHO WILL BE TESTIFYING. I ALSO WANTED TO RECOGNIZE SENATOR AND VICE SPEAKER TONY ADA FOR BEING HERE TODAY. THANK YOU. UP NEXT WE HAVE CHRIS TORREN.

CHRIS TORAN THANK YOU MA'AM. MY NAME IS CHRIS TORAN. I AM THE CURRENT COMMANDER FOR THE AMERICAN LEGION. A LITTLE BACKGROUND IS I CAME TO GUAM IN 1977 WITH THE AIR FORCE AND RETIRED IN 2003 WITH THE AIR FORCE RESERVE, THE 44TH APS, ORIGINAL MEMBER THERE. I'M A CLASS OF 1986 UOG GRADUATE, MARKETING MANAGEMENT. I RAN AN INSURANCE COMPANY FOR WELL A SMALL INSURANCE BROKER SHALL WE SAY FOR ABOUT 25 YEARS AND ALSO WAS THE GENERAL AGENT FOR SEVERAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANIES. CURRENTLY I MOSTLY WORK WITH THE, OR THROUGH THE AMERICAN LEGION TO HELP VETERANS GET THEIR BENEFITS. TRY TO POSITION THE LEGION AS AN ORGANIZATION THAT WORKS WITH AND THROUGH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS TO HELP FOLKS SUCH AS HMI, SUCH AS VFW, WHICH I'M ALSO A MEMBER AS THE DISTRICT QUARTERMASTER. I'M A MEMBER OF EBA 668. SO, AND POTENTIALLY A MEMBER OF THE US, THE US ARMY ASSOCIATION. NOW, I'M HERE TO SUPPORT THIS BILL AND IN MY VIEWPOINT, A LOT OF THESE FOLKS ARE GOING TO TALK ABOUT THE INTRICACIES OF THE BILL, I WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT THE OVERALL IMPACT WITHIN THE VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS. ONE OF THE MAIN PURPOSES IS TO BROADEN THE ABILITY TO ACCEPT FOLKS OR ACCEPT OTHER VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS AND TO TRY TO HELP TO GIVE THE ORGANIZATIONS AND PERSONNEL A BETTER OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK AND HAVE THEIR ISSUES HEARD. PART OF OUR CHALLENGE IS THAT WE DON'T HAVE ANY FORMAL MECHANISMS FOR COMMUNICATION OTHER THAN POSTING ON GOVERNMENT WEBSITES. WE DON'T HAVE A WEBSITE FOR OUR COMMISSION. WE DON'T EVEN HAVE STATION ARRAY THAT WE CAN POST THAT LIST ALL OF THE MEMBERS. PART OF THE REASON MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW WHO WE ARE IS BECAUSE INADVERTENTLY WE HAVE A VERY VERY LOW PROFILE. WE DO UTILIZE THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE FOR OUR MEETINGS. WE HAVE TO UTILIZE THEIR EQUIPMENT BECAUSE WE HAVE NONE OF OUR OWN. IF WE DECIDED TO HAVE A MEETING OR WAS FORCED TO HAVE A MEETING IN A DIFFERENT LOCATION, THE BEST WE CAN DO IS TO HOPE SOMEONE WILL BRING THEIR LAPTOP AND TO BROADCAST THE MEETING OUT SO WE CAN COMPLY. SO WE DO NEED MORE FUNDING FOR EQUIPMENT. WE NEED ACCESS TO MORE LOCATIONS SO THAT IT CAN BE EASIER AND MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR FOLKS TO COME TO THE

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MEETINGS BECAUSE MOST OF US ARE DISABLED AND ACCORDING TO PUBLIC LAW WE DO HAVE TO PUT OUT THE ADVERTISEMENTS. AND WE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING WAYS TO WHICH WE CAN DO IT ELECTRONICALLY WHICH WILL SAVE MONEY AND MAKE IT EASIER TO GET THESE THINGS OUT. CURRENTLY I KNOW THERE HAVE BEEN IMPROVEMENTS ON THE FUNDING ISSUE FOR THE ADVERTISEMENT BUT STILL WE HAVE TO JUMP THROUGH A LOT OF HOOPS IN ORDER TO GET THE ADVERTISEMENT OUT IN A TIMELY BASIS AND IF WE MISS THE TIMELINE THEN WE HAVE TO CANCEL MEETINGS. SO I'M JUST SAYING THAT LISTEN WE ARE HERE AS A UNIFIED BODY I LOOK AT THIS MOVE OR THIS OR THESE CHANGES TO THIS LAWS AS A FIRST STEP TOWARDS BRINGING TOGETHER A VETERANS COMMUNITY TO START TO WORK TOWARDS IMPROVING THINGS FOR ALL VETERANS HERE ON GUAM AND THE OTHER ITEM I'D LIKE TO ADD IS WITH SENATOR ADA SPOKE ABOUT B501CS. WE ALSO HAVE TO INCLUDE 501C19S. WHICH IS THE CLASSIFICATION FOR VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS. THAT CONCLUDES WHAT I HAVE TO SAY. THANK YOU.

SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE-CHAIRPERSON OF HEALTH AND VETERANS AFFAIRS
THANK YOU, MR. TORAN. UP NEXT, MR. DENNIS POLLI.

DENNIS POLLIHADA ADAL, MY NAME IS DENNIS POLLI. I'M A RETIRED 32-YEAR NAVY VETERAN AND I'VE BEEN LIVING ON GUAM SINCE 2012. I AM THE NEWEST MEMBER OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, HAVING ONLY BEEN APPOINTED IN AUGUST THIS YEAR. AND I'M HERE TO SPEAK TO THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE GUAM'S VETERANS COMMISSION AS STATED IN PROPOSED BILL 192-38. UNFORTUNATELY, IT'S TO ME IT'S A SIMILAR ISSUE TO THE ISSUE OF GMH AND THE NEW HOSPITAL. IF WE DON'T TAKE CARE OF WHAT YOU HAVE, HOW DO WE ENFORCE THE NEW COMMISSION? I'M SAD I HAVE TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE, BUT I FELT OBLIGATED TO DO SO. THE VETERANS COMMISSION HAS VERY DETAILED BY-LAWS THAT SHOULD BE ENFORCED AND IF NEED BE AMENDED AS NEEDED. CHANGING THE NAME OF THE VETERAN COMMISSION IN ITS CURRENT FORM WILL NOT CHANGE THE IMPACT OF THE COMMISSION UNLESS THE FOLLOWING ISSUES ARE ADDRESSED. THE FIRST ONE IS ACCOUNTABILITY. THERE DOES NOT SEEM TO BE ANY ACCOUNTABILITY FOR REPORTS DUE OR STRICT ADHERENCE TO THE MEETING SCHEDULE AS OUTLINED IN THE BYLAWS. OUR VETERANS DESERVE BETTER. THERE NEEDS TO BE SOME TYPE OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGER THAT CAN PROVIDE CLEAR AND CONCISE INFORMATION ON A DEDICATED SITE FOR REVIEW. I SPENT THREE HOURS ONLINE TRYING TO FIND ANY UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION ON VETERAN COMMISSION'S MEETINGS AND AGENDAS AND WAS VERY DISAPPOINTED THAT I COULD NOT AND MAYBE IT WAS USER ERROR ON MY PART. PERIODICITY. THE NEW BILL CHANGES THE MEETINGS FROM MONTHLY TO QUARTERLY. IF WE MISS A MEETING AS WE DID LAST MONTH, IT COULD BE SIX MONTHS BEFORE WE MEET. OUR VETERANS DESERVE BETTER. I DO NOT THINK IT IS A GOOD MESSAGE TO OUR VETERAN TO LET THEM KNOW THEIR ISSUES ARE ONLY QUARTERLY CONCERN. COMPENSATION. IT HAS BEEN MY UNDERSTANDING THERE IS A CONSIDERATION TO PAY CERTAIN BOARD MEMBERS SITTING ON THE BOARD PER MEETING. IT IS HUMBLING AND AN HONOR TO SERVE ON THE BOARD IN A VOLUNTARY CAPACITY AND BE PART OF THE VETERANS COMMISSION. COMPENSATING BOARD MEMBERS IS A WASTE OF TAXPAYER DOLLARS. THAT MONEY CAN BE USED TO HELP VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES OR MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE VETERANS CEMETERY. AGAIN, OUR VETERANS DESERVE BETTER. BEING IN THE MILITARY IS BELONGING TO SOMETHING BIGGER THAN YOURSELF. JUST BECAUSE YOU RETIRE AND THE UNIFORM COMES OFF DOES NOT MEAN YOU LOSE YOUR CALLING TO SERVE. THE THOUGHT OF HAVING TO PAY COMPENSATION TO BOARD MEMBERS WHO SHOULD FEEL HONORED TO BE PART OF THE SOLUTION IS VERY SAD. LASTLY IS BOARD ELIGIBILITY. NO PERSON WHO

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WORKS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF GUAM SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO RUN FOR THE ELECTED OFFICES OF THE VETERANS COMMISSION. THAT WOULD INCLUDE IN ITS CURRENT FORM THE CHAIRMAN, FIRST VICE CHAIRMAN, SECOND VICE CHAIRMAN AND FINANCE OFFICER. NO MATTER HOW WELL-INTENTIONED THEY MAY BE, THE OPTIC IS THAT OF POLITICAL CONSIDERATION, WHETHER VALID OR NOT. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE-CHAIRPERSON OF HEALTH AND VETERANS AFFAIRS
THANK YOU, MR. POLLI. UP NEXT, WE HAVE MR. ROY GAMBOA.

ROY GAMBOA GOOD MORNING, SENATORS, AND THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK. GOING BACK I THINK IT'S GOOD THING TO POINT OUT ABOUT WHERE THE VETERANS COMMISSION AT LEAST WITH MY INVOLVEMENT WHERE IT HAS BEEN HOW IT'S PROGRESSED THROUGH THE YEARS AND WHERE WE ARE AT TODAY. WHEN THE COMMISSION WAS ESTABLISHED, WE AGREE THAT IT WAS WELL INTENDED AND IT WAS AT LEAST A PLATFORM AND A FOUNDATION AND OR A BASIS TO GET THINGS MOVING FORWARD. I'M SURPRISED THAT IT'S TAKEN THIS LONG TO MAKE CHANGES TO THE LAW, EVEN THOUGH SO MANY YEARS HAVE PASSED. I RECALL FIRST TRYING TO ATTEND A VETERANS COMMISSION MEETING AS FAR BACK AS 2012. IN 2012, I WAS INVITED TO THE COMMISSION MEETING, TOOK TIME OFF OF WORK, SHOWED UP, AND THEN IT WAS ANNOUNCED THERE WAS NOT ENOUGH MEMBERS TO MAKE QUORUM, AND SO THE MEETING WAS NOT HELD. THERE WAS ANOTHER ATTEMPT A FEW MONTHS LATER SHOWED UP. THERE WAS QUORUM, BUT WHEN IT CAME TIME TO DISCUSS OPEN MATTERS, A VETERAN BASICALLY TOOK ALMOST 30 MINUTES AND WENT OFF THE RAILS AND SO ON AND SO FORTH AND NEVER FINISHED THE AGENDA. AND THAT WENT ON FOR MANY YEARS. AT TIMES OR AT BEST I COULD REMEMBER MEETINGS MAYBE FOUR OR FIVE TIMES TO THE POINT WHERE I FELT LIKE NOT ATTENDING WHATSOEVER. WHEN WE ESTABLISHED OUR ORGANIZATION IN 2019, WE HAD TO WAIT A COUPLE YEARS BECAUSE OF COVID AND THEN GY671 APPLIED FOR MEMBERSHIP AND IT WAS A HARSH ENTRANCE INTO THE COMMISSION ITSELF. EXCUSE THE LANGUAGE, BUT IT WAS AFTER SIX OR SEVEN MONTHS OF ATTENDING VETERANS COMMISSION MEETINGS. ANOTHER MEMBER BLATANTLY ASKED THE CHAIRMAN AT THE TIME, "WHO THE F ARE THESE GUYS?" AND YOU KNOW, THANKS TO MEMBERS LIKE BRIAN MERENDA AND OTHER INDIVIDUALS THERE, THEY WERE ABLE TO SPEAK ON OUR BEHALF THAT WE WERE HERE ALSO TRYING TO HELP AND THEY UNDERSTOOD WHAT OUR MISSION WAS WITH GY671. IN THE LAST FIVE OR SIX YEARS OR SO, THERE WAS A PRETTY GOOD TEMPO OF MEETINGS. IT WAS VERY CONSISTENT BECAUSE WE WERE USING THE DIGITAL ANNOUNCEMENTS TO POST MEETINGS. I DON'T RECALL OF NOT MEETING QUORUM. COMMISSION MEMBERS WERE IN ATTENDANCE. MEETINGS PROGRESSED WITH DISCUSSING EVENT ORGANIZATIONS AND HOW WE COULD ASSIST EACH OTHER SO ON AND SO FORTH. BUT BECAUSE OF THE LAW WRITTEN THE WAY IT WAS, WE UNDERSTOOD WE WERE MERELY AN ADVISORY BOARD TO THE GUAM OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND THE DIRECTOR. AND YES, I DO RECALL IN THE PAST MULTIPLE REQUESTS FROM THE DIRECTOR AT THAT TIME FOR REPORTS AND SO ON AND SO FORTH, NAF FUNDS, CEMETERY FUNDS, YOU NAME IT. AND IT WAS SUMMARILY BRUSHED OFF. GETTING TO THE POINT WHERE WE HAVE THIS BILL IN FRONT OF US, LIKE THE SENATOR SAID, WAS FINALLY PUTTING TEETH TO THE COMMISSION. AND I THINK IT'S ABOUT TIME BECAUSE IF YOU HAVE 10 ORGANIZATIONS WHO REPRESENT THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE VETERANS ON THIS ISLAND, IT WOULD BE A SMART IDEA TO LISTEN TO THE MEMBERS OF THIS COMMISSION. AFTER THOROUGH DELIBERATION LIKE THE SENATOR PROPOSED, WE SIT THERE, WE DISCUSS WHAT'S AFFECTING OUR VETERANS, NOT ONLY IN OUR ORGANIZATION, BUT LISTENING

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TO VETERANS AT LARGE, LISTENING TO VETERAN FAMILY MEMBERS, HAVING THE COMMISSION COMPILE, I WOULDN'T SAY SIMPLIFY, BUT CREATE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS SO THAT THE GOVA DIRECTOR CAN TAKE ACTION, MUST TAKE ACTION. I'VE ONLY BEEN RECENTLY THE CHAIRMAN AFTER BEING APPOINTED AS THE VICE CHAIRMAN LAST SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER AND I TELL YOU IT'S NOT EASY WHEN YOU'RE WORKING WITH A BUNCH OF ALPHA MALES, ALPHA FEMALES AND VERY STRONG PERSONALITIES. I SAY IT'S A CHALLENGE EVERY MEETING. THERE'S A LOT OF ANXIETY WALKING INTO THOSE MEETINGS BECAUSE AT MOST TIMES WE DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT'S GOING TO BE BROUGHT UP AND IT CAN BECOME TENSE. BUT PEOPLE STAY IN THE ROOM AND WE PUSH THROUGH IT. EARLIER THIS YEAR, I PUT OUT TO THE COMMISSION THAT WE'RE REBUILDING. WE'RE RESTRUCTURING. IT'S GOING TO TAKE NOT JUST ONE-HOUR MEETINGS LIKE WE USED TO HAVE IN THE PAST. IT'S GOING TO TAKE TIME TO SET UP COMMITTEES, PEOPLE THAT CAN FOCUS ON SPECIFIC ITEMS THAT WILL AFFECT VETERANS. FOR INSTANCE, A LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE WAS RECOMMENDED TO BE PUT OUT THERE. A POLICY COMMITTEE BASICALLY WAS TO BASICALLY LOOK AT POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND SO ON AND SO FORTH. THESE SUBCOMMITTEES WERE THERE TO BE ABLE TO DO WORK SIMULTANEOUSLY ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION. NOW IN PUTTING OUT THAT INFORMATION THERE WAS NO HESITATION. PEOPLE CONTINUED TO COME. OUR MEMBERS, THE COMMISSION MEMBERS CONTINUED TO COME AND SHOW UP IN GOOD FAITH TO MAKE SURE THAT WHAT THEIR ORGANIZATIONS NEEDED WAS PUT OUT AND HEARD. WE RECOGNIZED THAT BY-LAWS NEEDED TO BE UPDATED. WE WERE HOPEFUL THAT ONCE THIS BILL WAS INTRODUCED AND PASSED, WE WOULD USE THIS AS A FOUNDATION AND THEN FURTHER BREAK IT DOWN THROUGH THE BY-LAWS UPDATING AS WHAT SENATOR TOM ADA RECOMMENDED THE VALIDATION, THE VETTING PROCESS REQUIRING A MORE COMPREHENSIVE APPLICATION PROCESS OTHER THAN JUST FILLING OUT A DOCUMENT THAT SAYS THIS IS WHO I AM. WE WANTED TO ENSURE THAT THE VETERAN ORGANIZATIONS ON THIS ISLAND HAD THE VETERANS AT THE FOREFRONT AND NOT JUST ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS AS A MEANS TO ENGAGE WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS. WE'VE NEVER CLAIMED TO BE A PERFECT COMMISSION. I APPLAUD EVERYBODY FOR SHOWING UP BECAUSE IT IS AN UNPAID HONOR BASICALLY TO SHOW UP IN THIS COMMISSION AND PROVIDE YOUR TESTIMONY, YOUR SUPPORT, AND THE EFFORT TO PUSH THROUGH AND COME TO A COMPROMISE. AS YOU SAID, IT'S NOT EVERYBODY'S GOING TO BE HAPPY. I DON'T THINK WE WERE HAPPY ALL 20 YEARS IF WE SERVED IN THE SERVICE. THERE'S DAYS THAT WE'RE GOING TO ARGUE AND NOT AGREE ON CERTAIN TERMS, BUT THAT'S WHERE THE MAJORITY GETS TO PUT IT ON THE TABLE, SORT IT ALL OUT, AND IN THE END, WORK WITH THE GOVA DIRECTOR, WORK WITH EACH OTHER, AND GET RID OF THE NOTION THAT VETERANS ARE TOO BUSY FIGHTING AMONGST EACH OTHER. I'VE HEARD THAT TOO MANY YEARS. AND THE NONSENSE. WE HAVE TO SET OUR PRIDE ASIDE AND PUT THE VETERANS THAT WE REPRESENT AT THE FOREFRONT. WE KNOW IT'S NOT PERFECT. WE KNOW THE COMMISSION IS NOT PERFECT. WE KNOW THE BY-LAWS ARE NOT PERFECT. BUT THAT'S WHAT WE HAVE A SUBCOMMITTEE FOR IS TO SIT THERE, COMBINE BY-LAWS, MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS, UPDATE THEM, AND MOVE FORWARD FROM THERE. LIKE THE SENATOR, LIKE SENATOR TOM ADA SAID, THERE'S ADDITIONAL AMENDMENTS THAT COULD BE INCLUDED. AND ONE OF THOSE SUGGESTIONS IS TO FIND A WAY TO ALLOW EACH ORGANIZATION TO BE ASSIGNED A VETERAN, A FULLY ACCREDITED VA REPRESENTATIVE. AND ONE METHOD THAT WE PROPOSED OR WE ASKED FROM THE GUAM OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS WAS WHEN THE TRAINER DOES COME TO GUAM, CAN EACH OF OUR ORGANIZATION SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO THAT TRAINING? AND THEN EACH ORGANIZATION WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR TAKING ON THE TASK OF ENSURING THAT THAT INDIVIDUAL

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COMPLETES THE FOLLOW-ON TRAINING, COMPLETES THE BACKGROUND CHECK, AND BECOMES FULLY ACCREDITED. SO THAT IN THE FUTURE THE ARGUMENT OF WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH ACCREDITED REPS ON THIS ISLAND CAN BE A THING OF HISTORY. IT'LL HELP EASE THE BURDEN AT THE GUAM OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BY AT LEAST ALLOWING EACH OF THE ORGANIZATIONS TO HAVE AN ACCREDITED REP AT A VERY MINIMUM START THE PREPARATION OF THE PAPERWORK SO THAT IT'S AT LEAST A CERTAIN PERCENTAGE DONE WHEN IT IS FINALLY SUBMITTED. WELL, LET ME BACK UP. ONCE THEY'RE FULLY ACCREDITED, THEY CAN SUBMIT DISABILITY CLAIMS ON BEHALF OF THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE HERE ON THE ISLAND. SO, THOSE ARE THINGS THAT WE WANT TO CONTINUE TO MOVE FORWARD WITH. I BELIEVE THAT I'VE PUT OUT TO THE COMMISSION THAT WE SHOULD BE A BODY OF SOLUTIONS RATHER THAN JUST SITTING HERE AND JUST ARGUING BECAUSE IT'S A THING OF THE PAST AND WE HAVE TO FIGURE IT OUT MOVING FORWARD. AS THE BILL STANDS, IT TOOK MANY HOURS, MANY NIGHTS OF SITTING HERE AND SITTING IN AN OFFICE AND GOING THROUGH IT. AND THERE WILL BE ARGUMENTS THAT SAYS, "WELL, I WASN'T INCLUDED." WELL, THAT WOULD HAVE TAKEN ABOUT A YEAR OR TWO OR MORE FOR EVERYBODY TO AGREE ON WHAT WAS PUT FORWARD. THERE CAN ALWAYS BE AMENDMENTS INTRODUCED. MAYBE THERE WAS SOMETHING THAT WE HAD MISSED, BUT AS SENATOR TOM ADA SAID, THE MORE WE TRY TO ADD INTO THIS BILL AS IT STANDS RIGHT NOW, IT'S GOING TO DELAY. AND I WON'T RAMBLE ON ANY FURTHER. I'M JUST HERE TO PROVIDE, YOU KNOW, IN SUPPORT OF THE BILL IN SUPPORT OF BILL 192 AS IT IS WRITTEN AND GIVE THE COMMISSION ITS TEETH AND GIVE US THE TIME TO UPDATE OUR BY-LAWS, SET OUR COMMITTEES, ESTABLISH WHAT WAS PROPOSED OVER HERE. BETTER MECHANISMS OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, KNOWLEDGE RETENTION AND PERHAPS MAYBE DOWN THE ROAD AN AMENDMENT CAN COME FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOMEWHERE SPECIFICALLY FOR THAT WEBSpace KNOWLEDGE DATABASE WHERE WE CAN ALWAYS HAVE AN ARCHIVE TO REVERT BACK TO AND WHAT NOT. REVIEW THINGS THAT WE HAD DISCUSSED. SO MY NAME IS ROY GAMBOA. I'M THE PRESIDENT FOR GY671 AND ALSO THE CURRENT CHAIRMAN FOR THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE-CHAIRPERSON OF HEALTH AND VETERANS AFFAIRS
THANK YOU, MR. GAMBOA. SINCE YOU'RE AT THE TABLE, MR. BRIAN MERENDA.

BRIAN MERENDA IS IT WORKING? OKAY. THANK YOU, MADAM. BRIAN MERENDA, 24-YEAR NAVY VETERAN, CURRENT COMMANDER OF VFW POST 2917, PRIOR CHAIRMAN FOR THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION. I AM COMPLETELY AGAINST THIS BILL. I DON'T KNOW WHY WE HAVE TO CHANGE A LAW THAT'S ALREADY EXISTING. THE REQUIREMENT FOR ETHICS TRAINING. WE ARE ALL UNPAID VETERANS THAT OVER OUR TIME IN SERVICE HAVE HAD OUR ETHICS TRAINING. SO WHY DID YOU PUT ETHICS TRAINING IN THERE? I DON'T AGREE WITH THAT, BUT THAT'S MY OPINION. THE OTHER QUESTION I HAVE IS BACK IN 2018, THE BY-LAWS FOR THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION WAS APPROVED. THE ONLY TROUBLE I DIDN'T HAVE WAS HAVING THE STAMP COPY THAT I GAVE TO FRED BORDALLO. I SUBMITTED THE BY-LAWS TO THE COMMISSION OVER SIX MONTHS AGO. HAVE THAT BEEN ROUTED AND DONE THE RIGHT WAY? A LOT OF PEOPLE DISAGREED WITH THE BY-LAWS, BUT THE BY-LAWS WERE GOOD AND IF THEY NEED TO BE CHANGED, THEN YOU DO A COMMITTEE FOR IT. I ALSO ASKED THAT WHY THE THREE YEARS I RAN THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, WE DIDN'T MISS A MEETING. WE DIDN'T PUBLISH ANYTHING, BUT WE SUPPLIED AN AGENDA AND MINUTES AT EVERY MEETING FOR PEOPLE THAT SHOWED UP. WE DID A LOT FOR VETERANS AND AT THE TIME THERE WAS AN ADVISORY FOR THE CONGRESSWOMAN WHICH EVEN FEDERAL WE STOPPED IT AT THE MEETING AND IT WOULD SET

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THEM TO THE CONGRESS PERSON SO THEY COULD DO IT. THEY STOPPED THAT. SO THERE'S NO WAY TO GET FEDERAL STUFF UP. I QUIT GOING TO THE COMMISSION MEETINGS BECAUSE IT'S POLITICAL. IT'S NOT ABOUT VETERANS. IT BECAME POLITICAL AND ALL THEY CARE ABOUT IS THEIR POLITICS. I'M A FIRM BELIEVER NOW THAT ANYBODY THAT WORKS FOR THE GOV GUAM SHOULD NOT BE THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION BECAUSE THEY DO NOT HAVE THE VETERANS IN THEIR FAVOR. BUT I'M COMPLETELY AGAINST IT. WHY ARE WE CHANGING SOMETHING THAT'S ALREADY THERE? THE OTHER THING I'M SAD TO SEE THAT USED TO HAPPEN WAS THE GUAM VETERANS AFFAIR OFFICE WOULD GIVE THE REPORT OF WHAT THEY DID AND THEY ALSO GAVE A LIST OF EQUIPMENT OF THE STATUS OF EVERY PIECE OF EQUIPMENT. AND WHY WAS THAT? AND WE WERE GETTING IT BECAUSE PEOPLE ON THAT COMMISSION MAY KNOW SOMEBODY THAT CAN GET EQUIPMENT FIXED FOR THEM, BUT IF WE DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON, HOW CAN WE ADVISE THEM OR ANYBODY ELSE? THAT'S ALL I HAVE AND I WON'T TAKE UP ANY MORE OF YOUR TIME.

SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE-CHAIRPERSON OF HEALTH AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

THANK YOU, MR. MERENDA. ROSE, YOU'RE ALSO ON THE SIGNUP SHEETS. IF YOU'D LIKE TO GO AHEAD AND TESTIFY NOW.

ROSE BLEND THANK YOU. Hafa Adai and good morning Senator Salas Matanane, Madame Chair and members of the committee, Vice Speaker Tony Ada, Senator Therese Terlaje, and Senator Shawn Gumataotao. My name is Rose Indalecio Blend. I am a United States Marine Corps veteran. I served four years and I'm also a retired sergeant first class with the Army National Guard. I am part of the Women Veterans Organization here in Guam. I am currently the secretary for the Third Marine Division Association Guam Chapter and I am also a member of the Association of the US Army. My role today was part of the working group. I was basically the scribe when I was participating in the meetings as you are aware of. My thoughts are just based on myself as a woman veteran. On behalf of the Guam Veterans Commission or I'm going to say the Veterans Working Group because I was part of the Veterans Working Group, I want to thank you for introducing Bill Number 192-38 and for your continued leadership in addressing the needs of Guam's veteran community. The working group shares your commitment to strengthening how we serve our veterans. We believe that a few focused updates to the law governing the commission and the office of Veterans Affairs will make a lasting difference by improving collaboration, accountability, and representation. First, as myself or part of the group, we recommended that we establish a process allowing the commission to provide advice to the governor when appointing the director of the Guam Office of Veterans Affairs. This is not about control. It's about collaboration. It ensures that the perspective of veterans is part of the conversation when choosing who leads the office that serves them. Such a partnership will create stronger alignment between policy programs and the real needs of our veterans. Second, we support a structure where members are nominated by recognizing veteran organizations and then appointed by the governor. This provides balance, transparency, and legitimacy, giving us the authority and recognition it needs to effectively advocate for the men and women who have served. For myself, as a woman veteran, these updates are also essential for inclusivity. Today, women are

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THE FASTEST GROWING SEGMENT OF OUR VETERAN POPULATION. IN 1987, AND I SAY 1987 BECAUSE THAT'S WHEN I FIRST JOINED THE MARINE CORPS, WE ONLY REPRESENTED ABOUT 10% OF THE TOTAL MILITARY. TODAY, IN 2025, WE MAKE UP NEARLY 22% OF ACTIVE-DUTY SERVICE MEMBERS. BY 2040, WOMEN ARE PROJECTED TO COMPRISE 18% OF ALL VETERANS NATIONWIDE. THIS SHIFT MEANS OUR POLICIES AND REPRESENTATION MUST EVOLVE. A STRENGTHENED AND INCLUSIVE VETERANS COMMISSION WILL ENSURE THAT WOMEN VETERANS WHO HAVE WORN THE SAME UNIFORM AND CARRIED THE SAME BURDENS ARE SEEN, HEARD, AND SUPPORTED IN THE SAME WAY AS ALL WHO HAVE SERVED BEFORE THEM. IN CLOSING, I WOULD APPRECIATE AND I DO APPRECIATE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS REFORM EFFORT WHICH WAS LED BY SENATOR SALAS MATANANE AND OUR WORKING GROUP AND THE COMMITTEE. I BELIEVE THESE PROPOSED ADJUSTMENTS WILL STRENGTHEN HOW WE SERVE OUR VETERANS, FASTEST COOPERATION WITH THE OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND ENSURE INCLUSIVE REPRESENTATION THAT REFLECTS TODAY'S CHANGING MILITARY COMMUNITY. SI YU'OS MA'ASE FOR YOUR TIME AND YOUR STEADFAST SUPPORT OF GUAM'S VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES. THANK YOU.

SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE-CHAIRPERSON OF HEALTH AND VETERANS AFFAIRS
 THANK YOU, MS. BLEND. MR. VINCE SANTIAGO.

VINCE SANTIAGO GOOD MORNING, SENATORS, FELLOW VETERANS, AND CITIZENS OF GUAM. MY NAME IS VINCENT SANTIAGO. I AM THE SON OF JOE AND MARY SANTIAGO MALESSO. I'M A SECOND-GENERATION MARINE. I BEGAN MY SERVICE IN THE MARINE CORPS IN 1989 AND CONTINUED FOR OVER 31 YEARS. I HAVE SERVED AT ALL LEVELS OF COMMAND IN THE MARINE CORPS AND IN THE JOINT SERVICES. I HAVE SERVED AT ALL LEVELS OF COMMAND WITHIN THE MARINE CORPS STARTING AT THE PLATOON ALL THE WAY TO THIRD MARINE DIVISION. AND AS WE KNOW THE THIRD MARINE DIVISION IS THE DIVISION THAT HELPED LIBERATE OUR ISLAND. I AM PROUD TO SAY THAT I WAS THE SECOND CHAMORU MARINE TO SERVE AS A SENIOR ENLISTED FOR THAT DIVISION. WHEN I WAS APPROACHING RETIREMENT, I KNEW THAT I WANTED TO RETURN HOME AND SERVE OUR ISLAND AS A VETERAN. CURRENTLY, I SERVE AS THE MARINE SENIOR INSTRUCTOR AT OKKODU HIGH SCHOOL MARINE CORPS JROTC. YES, I AM EMPLOYED FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF GUAM. ATTEMPTS TO DEVALUE A VETERAN'S VALUE TO THE COMMISSION BECAUSE THAT PERSON IS AN EMPLOYEE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GUAM IS CONCERNING. OUR CONSTITUTION AND LIBERTIES THAT WE AS VETERANS ONCE DEFENDED WHILE SERVING OUR MILITARY SERVICES CLOTH ALLOW ALL AMERICAN CITIZENS RIGHTS NO MATTER THEIR EMPLOYER. IN SERVING OUR ISLAND AS A VETERAN, I ALSO SERVE AS THE PRESIDENT OF THIRD MARINE DIVISION ASSOCIATION GUAM CHAPTER. I'M ALSO A LIFETIME MEMBER OF THE VETERAN OF FOREIGN WARS AND I'M CURRENTLY ON THE VETERAN COMMISSION AS A SECOND CHAIR. IT WAS AT MY SECOND MEETING THAT NICK FRANCISCO INVITED ME TO A MEETING TO DISCUSS BILL 85-38. AND TRUTH BE TOLD, I WAS UNAWARE OF BILL 85-38 UNTIL THAT TIME. AT THE END OF THAT MEETING THAT NICK FRANCISCO HELD, I DOVE INTO BILL 85-38. AFTER READING AND REREADING THE 65 PAGES OF BILL 85-38, I COULDN'T SLEEP. I WAS FRUSTRATED THAT CONCERNS ABOUT OUR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES WERE RECEIVING ASSISTANCE WERE LACKING ON OUR ISLAND. WHAT CONCERNED ME MORE WERE THE NAMES ON BILL 85-38 WHO SUPPORTED THAT BILL. I SPOKE WITH A FEW OF THOSE PEOPLE AND QUICKLY REALIZED THAT THE SOLUTION WASN'T TO GO THROUGH THEM BUT TO BRING THE PRESIDENTS AND COMMANDERS OF VETERAN ORGANIZATIONS HERE ON GUAM TO DISCUSS BILL 85-38. WE ALL GATHERED AROUND A CIRCULAR

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TABLE AND THOSE MEMBERS THAT SHOWED UP WERE JOSEPH C. SAN NICHOLAS OF DETU VETERANS ORGANIZATION, CHRIS TORAN, AMERICAN LEGION AND VFW, NICK FRANCISCO, MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART, JOE YUTAR, VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA 668. SCOTT D. DUENAS, FLEET RESERVE AFFAIRS 73. JOE A. SAN AGUSTIN, THIRD MARINE DIVISION ASSOCIATION, GUAM CHAPTER. JOE MAFNAS, BARRIGADA VETERANS. LEE WEBER, NAVY LEAGUE. ROSE BLEND, THIRD MARINE DIVISION ASSOCIATION AND GUAM WOMEN VETERANS. TIM PAZON, AIR FORCE VETERANS, AND MYSELF. AS WE APPROACHED THE START TIME, I LEANED OVER TO UNCLE NICK AND I ASKED, "SHOULD WE START?" HE QUICKLY TURNED TO ME AND SAID, "YOU GOT THIS, SERGEANT MAJOR." SO, I BEGAN WITH MY TIME IN THE MARINE CORPS. AS I APPROACHED MY RETIREMENT, I REALIZED THAT I WAS PRETTY OLD IN AGE AND I NEEDED TO EXIT THE MARINE CORPS AND LEAVE THE FIGHTING TO THE YOUNG ONES. WHEN I CAME HOME, I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO BE ON EVEN KILL UNTIL UNCLE NICK TURNED TO ME AND SAID, "YOU GOT THIS." SO, I REALIZED QUICKLY THAT I'M NOW A PRIVATE WITHIN THE ORGANIZATIONS AGAIN. SO, THANK YOU, UNCLE NICK, FOR REMINDING ME. I APPRECIATE IT. WE ALL AGREED THAT BILL 85-38 MUST NOT GO FORWARD AS IS. I THEN REQUESTED TO MEET WITH SENATOR MATANANE AND WITHIN LESS THAN 12 HOURS, I GOT A REPLY FROM HER CHIEF OF STAFF SAYING, "PLEASE COME." THE MEETING WENT WELL. I WAS ACCOMPANIED BY ROSE BLEND. TO BE HONEST, I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT COMING INTO YOUR OFFICE. I THOUGHT YOU WERE GROUNDED BY BILL 85-38, BUT TO MY SURPRISE AND MY APPRECIATION, YOU LISTENED TO US AND THAT SAID A LOT TO ME. BECAUSE UP TO THAT POINT, I NEVER MET YOU. I ONLY READ THIS BILL AND I THOUGHT, "OKAY, THIS IS WHAT SHE'S ABOUT." BUT HAVING SAT IN THAT ROOM AND LOOKING AT YOUR BODY LANGUAGE AND LOOKING AT THE CONCERN ON YOUR FACE, IT MADE ME QUICKLY REALIZE THAT WE AS THE VETERANS OF GUAM NEED TO BE POSTURED TO PROTECT AND SERVE EACH OTHER AND NOT JUST LEAVE IT SOLELY ON YOU. SO AT THE END OF THAT MEETING AND WITHIN A FEW DAYS I CALLED A FEW PEOPLE TO FORM A WORKING GROUP AND YOU ALREADY KNOW THE NAMES MA'AM SO I WON'T REPEAT THOSE. BUT I WILL COMMEND SENATOR TOM ADA. HE BROUGHT A PLETHORA OF KNOWLEDGE TO THE TABLE HAVING BEEN A PREVIOUS SENATOR AND MORE IMPORTANTLY BEING A VETERAN DURING HIS TENURE. SO HE BROUGHT A LOT TO THE TABLE AND THERE WAS A LOT OF US AROUND THERE. BUT THE THING THAT I APPRECIATED ABOUT THAT WORKING GROUP WAS WE HAD ONE MISSION AND THAT WAS TO TAKE CARE OF THE VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES. IT WASN'T A POLITICAL STANDPOINT. IT WAS NOTHING ABOUT THAT. IT WASN'T ABOUT WHO WE WERE IN OUR OWN VETERAN ORGANIZATION. IT WAS ABOUT US AS VETERANS WITH THE KNOWLEDGE WE HAD AND DOING THE RIGHT THING FOR THE VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES ON THE ISLAND OF GUAM, BOTH CURRENT AND FUTURE. BECAUSE I'LL BE REMISED IF I LEFT OUT THOSE VETERANS WHO DID FOUR YEARS, SIX YEARS IN THE MILITARY, DECIDED TO COME HOME AND WORK. BE IT FOR THE GOVERNMENT, BE IT IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR, THEY DECIDED TO COME HOME AND WORK AND GIVE BACK TO OUR ISLAND. THOSE LADIES AND GENTLEMEN WHO WE CONSIDER VETERANS AND WELCOME INTO THE FOLD ARE OUT THERE RIGHT NOW EARNING A LIVING AND ALLOW THE FIGHT TO BE LED BY US. SO WE WILL CONTINUE THAT FIGHT. SO SENATOR I THANK YOU FOR INTRODUCING 192-38. SOME MAY ASK WHY WEREN'T WE PART OF THE WORKING GROUP? I WILL SAY IT IS THE WRONG QUESTION TO ASK. IT SHOULD BE HOW CAN WE BEST SUPPORT 192-38 FOR THE BETTERMENT OF ALL VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES. THEY MAY ATTEMPT TO FIND GAPS AND SEAMS IN WHAT WE PUT TOGETHER. INSTEAD, THEY SHOULD TAKE THE ENERGY AND WILL TO GET AFTER THE ISSUES AND CONCERNS OF OUR FELLOW VETERANS AND FAMILIES. HOW DO WE AS VETERANS CONTINUE TO BE VALUED TO OUR

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ISLAND? I DO SUPPORT BILL 192-38 AND I DO APPLAUD ALL THE SENATORS WHO SIGN THEIR NAME ON BILL 192-38. THE FIRST PLAN THAT WE KNOW SERVING IN THE MILITARY, THE FIRST PLAN INTO ACTION DOES NOT SURVIVE FIRST CONTACT. INSTEAD, WHAT WE RELY UPON IS THE TRAINING AND THE KNOW-IT-ALL OF ALL OF OUR PERSONNEL WITHIN OUR ORGANIZATION. AND THAT IS WHAT WE AS THE VETERAN WORKING GROUP WENT OUT TO DO. NOW, WE COULD HAVE SOLICITED EVERY VETERAN ORGANIZATION ON THIS ISLAND. WE COULD HAVE, BUT IT WOULD HAVE DELAYED THE RESPONSE BECAUSE AS FAR AS I WAS CONCERNED, SENATOR MATANANE INTRODUCED 85-38. IT WAS ALREADY INTRODUCED. TIME WAS NOT ON OUR SIDE. BUT SENATOR, YOU GAVE US THAT TIME. AS A MATTER OF FACT, I APPLAUD YOU AGAIN FOR COMING TO OUR FIRST MEETING. YOU ASKED TO ATTEND AND YOU LISTEN TO US AGAIN. AND THAT TOOK A STRONG WILL TO DO THAT BECAUSE A LOT OF US WERE VERY VERY OPINIONATED AND LIKE ROY GAMBOA SAID, A ROOM FULL OF ALPHA PERSONALITIES. BUT YOU TOOK IT WITH STRIDE AND YOU LISTENED TO US AGAIN. SO WHEN WE TRANSMITTED OUR DOCUMENT OF THE WORKING GROUP, YOU ONCE AGAIN LISTENED TO US. YOU READ THE DOCUMENT AND YOU ASKED US QUESTIONS. YOU JUST WEREN'T THERE TO RECEIVE, BUT YOU ASKED US QUESTIONS. I APPRECIATE THAT. THAT TALKS TO US. FOR ME, THAT LETS ME BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE VERY MUCH INTERESTED IN THE LIVELIHOOD OF ALL VETERANS ON THIS ISLAND. THANK YOU FOR RECOGNIZING THE NEED FOR CHANGE. YOU AND THE COMMITTEE MOVING FROM GOOD TO GREAT BECAUSE IF WE'RE NOT GETTING BETTER, WE ARE DEFINITELY GETTING WORSE. THANK YOU TO ALL VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES. MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS OUR NATION, OUR ISLAND, OUR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES, BOTH CURRENT AND IN THE FUTURE. AND AS WE APPROACH NOVEMBER FOR THE VETERANS OF THIS ISLAND AND THE MONTH OF THE VETERANS, I WANT TO TAKE THE TIME TO WISH ALL VETERANS BOTH ON GUAM AND ABROAD HAPPY VETERANS DAY. THANK YOU.

SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE-CHAIRPERSON OF HEALTH AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

THANK YOU, MR. SANTIAGO. AND ALSO THANK YOU TO ALL THE VETERANS THAT ARE WITH US AND THE VETERANS WORKING GROUP. AND THAT FIRST MEETING, WOW, YOU GUYS REALLY GAVE IT TO ME. BUT, YOU KNOW, AND I'M GLAD WE HAD THAT MEETING BECAUSE LIKE YOU SAID, IT HELPED PRODUCE BILL 192. SO, THANK YOU SO MUCH. MR. MCNINCH.

RON MCNINCH THANK YOU, SENATOR SABRINA, AND THANK YOU, SENATOR. TODAY, MY NAME IS RON MCNINCH. I AM A 30-YEAR RESIDENT OF GUAM AND I'M ON THE GUAM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION BOARD AND I'M SPEAKING AS A CITIZEN TODAY AND I'M AN ELECTED SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER. I JUST WANT TO MENTION BACK IN 2016 WHEN I WAS BEFORE THE LEGISLATURE ON AN APPOINTMENT TO THE GUAM SCHOOL BOARD, SENATOR TOM ADA ADVISED ME WHEN YOU'RE ON A PUBLIC BOARD TO SPEAK UP AND HAVE A VOICE. AND I NEVER FORGET THAT. THAT WAS VERY GOOD ADVICE, SIR. AND I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT FOR ALL OF OUR BOARDS TO BE ABLE TO SPEAK UP AND HAVE THE VOICE THAT THEY NEED. AND THAT'S A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF OUR PROCESS HERE. WHEN I WAS 17 YEARS OLD, I JOINED THE NATIONAL GUARD. LATER I SERVED IN THE ARMY RESERVES. I FIRST CAME TO GUAM IN 1991 TO HELP STAND UP THE, OR TO HELP DEMOBILIZE THE 731ST MP UNIT OUT OF GUAM, WHICH SERVED VERY HONORABLY IN THE FIRST GULF WAR. AND I AGREE, GOD BLESS GUAM AND GOD BLESS AMERICA. I THINK THAT WE HAVE A LOT OF GOOD THINGS IN OUR COMMUNITY AND CERTAINLY OUR VETERANS AND OUR VETERAN COMMUNITY IS A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF OUR COMMUNITY. MY TESTIMONY TODAY WILL BE JUST SPOKEN A LITTLE BIT BUT I WILL WRITE A DETAILED LETTER TO ALL OF YOU ON SOME OF THE THINGS I HAVE TO SAY. I DID NOTICE WHEN I WAS READING THIS BILL IT LOOKS AS IF AND I

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COULD BE WRONG AND PLEASE CORRECT ME SENATOR IF I'M WRONG, 14 SENATORS CO-SPONSORED THIS BILL. IS THAT HOW I'M READING THIS?

SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE-CHAIRPERSON OF HEALTH AND VETERANS AFFAIRS
THAT IS CORRECT.

RON MCNINCH AND IF I DON'T KNOW, BUT DID ONE SENATOR DIDN'T SIGN OFF ON IT AT ALL OR INITIAL AT ALL? WHO WAS THAT? CAN I ASK, PLEASE?

SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE-CHAIRPERSON OF HEALTH AND VETERANS AFFAIRS
THAT WAS SENATOR SABINA PEREZ.

RON MCNINCH OKAY. THANK YOU, MADAM. I APOLOGIZE. IT'S HARD FOR ME TO KEEP TRACK OF ALL THE NAMES HERE. THANK YOU VERY MUCH. I'M A POLICY SPECIALIST. I REVIEW LAWS ALL THE TIME AND AS PART OF MY ACADEMIC WORK, I AM AN ACADEMIC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GUAM. AND THERE ARE FOUR REASONS THAT POLICIES FAIL. FIRST, THEY'RE NOT FUNDED. SECOND, THEY'RE NOT KEPT ON TRACK EITHER BY THE EXECUTIVE OR BY THEIR COORDINATING FORCES. FOURTH, A LOT OF TIMES GUAM IN PARTICULAR, BUT OTHER PLACES TOO, CUT AND PASTE LAWS FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS AND THEY BECOME OVERLY COMPLEX OR LAWS ARE MODIFIED IN WAYS THAT MAKE THEM OVERLY COMPLEX. AND SO I WOULD LIKE TO KINDLY ASK SENATORS WHEN YOU CUT AND PASTE LAWS FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS OR BILLS FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS, PLEASE TELL US WHERE THEY'RE COMING FROM SO THEN WE CAN LOOK AT THE FULL LEGISLATIVE HISTORY OF WHERE THEY COME FROM. AND THAT GIVES US A LOT BETTER INFORMATION WHEN WE'RE TRYING TO UNDERSTAND POLICIES THAT ARE BEING PROPOSED. AND FINALLY, THERE ARE JUST SOME LAWS THAT SHOULD NOT BE ON THE BOOKS AT ALL. AND I DON'T BELIEVE THAT'S THE CASE HERE. I THINK THAT THIS, HAVING A VETERANS BOARD IS A VERY IMPORTANT LAW AND HAVING A VETERANS COMMISSION IS VERY VERY IMPORTANT. I HAVE TO SAY THIS PARTICULAR BILL IS NINE PAGES LONG. I THINK IT COULD BE TWO PAGES. I THINK YOU COULD HAVE A MUCH MORE SIMPLE FORMAT FOR THIS PARTICULAR FUNCTION AND IT WOULD BE MUCH EASIER FOR EVERYONE TO UNDERSTAND. AND I DO HAVE SOME GENERAL SUGGESTIONS IF I MAY AND I'LL SEND THESE TO YOU ALSO. FIRST I THINK THAT IF YOU HAVE A BOARD, ANY BOARD, NOT JUST THIS BOARD, IF YOU SAY THAT THEY'RE GOING TO MEET AND YOU'RE GOING TO TELL THEM TO MEET A NUMBER OF TIMES A YEAR, IT'S GOOD TO SET THE MEETING DATE IN THE LAW AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE AND THAT AND THEN EXEMPT THEM FROM THE OPEN GOVERNMENT LAW AND THAT'LL SAVE EVERYBODY A LOT OF MONEY BECAUSE RIGHT NOW WE HAVE A VERY ANTIQUATED OPEN GOVERNMENT LAW THAT WE'VE SIMPLY APPLIED ACROSS THE BOARD AND IT'S VERY VEXING TO MANY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS HERE ON GUAM AND WE HAVE THE INTERNET NOW. WE HAVE YOUTUBE TO SHOW PEOPLE WHAT'S GOING ON AT MEETINGS. I WOULD JUST LIKE TO SIMPLY KINDLY REQUEST SENATORS TO CONSIDER UPDATING OUR VERY ANTIQUATED OPEN GOVERNMENT LAW AND TO CERTAINLY WORK ON MAYBE MAKING IT EASIER PARTICULARLY FOR SUBORDINATE BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS ONES OTHER THAN THE LEGISLATURE OR MAJOR YOU KNOW THE BIG BIG BOARDS TO SIMPLY MAKE IT A LITTLE BIT EASIER AND THAT WOULD HELP A LOT AND IT WOULD SAVE EVERYBODY A LOT OF MONEY. THERE'S NO REASON AT ALL IN THIS DAY AND AGE TO HAVE A PRINTED NEWSPAPER REQUIREMENT OR OTHER PAID REQUIREMENTS FOR MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENTS AND THINGS LIKE THAT. ON ANOTHER POINT, ETHICS TRAINING. I'M A SPECIALIST IN ETHICS AND PUBLIC ETHICS. I'M WELL PUBLISHED IN THIS AREA. I DON'T BELIEVE GUAM'S FOLLOWED THE RIGHT PATH ON ETHICS TRAINING. I DON'T

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THINK ETHICS TRAINING IS HELPFUL HERE. AND I'M SAYING THIS AS A PERSON WHO TRAINS PUBLIC EMPLOYEES. I THINK THAT ETHICS TRAINING IS A VERY COSTLY PROCESS THAT'S VERY SYMBOLIC WHEN YOU CAN ACTUALLY HAVE MUCH BETTER INTERNAL GOVERNMENT TYPE TRAINING THAT'S NOT DONE THROUGH THE ETHICS COMMISSION ITSELF BECAUSE THEY HAVE AN INTEREST IN ENFORCING THE ETHICS LAWS BUT I THINK THE UNIVERSITY AND GCC COULD PUT TOGETHER VIRTUALLY FREE ETHICS TRAINING AND ETHICS CERTIFICATES THAT THEN THE PUBLIC COULD USE AND ALSO MEMBERS OF BOARDS COULD USE. THE WAY WE DO ETHICS TRAINING, I DON'T KNOW WHERE THAT LAW CAME FROM, WHERE IT WAS CUT AND PASTED FROM. I HAVE NO IDEA. I DIDN'T, I WAS AFRAID TO LOOK, BUT IT'S SIMPLY A SET OF LAWS THAT REALLY DON'T WORK VERY WELL AND THEY CAN BE READILY UPDATED. WE HAVE TO HAVE THE COURAGE TO CHANGE LAWS AND UPDATE THEM. THAT WOULD BE MY KIND SUGGESTION IN THIS REGARD. UNDER 6101 UNDER THE DEFINING OF THE VETERAN ISSUE, I THINK THAT THAT DEFINITION NEEDS TO BE WORKED ON A LITTLE BIT AND I'LL GIVE SOME SUGGESTIONS ON THAT. ALSO, I THINK THAT I'D LIKE TO KINDLY SUGGEST TO THE AMERICAN LEGION AND TO THE VFW, PLEASE DO SOME MORE AND ALSO TO THE OTHER ASSOCIATIONS, PLEASE DO SOME MORE RECRUITING. I THINK YOU'RE GREAT ORGANIZATIONS. THERE'S WAYS THAT WE CAN HELP BUILD THESE ORGANIZATIONS BECAUSE WE HAVE A LOT OF VETERANS HERE WHO ARE UNDERREPRESENTED OR NOT REPRESENTED. WE HAVE A LOT OF PEOPLE WITH MILITARY SERVICE WHO SIMPLY DO NOT KNOW THEY HAVE RIGHTS AND THESE ORGANIZATIONS ARE VERY VERY IMPORTANT TO HELP GET THESE VETERANS THEIR RIGHTS AS WELL AS THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS. ON A RELATED NOTE, I HOPE MORE VETERANS RUN FOR OFFICE. I HOPE THEY TAKE OVER THE GOVERNMENT TO BE FRANK. YOU KNOW, I HAVE TO SAY GUAM HAS MANY GOOD AND WONDERFUL THINGS THAT GO ON HERE THAT A LOT OF PEOPLE DON'T NOTICE. IT'S A GREAT PLACE TO RAISE OUR FAMILIES AND TO HAVE GREAT LIFELONG FRIENDS. WE HAVE A DIFFERENT SOCIETY HERE THAT A LOT OF PEOPLE DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND. AND CERTAINLY I GREATLY THANK THE OPPORTUNITY TODAY TO BE ABLE TO SAY A FEW WORDS ON BEHALF OF THIS BILL. THANK YOU, MADAM.

SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE-CHAIRPERSON OF HEALTH AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

THANK YOU, MR. MCNINCH. I'D LIKE TO EXCUSE THE FIRST PANEL. CHARLIE, YOU COULD STAY. BUT IF THERE ARE ANY QUESTIONS, IF YOU COULD PLEASE STICK AROUND. NEXT ON THE LIST, THAT WERE BEFORE YOU, MR. HERMOSA, JOHNNY TULLE TAITANO, IF YOU COULD, WERE YOU PLANNING ON TESTIFYING? NO. OKAY. JOE SAN AGUSTIN? OKAY. I'M STILL GOING TO CALL UP THOSE THAT ARE ON THE LIST IF THEY WANTED TO TESTIFY. MR. DANIEL COGAR. MR. FRANCISCO. WE HAVE BENNY FERNANDEZ. MARLENE FERNANDEZ. NO. OKAY. STAN KO, WILL YOU BE TESTIFYING? JOE MAFNAS, WILL YOU BE TESTIFYING? YES? YOU CAN COME TO THE TABLE IF YOU PLAN ON TESTIFYING ON THE BILL. NO. OKAY. VINCENT HERRERA, WILL YOU BE TESTIFYING? OKAY. WE'LL START WITH YOU, MR. FRANCISCO.

NICK FRANCISCO GOOD MORNING, MADAM CHAIRMAN, SENATOR MATANANE, SENATOR GUMATAOTAO, VICE SPEAKER TONY ADA, AND SENATOR THERESE TERLAJE. YOU KNOW, NICE TO BE BACK AT THE LEGISLATIVE TWO DAYS IN A ROW TO TESTIFY. AND YESTERDAY'S, A LATE PUBLIC HEARING, THIS MORNING, SO EARLY. I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW FAST THE TIME GOES. AND I LOOK AT MY CLOCK, IT'S ALMOST 8:00. OH MY GOD. AT THIS 9:00 PUBLIC HEARING IS NOT REALLY GOOD. BUT YOU KNOW, I'M HERE TO SUPPORT THIS BILL 192-38. I KNOW THAT THE WORKING GROUP BEEN WORKING A LOT OF HOURS LATE IN THE AFTERNOON LIKE 5:00 TO DO A LOT OF REVIEWING ON THE ORIGINAL BILL THAT CREATE THE COMMISSION AND I THANK SENATOR MATANANE FOR HER

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HELP IN FINALIZING EVERYTHING BECAUSE I REMEMBER WHEN WE VISIT HER OFFICE TO TURN IN THE FINAL DOCUMENT THAT FROM THE WORKING BODY FROM THE WORKING COMMISSION THAT HE WAS VERY VERY PLEASED TO REVIEW THE DOCUMENT AND SET THE PUBLIC HEARING WHICH WERE CONDUCTING THIS MORNING. SO I LISTEN TO ALL THESE OTHER SPEAKERS AND I AGREE WITH EVERYTHING FOR EXCEPTION OF ONE THAT I COULDN'T BELIEVE THAT YOU KNOW I'M GOING TO HEAR THAT BUT THIS IS, EVERYBODY HAVE THEIR OWN OPINION BUT I COMMEND ALL THE SPEAKER THAT SPOKEN IN BEHALF IN SUPPORTING THIS BILL 192 AND I ALSO THANK MR. SAN AGUSTIN FOR BEING HERE BECAUSE THIS BILL GOT A LOT TO DO WITH THE VETERANS AFFAIR AND HIMSELF AND I'M SO HAPPY WHEN I HEAR FROM HIM THAT HE IS SUPPORTING THIS BILL. SO, NOT TO PROLONG, I JUST SAY I'M VERY PLEASED TO BE HERE TO REPRESENT THE MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART AS THEIR COMMANDER AND THE VIETNAM VETERAN OF AMERICA AS THEIR PRESIDENT AND BEING INVOLVED WITH THIS COMMISSION FOR THE LONGEST TIME SINCE I COULD REMEMBER. I WORK WITH THE DIFFERENT CHAIRMEN OF THE COMMISSION, AND I THANK ROY GAMBOA FOR DOING A GREAT JOB TRYING TO GET THIS COMMISSION BACK THE WAY THE COMMISSION SHOULD BE AND I THANK AGAIN ALL THE WORKING COMMITTEE FROM THE COMMISSION AND SENATOR MATANANE FOR EVERYTHING. SO AGAIN, DĀNGKULU NA SI YU'OS MA'ĀSE', I'M VERY HONORED TO BE HERE TO SUPPORT THIS AND I'LL BE SO HAPPY WHEN I SEE THAT THIS BILL IS PASSED, AND I HOPE THIS GOING TO HAPPEN BY VETERANS DAY. VETERANS DAY, NOVEMBER 11 IS NOT TOO FAR. AND I THINK THE WHOLE ISLAND OF GUAM, THE VETERANS WILL BE PLEASED TO SEE THAT THIS BILL IS FINALLY GOING TO GIVE THE COMMISSION THE POWER AND YOU KNOW TO WORK WITH THE GOVERNOR AND THE DIRECTOR OF GOVA. SO AGAIN DĀNGKULU NA SI YU'OS MA'ĀSE.

SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE-CHAIRPERSON OF HEALTH AND VETERANS AFFAIRS
SI YU'OS MA'ĀSE, MR. FRANCISCO. MR. MAFNAS WOULD YOU LIKE TO TESTIFY?

JOE MAFNAS THANK YOU, MADAM CHAIR. MY NAME IS JOE MAFNAS. I'M A VETERAN ALSO RETIRED CSM, UNITED STATES ARMY. SENATOR GUMATAOTAO, VICE SPEAKER TONY ADA AND SENATOR TERLAJE, GOOD MORNING. I'M HERE IN REFERENCE TO BILL 192-38 IN SUPPORT OF THIS BILL. AND THE REASON WHY I CAME HERE IS BECAUSE I THINK WE'RE OVERDUE FOR SOME CHANGES HERE. AND I THANK THE WORKING GROUP THAT MADE WITH YOU IN REFERENCE TO SOME OF THE CHANGES THAT WAS REVISED FROM THE PREVIOUS BILL 85-38. THE THING ABOUT THIS BILL IS THAT I GUESS IT MOVE FORWARD FOR THE NEW COMMISSION TO COME OUT WITH A NEW BY-LAWS AND START UP WITH THAT AND LET'S DO A WORKING WITH THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIR. A LOT OF THIS PROBLEM WAS GENERATED IN THE PAST AND NOW WE'RE TRYING TO CORRECT ALL THIS PROBLEM AND AGAIN I THANK FOR THE CREW ESPECIALLY SENATOR TOM ADA AND MY FRIEND OVER THERE SERGEANT MAJOR SANTIAGO FOR COMING UP WITH ALL THIS INPUT THAT WAS PUT OUT HERE SO THAT WE CAN BETTER THE COMMISSION AND MOVE ON FORWARD AND LET'S FORGET ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED IN THE PAST SO THAT WE CAN CONTINUE TO HELP OUR VETERANS WHETHER THEY'RE COMING OUT FROM THE MILITARY OR REAL VETERANS THAT HAS SERVED SO MANY YEARS AND SO FORTH. AND I'D LIKE TO, SINCE WE'RE GOING INTO THE NOVEMBER TIMEFRAME, TO HONOR ALL THE VETERANS WHETHER THEY'RE GONE OR STILL HERE TO CELEBRATE THE VETERAN'S MONTH IN NOVEMBER AND I THANK YOU FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR WHAT I HAVE TO SAY.

SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE-CHAIRPERSON OF HEALTH AND VETERANS AFFAIRS
THANK YOU, MR. MAFNAS. MR. HERMOSA.

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CHARLIE HERMOSA BUENAS YAN Hafa Adai, Madam Chair, and Members of the Legislature. My name is Charlie Hermosa. I'm a Combat Marine Corps Veteran. Speaking today, not just for myself, but for the many veterans who feel forgotten and frustrated by the system that's supposed to serve us. I appreciate the intent of Bill 192-38 in part to strengthen the Veterans Commission and give it a clearer role in representing those who serve. But I cannot fully support this bill unless real safeguards are built in to ensure things are actually getting done. Under the proposed setup, the Commission will meet quarterly. That's not enough. If they're only meeting four times a year, there must be measurable goals, timelines, and accountability for progress between those meetings. We've seen too many promises fade between sessions, and veterans continue to pay the price. The truth is, the Commission as it stands today is ineffective. There is no consistent follow-through, no strong leadership driving results, and no visible outcomes for the men and women who have sacrificed so much. We need new leadership, people who are willing to act, not just meet and talk. I'm asking this body to amend this bill so that it includes one, a phased in plan with clear benchmarks and quarterly reporting to the Legislature. A leadership review and restructuring to bring capable, committed individuals on board and a mandate for transparency and accountability to the veteran community. Madam Chair, our veterans deserve action, not more bureaucracy. Let's fix this before another year passes without any progress. I do also want to say and the reason why I pointed out the transparency and accountability to the veteran community is because there's a lack of communication between the Commission and all the veterans on island and maybe I'm not in the know, maybe I'm not in the chat group maybe I'm missing somewhere where I don't see any communication coming out but I also do want to leave and I've posted this on my social media and I also want to leave a quote is "Tactics are for amateurs. Logistics is for professionals." and the reason why I say that is because one of the things that I have seen that I have spoken to the GOVA Director is the fact that he needs things to make things happen. One is personnel. I do want to go on record on saying that we need to revise the pay scales for the folks that are within GOVA, especially in the cemetery. Right now, I'm not going to speak over the Director, but I know when I meet with him in his sincerity, he's going out and trying to find people to work at the cemetery, but the pay scales are not in level. So, that's the reason why I say that quote. And in conclusion, just want to say thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE-CHAIRPERSON OF HEALTH AND VETERANS AFFAIRS
Thank you, Mr. Hermosa. Mr. San Augustine.

JOSE SAN AGUSTIN Madam Chair and Honorable Senators, good morning. My name is Jose San Agustin, the Director for the Guam Office of Veterans Affairs. I'm here this morning testifying in support of this bill as the Director of the Guam Office of Veterans Affairs, but also I'm here as a representative of a retired US military, a US Marine of 30 years in the United States Marine Corps. I want to thank you all for sponsoring and bringing this bill up, but I also want to thank the working group that made this possible. I would like to elaborate that as Mr. Vince Santiago, my

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GREAT LEADER HAD INDICATED THAT I WAS PART OF THE MAKEUP OF THIS BILL. I WANT TO ALSO REMIND YOU ALL THAT IN THE MEAT OF THE DISCUSSION OF THIS BILL, I STAYED AWAY DUE TO THE FACT THAT I DO NOT WANT TO BE AN INFLUENCE TO THEIR DECISION. HOWEVER, THE OUTCOME OF THIS BILL MIGHT NEEDS TO BE POLISHED, RIGHT? AND HOPEFULLY THE POLISHING WHEN WILL BE WHEN YOU'LL MEET AS A WHOLE IF YOU ALL COULD BRING THOSE FOLKS IN THAT HELP YOU CREATE THIS THIS BILL TO JUST POLISH IT BEFORE WE PUT IT OUT FOR A VOTE. IT'S DUE FOR CHANGE AND CHANGE IS GOOD. BUT AS I MOVE AROUND DURING MY PRESENTATION THIS MORNING, I WANT YOU ALL TO UNDERSTAND ONE THING THAT LIKE VINCE SANTIAGO, I SERVE IN THE UPPER ECHELON OF LEADERSHIP THROUGHOUT MY CAREER. I JOINED THE MARINE CORPS IN 1979, RETIRED IN 2009, CAME BACK TO GUAM AND BECAME THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION FOR SIX AND A HALF YEARS AS A MARINE VETERAN. YOU ALL KNOW MY PAST. FOR SOME ODD REASON, YOU ALL CONTINUE TO SEE ME. AND YOU ALL CONTINUE TO SEE ME FOR ONE REASON. BECAUSE MY HEART IS IN THE PEOPLE OF GUAM. MY HEART IS TO HELP THIS COMMUNITY. LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I WANT ONE TO KNOW THAT I'M STRUGGLING TO MAKE IT HAPPEN. I STRUGGLE BECAUSE AS A MILITARY PERSON OF 30 YEARS, I HAVE A HARD TIME, DEFINITELY A HARD TIME INFLUENCING MY WAY OF DOING THINGS IN THE MILITARY TO INFLUENCE IT INTO THE CIVILIAN COMMUNITY. AND I SAY THIS BECAUSE THAT'S THE REASON WHY YOU'LL CONTINUE TO SEE ME BECAUSE I DON'T PLAN TO GIVE UP. AND MY COUNTERPARTS THAT ARE LEADERS OF THE DIFFERENT VETERAN ORGANIZATION DON'T PLAN TO GIVE UP TOO. AND THEY'RE THE REASON WHY I CONTINUE TO DRIVE BECAUSE THEY ARE THE ROOT AND THE LEADERS THAT CONTINUE TO GO OUT THERE AND SEEK FOR THE VETERANS THAT HAVE SERVED OUR COMMUNITY SO THAT WE COULD CONTINUE TO HELP THEM IN ONE CAPACITY OR ANOTHER. I TAKE PRIDE IN WHAT I DO. I'M NOT PERFECT LIKE MANY OTHER, BUT I'LL TELL YOU WHAT, I DAMN WORK HARD. I WELCOME FOOLS. I WELCOME ANYBODY TO VISIT MY CEMETERY. I WELCOME ANYBODY TO VISIT THE GUAM OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS. I WELCOME ANYBODY WHO WANTS INFORMATION FROM ME TO COME AND SEE ME. I'M MORE THAN HAPPY TO SHARE THAT. BUT LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, SENATORS AND THE PEOPLE OF GUAM AND THOSE LISTENING, I'M NOT HERE TO FAIL. I DIDN'T RETIRE AND COME HOME TO FAIL. HOWEVER, I AM HAVING DIFFICULTY BLENDING BACK INTO THE COMMUNITY TO INFLUENCE THAT MY WAY OF DOING THINGS IN THE MILITARY JUST ISN'T WORKING OUT HERE. SO, WITH A NEW BODY OF COMMISSIONS, THERE IS HOPE. THERE IS HOPE. AND I GRADUALLY WAS ABLE TO BRING THEM IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER AND WE'RE GOING TO MAKE IT HAPPEN. WE DIDN'T RETIRE TO COME HOME OR WE DIDN'T SERVE TO COME HOME AND FAIL THE ISLAND. WE CAME BACK HOME BECAUSE WE WANT TO BE PART OF THE SOLUTION. AT LEAST ME AND THE LARGER LEADERS AND THOSE THAT WERE UP HERE TESTIFYING. SO THERE IS NO WAY. I MIGHT NOT BE PERFECT. I STUTTER A LOT AND THERE'S REASON BEHIND THAT BECAUSE I WANT TO MAKE IT RIGHT BUT I'M HAVING A HARD TIME MAKING IT RIGHT. BUT THE NEW BODY WITHIN THIS COMMISSION WILL WORK TOGETHER AND WE'LL MOVE FORWARD TO MAKE IT THE BEST AND THE MOST RIGHT WAY THAT WE KNOW IT COULD HAPPEN. AND I WANT I JUST WANT TO REITERATE THAT THE REASON WHY YOU'LL CONTINUE TO SEE ME BECAUSE I DON'T PLAN TO GIVE UP. AND I WILL CONTINUE TO FORGE FORWARD TO MAKE THINGS HAPPEN. MY AGENCY IS STRUGGLING AND THAT'S ALL THE REASON WHY I'M PROUD TO BE WHERE I'M AT. LIKE MANY OF THE OTHER MARINES AND OTHER SERVICE MEMBERS THAT TESTIFIED OUT HERE UP HERE, OUR JOB IS TO FIND SOLUTIONS FOR THE SHORTFALLS THAT WE ARE DEALING WITH. IF YOU ALL ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE US MORE FUNDING SO THAT WE COULD HIRE MORE PEOPLE, PLEASE DO SO. BUT RIGHT NOW MY JOB IS SOLUTION BASED ON WHAT I AM GIVEN. AND

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WITH THE MENTORSHIP AND THE LEADERSHIP AND GUIDANCE AND THE WORKING RELATIONSHIP OF THIS NEW COMMISSION MEMBERS, WE CAN FORGE FORWARD BECAUSE I NEVER SAY NO. I SERVED IN THIS AGENCY IN 17 AND 18. AND BACK THEN I WAS GIVING THEM ALL THE REPORT AND I WAS SAYING TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT ME TO DO WITH THE FUNDS. AND NOBODY WANTS TO. AND THE REASON BEHIND THAT AND I THANK THEM ALL BECAUSE THEY HAVE THE TRUST IN ME TO DRIVE IT THE WAY IT SHOULD BE DRIVEN BUT I CANNOT BE MAKING THAT DECISION ON MY OWN THAT'S WHY THERE'S A BODY TO BE ABLE TO GUIDE ME THROUGH AND SAY JOE USE IT FOR THIS OR NO DON'T DO THIS OR THIS IS WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO OKAY BUT I THINK MOST OF THE CONCERNS WERE BROUGHT UP AMONGST THE FOLKS THAT HAD TESTIFIED UP HERE BEFORE ME, WE DO NEED TO POLISH. SOME OF THE THINGS THAT I WOULD LIKE TO PROBABLY TALK WITH THE MEMBERS IS IT REALLY THE GOVERNOR THAT WE WANT TO SAY YES THAT'S THE ORGANIZATION THAT WE WANT TO BE PART OF THE COMMISSION OR SHOULD THE BODY AS A WHOLE BE THE ONE TO DECIDE BECAUSE WE'RE THE ONES WITH THE MILITARY BACKGROUND. THE GOVERNOR NEVER JOINED THE MILITARY. SO, IS THAT THE BODY OR THE ORGANIZATION THAT WE WANT OR SHOULD BE PART OF THE COMMISSION? OKAY. AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST, GUYS, I'LL TELL YOU, I'VE BEEN WORKING WITH THIS FOR THE LONGEST TIME, AND I HOPE ONE OF THESE DAYS THERE'LL BE MORE LOVE WITHIN OUR VETERANS COMMUNITY BECAUSE THERE'S ALREADY PLENTY OF HATRED OUT THERE. SO, AS MUCH AS I TRUST YOU ALL, I'M HOPING THAT YOU ALL TRUST ME, TOO. AND COME TO ME WHEN YOU THINK I'M NOT DOING THE RIGHT THING. LIKE CHARLIE SAID, WE COULD AGREE TO DISAGREE, BUT LET'S LEVEL IT UP WHERE YOUR AGREEMENT AND MY DISAGREEMENT IS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILY AND THE COMMUNITY. I THINK I'VE TAKEN UP MY FIVE MINUTES. THANK YOU VERY MUCH AGAIN FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP. THANK YOU TO ALL THE CO-SPONSORS. I LOOK FORWARD TO HOPEFULLY GETTING THE WORKING GROUP INTO THE COMMITTEE AS A WHOLE TO POLISH IT BEFORE IT GOES OUT FOR A VOTE AND THEN WE'LL GO FROM THERE AND FIX IT WHATEVER MIGHT BE BROKEN. DĀNGKULU NA SI YU'OS MA'ĀSE.

SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE-CHAIRPERSON OF HEALTH AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

THANK YOU MR. SAN AGUSTIN AND I DON'T PLAN ON GIVING UP EITHER. WE'RE NOW GOING TO OPEN THIS UP FOR QUESTIONING FROM MY COLLEAGUES. AGAIN THERE'S FIVE MINUTES FOR EACH COLLEAGUE TO PRESENT THEIR QUESTIONS AND WE'LL START WITH YOU SENATOR GUMATAOTAO.

SENATOR EULOGIO SHAWN GUMATAOTAO YES. THANK YOU, MADAM CHAIR AND THANK YOU FOR ALL THE VETERANS AND THOSE INTERESTED IN VETERANS ISSUES. THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE AND THANK YOU SENATOR ADA SPECIFICALLY FOR YOUR COMMENTS TODAY AND I HOPE YOU'LL STICK AROUND. DON'T LEAVE BECAUSE I HAVE A QUESTION FOR YOU IF YOU POSSIBLY CAN. BUT I WANT TO START WITH THIS SPECIFIC QUESTION FOR JOE AND THEN THIS IS GOING TO HELP ME GO TO SENATOR ADA. WHAT SPECIFIC EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE BY THE GUAM OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION WITHIN THE PAST FIVE YEARS TO APPLY FOR GRANTS OR SUBGRANTS OR INTO IN ENTER INTO INTRA-GOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS TO PROVIDE OR EXPAND CRITICAL SERVICES IN GUAM FOR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, HIGHER EDUCATION, AND HEALTHCARE. ANYONE CAN ANSWER. IF YOU WANT TO GIVE IT A CRACK DIRECTOR THAT'S FINE.

JOSE SAN AGUSTIN YEAH. SO FOR MY PART, THE GRANTS THAT ARE AVAILABLE ARE FOR THE EXPANSION GRANTS THAT FALL UNDER THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. THERE ARE NO GRANTS OUT THERE THAT ARE DIRECTLY, WHAT'S THAT WHERE THE GUAM OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

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COULD APPLY MORE. MORESO, THE GRANTS THAT ARE AVAILABLE ARE FOR NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS. THE OFFICE AS A GOVERNMENT DOES NOT QUALIFY FOR MANY OF THESE GRANTS. IF THAT MAKES SENSE.

SENATOR EULOGIO SHAWN GUMATAOTAO IT DOES. ROY, YOU WANTED TO CHIME IN?

ROY GAMBOA YES, SENATOR, THANK YOU FOR THAT QUESTION. I THINK ONE OF THE POINTS WAS HOUSING. A FEW YEARS AGO, OUR ORGANIZATION REALIZED THAT THERE WERE A NUMBER OF HOMELESS VETERANS THAT WERE OUT THERE. SO, WE ATTEMPTED TO BRING IN SOME TEMPORARY HOUSING TO ASSIST. GUMA, SAN JOSE, OTHER ENTITIES, HOTELS, MOTEL, WHATEVER, THEY'RE ALMOST ALWAYS AT CAPACITY. THE SSVF PROGRAM, THE SUPPORT SERVICES FOR VETERANS AND FAMILIES, THEY DO RECEIVE A GRANT AND THEY ASSIST AND THAT'S FOR TEMPORARY HOUSING. WHAT WE WANTED TO DO WAS TRY TO FIND SOMETHING A LITTLE BIT MORE PERMANENT. ABOUT TWO MONTHS AGO, I MET WITH SENATOR SABINA PEREZ AND SHE MENTIONED THAT THE GOVERNMENT AND AGAIN I COULD BE WRONG HERE BUT THE GOVERNMENT HAS IN ITS INVENTORY 70 DERELICT BUILDINGS OR BUILDINGS IN GENERAL. AND THE QUESTION I HAD ASKED WAS, IS THERE A BUILDING THAT OUR ORGANIZATION, VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS CAN REFURBISH, SIGN A LEASE FOR A SHORT, FOR A LONG-TERM PERIOD SO THAT WE CAN PUT THE INVESTMENT INTO REFURBISHING THEM AND USING THEM AS HOUSING FOR UP TO 12 MONTHS WHILE THE VETERANS TRY TO, YOU KNOW, GET BACK ON THEIR FEET. AND THE PLAN THERE WAS TO HAVE A LOCAL RESIDENT BE IN CHARGE, SET UP RULES AND REGS FOR PARTICIPANTS, ENSURE IT'S A DRUG-FREE, TOBACCO FREE, ALCOHOL-FREE AREA. SO WE AT LEAST ON THE NONPROFIT SIDE HAVE TRIED TO LOOK FOR AVENUES. A FELLOW NONPROFIT GROUP OUT IN THAT STARTED OUT IN KANSAS. IT'S CALLED THE VETERANS COMMUNITY PROJECT AND THROUGH DONATIONS BECAUSE THEY'RE IN THE LOWER 48. THEY WERE ABLE TO RECEIVE LARGE DONATIONS TO BUILD THE VERY FIRST PROJECT HAD 49 TINY HOMES THAT WERE BUILT WITH PSYCHOLOGISTS AND PSYCHIATRISTS THERE TO ADVISE HOW TO BUILD THESE HOMES. BUT THEY PUT THE HOMELESS VETERANS IN THESE UNITS WITH COUNSELING, SOCIAL WORKERS. THEY WERE ABLE TO BRING IN THROUGH DONATIONS, BARBERS WOULD COME EVERY WEEK. PEOPLE WOULD COME AND CONDUCT CLASSES AND SO ON AND SO FORTH. AND IT ALSO SERVED AS AN AREA WHERE THE VETERANS COULD PROVIDE SECURITY. SO THEY WOULD HAVE BASICALLY ON THE JOB TRAINING AND AFTER A PERIOD OF 6 MONTHS THE COMMUNITY PROJECT WOULD BE ABLE TO GIVE THEM A WORK EXPERIENCE DOCUMENT SO THAT THEY CAN GO AND APPLY FOR WORK AND SO ON AND SO FORTH. THE 70 DERELICT BUILDINGS. I DIDN'T HAVEN'T GOTTEN AN ANSWER BACK TO IT YET, BUT WE'RE MORE THAN WILLING TO PUT OUR TIME, MONEY, AND EFFORT INTO FIXING THESE BUILDINGS UP AT OUR COST, OR WE CAN GO OUT THERE AND WE CAN GET THESE GRANTS TO SOLVE AT LEAST THAT ONE THAT ONE ISSUE. RIGHT NOW, I'M WORKING WITH TOGEI. TOGEI IS AT THE GY611 OFFICE RIGHT NOW CONDUCTING PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST TRAINING SO THAT WE CAN HAVE BETTER COUNSELORS, PROVIDE COUNSELORS OUT THERE FOR VETERANS THAT ARE STRUGGLING. WE'RE ALWAYS OPEN AND ALWAYS LOOKING, BUT WE ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS A COMPETITIVE GRANT PROCESS AND IT DOES TAKE SOME FUNDING FROM US BECAUSE AT LEAST WITH OUR ORGANIZATION, WE HAVE TO HIRE A GRANT WRITER TO PERFORM AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF THE FEDERAL VA GRANTS. IF YOUR GRANT IS NOT PERFECT, IT'S NOT GOING TO BE SEEN. AND SO, WE TAKE THAT RISK OF PUTTING MONEY OUT THERE TO APPLY FOR SOME OF THESE GRANTS, AND WHEN WE'RE LUCKY, WE DO GET THEM.

SENATOR EULOGIO SHAWN GUMATAOTAO OKAY. THANK YOU, ROY. CHARLIE.

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CHARLIE HERMOSA SENATOR, AND THIS IS THE ISSUE. YOUR QUESTION WAS DIRECTED TOWARDS A GOVERNMENT AGENCY, AND WE HAVE A NONPROFIT SPEAKING ABOUT WHAT THEY'RE DOING TO ENSURE THAT WE'RE GETTING HOMELESS VETS OFF THE STREETS. AND SO IF YOU LOOK AT THE LEADERSHIP, THE GOVERNMENT AGENCY SHOULD BE LEADING THE WAY. IT SHOULDN'T BE A NONPROFIT.

SENATOR EULOGIO SHAWN GUMATAOTAO AND THAT'S WHAT I WAS GOING TO GET TO. THIS IS WHAT I WANT TO DIRECT THIS RIGHT BACK TO SENATOR ADA AND TO THE WORKING GROUP. AND I GOT TO SAY THAT I APPRECIATE THIS. I SUPPORT THIS EFFORT. AND SO WE JUST FINISHED IN THE LAST SESSION OR TWO SESSIONS AGO, WE JUST CODIFIED THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE AUTOMATION COMMISSION WHICH TOOK 32 YEARS TO GET CODIFIED. AND I WANTED TO ASK I SAW THAT IT WAS REMOVED BUT I THINK TO GO TO SENATOR ADA'S POINT IN HIS TESTIMONY COMMISSION DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES WERE REMOVED BUT I WOULD MAYBE IN THE MARKUP PROCESS TO THE CHAIR MAYBE LOOK AT A COUPLE DIFFERENT THINGS TO ADDRESS THE THINGS THAT CHARLIE HAD MENTIONED. HOW DO WE AND I'M JUST GOING TO USE THIS VERY BROAD LANGUAGE. HOW WE DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN PROCESSES WITH VETERANS ISSUES, DEVELOP APPROPRIATE POLICIES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THINGS WITH GOVA, DEVELOP AND ADOPT RULES AND PROCEDURES IF YOU WILL, PERFORM ALL FUNCTIONS TO CARRY OUT THIS COMMISSION AND TO GO TO CHARLIE'S POINT SUBMIT A WRITTEN REPORT ONE YEAR OR ANNUALLY TO THE GUAM LEGISLATURE AND TO THE GOVERNOR ON THE ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS. I OFFER THAT BECAUSE SENATOR ADA I THINK WHAT YOU WERE OFFERING TODAY THE DEFINITION I THINK WE MENTIONED EARLIER I THINK THAT'S A GOOD THING BUT TAKING IT OUT COULD WE PUT IT BACK IN THESE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES WOULD IT MAKE SENSE. LAWYERS PRODUCE THE CJAC BUT COULD WE DO THAT THE SAME WITH THIS PARTICULAR COMMISSION?

TOM ADA YES I THINK WE CAN BUT IF BEFORE WE GO FURTHER WITH THAT I WOULD LIKE TO KIND OF RESPOND TO YOUR QUESTION AND I THINK YOUR QUESTION WAS YOU KNOW, HAS THERE BEEN ANY EFFORT TO APPLY FOR GRANTS TO HELP THE VETERANS COMMUNITY AND I THINK IF WE TAKE A LOOK AT IT A LITTLE BIT DIFFERENTLY THERE IS A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION OUT THERE RIGHT NOW WHO BASICALLY THROUGH FUNDRAISERS THAT'S HOW THEY WOULD FUND THEIR EFFORTS. BUT WHAT THEY DO IS THEY ACTUALLY CONDUCT BOOT CAMPS EVERY MONTH IN THE VILLAGES TO EMPOWER THE VETERANS THEMSELVES. SO FOR EXAMPLE, I'VE BEEN TRACKING THE EFFORTS OF, AND THIS IS THE ORGANIZATION HMI. ALL RIGHT. SO DURING THE PERIOD JANUARY TO JUNE THEY HAVE CONDUCTED A TOTAL OF 45 BOOT CAMPS AND DURING THAT SIX-MONTH PERIOD THEY ASSISTED A TOTAL OF 147 VETERANS. ALL RIGHT. BASICALLY EMPOWERING THEM BY TEACHING THEM WHERE DO YOU FIND THE INFORMATION TO APPLY FOR THE BENEFITS THAT YOU HAVE EARNED THROUGH MILITARY SERVICE. SO THEY HAVE ASSISTED DURING THAT SIX-MONTH PERIOD A TOTAL OF 147 VETERANS. AS A RESULT OF THESE VETERANS INITIATING THEIR CLAIMS AND SUBMITTING IT, THEY NOW ON AN ANNUAL BASIS COMBINED BRING IN A TOTAL OF ABOUT \$3.9 MILLION A YEAR INTO THE ECONOMY. ALL RIGHT. AND THIS IS A TOTAL OF \$3.9 MILLION THAT THESE VETERANS ARE ABLE TO USE TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN THEIR FAMILY'S ECONOMIC SITUATION. THAT IN ADDITION TO OTHER BENEFITS THAT COMES WITH FOR EXAMPLE IF YOU HAVE A 100% RATING, IT HAS ALLOWANCES THAT ARE AVAILABLE FOR DEPENDENTS WHO ARE IN COLLEGE, THE MEDICAL HEALTH CARE. SO, THAT'S ANOTHER TWIST TO INSTEAD OF THE GRANTS FOR HOUSING AND ALL THAT, IT'S ALSO THE EFFORT TO EMPOWER THE VETERANS TO BE ABLE TO GO AFTER THE BENEFITS THAT THEY HAVE EARNED.

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SENATOR EULOGIO SHAWN GUMATAOTAO AND THAT'S WHY I WAS ASKING AND IT WAS TO TEE UP THIS IDEA OF DOING THE KIND OF THE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IS BECAUSE IF YOU THINK WHAT JOE JUST ASKED WAS, I NEED HELP. AND SO THE COMMISSION OR AT LEAST THE WAY I READ THE POLICY, IT'S TO DO JUST THAT. AND JUST LIKE THE WE JUST PASSED THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE AUTOMATION COMMISSION ACROSS AGENCIES, THEY COLLABORATE LIKE YOU WILL DO IN YOUR MEMBERSHIPS TO HELP WITH EITHER POLICY RULES, MAYBE GETTING OUT DIFFERENT THINGS. YOU MENTIONED THE CEMETERY AS I HAVE ASKED. I'M NOT GOING TO DO THAT TODAY, BUT IT'S THE SAME THING. AND I THINK, WE MADAM CHAIR, I THINK THAT WHEN WE THINK OF THE WAY COMMISSIONS HAVE BEEN RUNNING AND I USE THE CJAC AND THIS HAS GOT A GREAT SYNERGY. CHARLIE I MIGHT DISAGREE IN TERMS OF MEETINGS. I THINK YOU CAN DO QUARTERLY MEETINGS, BUT NOTHING STOPS THE COMMISSION FROM DOING LIKE MONTHLY WORKSHOPS MAYBE EVERY OTHER MONTH GET DIFFERENT GROUPS INVOLVED TO STAY ACTIVE IN THE COMMUNITY. BUT I SAY THIS FOR THIS POLICY. I'M HOPING IN THE MARKUP AND HOPE YOU'LL ALLOW MAYBE TO BRING IT BACK IN ONLY BECAUSE IF YOU GET A LITTLE BIT MORE FOCUS AND SENATOR, I HOPE YOU'RE NOT, HOPE I'M NOT YOU KNOW HURTING YOUR FEELINGS OR ANYTHING. I JUST THINK THAT WE GIVE A LITTLE BIT MORE DIRECTION. I KNOW YOU'RE TAKING IT OUT PUTTING IT BACK IN, BUT WHEN I WAS READING THE POLICY, I THINK THAT WAS ONE OF THE BIGGEST GAPS. I KNOW ATTORNEYS WROTE THE CJAC, BUT I'M SAYING THAT VETERANS ARE WRITING THIS AND IT MIGHT MAKE SENSE TO KEEP IT VERY NARROW. THINK OF THE THINGS THAT YOU JUST MENTIONED, HOW WE CAN GET THERE IN YOUR TESTIMONY. I THINK WE SHOULD USE THAT AS THE REFERENCE AND I JUST WANTED TO OFFER THAT TODAY. GO AHEAD. I'M SORRY. GO AHEAD.

VINCE SANTIAGO GOOD MORNING, SENATOR. THANK YOU FOR THAT COMMENT AND DEFINITELY THE QUESTION POSED TO US. AND I WOULD SAY THIS, RIGHT? WHEN WE LOOKED AT THIS BILL, WE WERE TRYING NOT TO GO MORE THAN WE NEEDED TO. IF WE ADDRESSED IT IN OUR BY-LAWS, THEN IT SHOULDN'T BE THE NEED TO ADDRESS IT IN THE LAW. HOWEVER, THOUGH, BY LOOKING AT IT, RIGHT, THE ONLY WAY WE MOVE FROM GOOD TO GREAT IS BY IDENTIFYING THAT WE NEED TO MOVE FROM GOOD TO GREAT. SO, IF WE NEED TO PUT IT BACK IN INTO THIS POLICY, THEN THEN WE WILL HAVE A DISCUSSION. BUT THE REASON WHY WE REMOVED IT BECAUSE IT WAS IN OUR BY-LAWS, THE VET COMMITTEE, BECAUSE WE LOOKED AT THAT. THAT WAS ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS WE LOOKED AT WAS THE BY-LAWS BEFORE WE LOOKED AT 85-38 THAT WE ALREADY STARTED THE GROUND.

SENATOR EULOGIO SHAWN GUMATAOTAO AND I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT THAT BILL, BUT I THINK ABOUT THIS ONE. IF YOU THINK ABOUT FOCUS, YOU WANTED TO GET MORE HELP OR YOU WANT TO GET MORE. I THINK PUTTING IT BACK IN, I DON'T KNOW, SENATOR ADA IF YOU WOULD DISAGREE, BUT I THINK PUTTING IT MIGHT BACK IN VERY SIMPLY AND SMALLER MAY BE HELPFUL.

VINCE SANTIAGO SURE. AND DEFINITELY UNDERSTAND THE REASON FOR IT BECAUSE ONCE IT'S WRITTEN IN LAW, IT'S IN LAW AND IT'S NOT A BY-LAW. SO DEFINITELY APPRECIATE THAT. NOW, THE OTHER THING I'LL MENTION, RIGHT, AND CHARLIE HERMOSA MENTIONED THAT, YOU KNOW, IT'S THE VETERAN ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE COMING UP WITH THESE WITH THESE OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS AND OUR FAMILIES. AND IT'S RIGHT, YOU KNOW, BECAUSE LET'S BE HONEST. SOME OF THESE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, THEY GOT TO GO THROUGH RED TAPE TO ACHIEVE THEIR OUTCOME. SOME VETERAN ORGANIZATIONS, WE MAY NOT HAVE TO GO THROUGH THAT RED TAPE. THERE MAY BE AN EASIER PATH FOR US TO ACHIEVE. NOW, I WILL SAY THIS,

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RIGHT? I COMMEND ANY ORGANIZATION, VET ORGANIZATION THAT IS TRYING TO HELP A VETERAN OR THEIR FAMILY. I COMMEND THEM ALL, RIGHT? BECAUSE IT'S NOT ABOUT PATTING OURSELVES ON THE BACK AS IT IS ABOUT US AS VETERANS, THE ONE WHO THE ONES THE MANY OF US WHO HAVE THE WILL, THE DESIRE, AND THE STRENGTH, THE PASSION TO CONTINUE TO LOOK AFTER OUR FELLOW VETERANS BECAUSE WHEN WE ALL RETIRED AT ONE POINT IN TIME, WE WERE LEADERS OF OUR ORGANIZATIONS. SO ALL WE DID AND I WON'T ASK ANSWER FOR ALL OF THEM BUT ALL I DID WAS PIVOT AND CONTINUE TO TAKE CARE OF MY ORGANIZATION AS THE PRESIDENT AND THEN NOW LOOKING AS THE SENIOR MARINE INSTRUCTOR FOR MARINE CORPS JROTC I'M LOOKING FOR THE FUTURE, THE FUTURE OF OUR ISLAND THE FUTURE OF OUR NATION SO AGAIN THE SCORECARD FOR THE GOODNESS, OKAY THANK YOU THANK YOU ALL VETERAN ORGANIZATIONS FOR DOING THE RIGHT THING AND DOING IT. BUT I WILL ALSO TELL YOU IN TODAY'S DAY AND WORLD OF SOCIAL MEDIA, ALL THAT STUFF IS OUT THERE. SO THAT BOOT CAMP, I THINK THAT'S VALUABLE. I THINK IT'S VALUABLE BECAUSE WHAT YOU DO IS YOU BRING IT FROM THE WORLDWIDE WEB AND YOU PUT IT DOWN TO KNEECAP TO KNEECAP CONVERSATIONS. AND I THINK THAT'S GREAT. AND EVERY VETERAN ORGANIZATION IS TRYING TO MOVE OUT TO THAT END STATE. THE OTHER THING I WILL SAY IS THIS. AS TIME GOES, PEOPLE CHANGE AND LEADERS CHANGE. JUST LIKE THIS VET COMMISSION, IT'S A NEW COMMISSION. THE OLD COMMISSION AND THE OLD WAYS OF DOING BUSINESS, IT WAS, IT'S PART OF THE HISTORY. WE CAN'T CHANGE THAT. BUT THE CURRENT COMMISSION, WE ARE AFTER IT. HENCE WHY WE DEVELOPED THIS WORKING GROUP.

SENATOR EULOGIO SHAWN GUMATAOTAO YES, SENATOR ADA, I DON'T KNOW IF AGAIN, DO YOU THINK WE COULD DO THAT? THE ADD OF THE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES BACK IN OF THE COMMISSION?

TOM ADA I THINK IT'S WORTHWHILE LOOKING AT. I THINK THE MOST IMPORTANT PART IS HOW THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COMMISSION ARE HANDLED. RIGHT? SO A GOOD EXAMPLE I THINK IS I KNOW THAT FOR THE PAST 50 YEARS THE OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS IS BUDGETED TO HIRE VETERANS SERVICE ADVISORS BASICALLY AND THESE ARE THE PEOPLE THAT AND BASICALLY SO WE BUDGET THEM AND IT'S KIND OF LIKE YOU KNOW BUILD IT AND THEY'LL COME. RIGHT. SO WE FUND THEM AND WE WAIT FOR THE VETERANS TO COME IN TO GET TO BASICALLY BE ASSISTED IN FIGHT. MAYBE WE SHOULD CHANGE THAT MODEL AND INSTEAD BE MORE PROACTIVE AND GO OUT THERE AND CONDUCT BOOT CAMPS. GO OUT THERE AND CONDUCT SYMPOSIUMS LIKE ONCE A YEAR WHERE WE BRING ALL THE VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS THAT CAN PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO VETERANS AND YOU KNOW SO RIGHT NOW AN EVENT LIKE THAT COULD RUN AS MUCH AS \$10,000 FOR A THREE-DAY EVENT TO DO THAT AND RIGHT NOW THAT'S BEING DONE THROUGH FUNDRAISERS. MAYBE WE SHOULD TAKE A LOOK AT A MODEL WHERE THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE USES SOME OF ITS BUDGETS TO PAY FOR THAT SYMPOSIUM. USES SOME OF ITS BUDGETS TO GO OUT AND CONDUCT BOOT CAMPS OR COLLABORATE WITH THE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE DOING IT. SO THAT THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN DOING IT FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS ARE NOT HAVING TO SPEND THE TIME TO RAISE FUNDS BUT CAN THEN DEDICATE REALLY THEIR EXPERTISE IN ASSISTING VETERANS TO EMPOWER THEM.

SENATOR EULOGIO SHAWN GUMATAOTAO YEAH. AND WITH THAT SAID. MADAM CHAIR, THAT'S WHAT, RUNNING OUT OF TIME, BUT I WANTED TO AT LEAST OFFER THAT AND I WOULD BE HAPPY TO OFFER UP ANY RECOMMENDATIONS. I THINK THAT BUT BY DOING SO, IT WILL KIND OF LOOK

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AT THE COMMENTS MADE BY FORMER SENATOR ADA TO ADDRESS MAYBE THE CONCERNS OF THE CURRENT GOVA. AND I THINK MOVING FORWARD I DON'T WANT TO MAKE THIS TOO CUMBERSOME BUT I THINK THAT BY PUTTING IT BACK IN JUST AND VERY SIMPLY WE CAN ALMOST MODERNIZE IT LIKE WE JUST DID JUST SEVERAL SESSIONS AGO WITH ANOTHER COMMISSION IN THE GOVERNMENT. THANK YOU MADAM CHAIR FOR THE TIME.

SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE-CHAIRPERSON OF HEALTH AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

THANK YOU SENATOR GUMATAOTAO. WE DO HAVE ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC WHO WOULD LIKE TO PROVIDE TESTIMONY. MR. TORRES, IF YOU COULD PLEASE SPEAK CLEARLY INTO THE MICROPHONE, STATE YOUR NAME AND IF YOU'RE PART OF ANY ORGANIZATION.

ENRIQUE TORRES YES. HI MADAM CHAIR AGAIN THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE. A LOT OF VETERANS WE GET THE ACCOLADES TOO FROM OUR COMMUNITY. THANK YOU FOR OUR SERVICE. AND I'M HERE AS A VETERAN MYSELF WHO JUST GOT HIS CLAIM PROCESSED AND I DO HAVE AN AWARD NOW AND I JUST CAME BACK FROM MY, I WAS HERE EARLIER JUST WENT BACK WENT TO MY APPOINTMENT AND THE SERVICE PROVIDER SAID HE GETS 50% OF HIS CUSTOMERS FROM VETERANS AS WELL AS LOCAL RESIDENTS. SO, AS SENATOR TOM ADA SAID, THE VETERANS AND THEIR BENEFITS, TAX-FREE BENEFITS OR COMPENSATION FOR DISABILITY IS MAKING AN IMPACT IN THE ECONOMY TODAY. AND YOUR BILL HERE WILL HELP MOVE ALL SERVICES FORWARD THAT THE VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES NEED. I'LL GO A LITTLE BIT FURTHER WITH BEING IN THE MILITARY, WE ALWAYS HAD REGULATIONS AND POLICIES OURSELVES. AND THIS IS NOT, IT'S NOT A HARD TASK TO DEVELOP REGULATIONS AND POLICIES FOR ANY ORGANIZATION. YOU JUST GOT TO VET IT AND MAKE IT USEFUL. REINVENT, RELOOK, AND REFINE YOUR POLICIES. SO THAT'S WHAT I BELIEVE YOUR BILL IS FOR. AND I THINK EARLIER I HEARD ABOUT COMMUNICATIONS. COMMUNICATIONS IS EFFECTIVE WHEN UTILIZED PROPERLY. IT WAS THE MILITARY THAT MADE THE INTERNET POSSIBLE. SO WHY NOT USE THE HANDS, THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERNET THROUGH WEB PAGES THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA AND I'LL SAY THIS AND THIS IS MY LAST COMMENT. AI IS HERE. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS HERE AND WE NEED TO HARNESS THAT ESPECIALLY IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE RESOURCES. I PREDICT THAT AI CAN HAVE YOUR COMMISSION AND ITS MEMBERS DEVELOP POLICIES AND PUSH IT OUT TO GET VETTED AND THEN USE AI TO GO SEEK THE USERS, THE NEEDED USERS. I ENVISION A WORLD OF ME, A VETERAN WHO SEE THE SERVICES IN MY METAVERSE AND MY COMMUNITY AND I WILL BE WELL INFORMED OF THE CHANGES THAT ANY ORGANIZATION THAT WANTS TO HELP ME PUSH ALONG. YES, WE ARE HERE. WE ARE YOUR SERVANTS AS WELL AS WE WENT OUT TO PROTECT AND OUR FREEDOMS. WE ARE HERE. WE ARE BACK HERE. WE ARE BACK HOME AND WE APPRECIATE ALL THAT YOU CAN HELP US WITH. THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE-CHAIRPERSON OF HEALTH AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

THANK YOU, MR. TORRES. SENATOR TERLAJE.

SENATOR THERESE TERLAJE SI YU'OS MA'ASE, MADAM CHAIR, THANK YOU ALL FOR BEING HERE AND FOR YOUR TESTIMONY. I THINK IT'S VERY IMPORTANT AND FOR YOUR WORK ON THE BILL, THOSE WHO WORKED ON THE BILL AND FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN WORKING FOR YEARS AND YEARS AND YEARS FOR OUR COMMUNITY. JUST A COUPLE THINGS I AGREE WITH SENATOR ADA'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS TO THE BILL. SO I WOULD SUPPORT THOSE. I JUST WANT TO CLARIFY I GUESS SOME OF THE PREMISES THAT ARE UNDERLYING SOME OF THESE THINGS. SO, FOR EXAMPLE, THE OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HAS A LONG LIST OF

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DUTIES NOT INCLUDED IN THIS BILL BECAUSE THIS BILL ONLY PICKS AND CHOOSES CERTAIN SECTIONS TO AMEND. THE REST ARE ALL IN PLACE. AND WHEN I LOOK AT IT, IT'S SUCH A HUGE LIST OF THINGS THAT THE OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS IS SUPPOSED TO DO OR MANDATED TO DO. AND IF THAT WAS JUST ORGANIZED INTO A REPORTING FORMAT AND REPORTED AS TO WHAT YOU'RE MANDATED TO DO, WHAT LIMITATIONS YOU HAVE BY LAW, AND THEN KIND OF HOW MANY OF THOSE YOU'VE ACCOMPLISHED DURING THE QUARTER OR THE MONTH THAT MIGHT TAKE AN HOUR, I THINK. I MEAN, IT'S VERY LONG. IT'S THAT DETAILED, INCLUDING, OF COURSE, SOME OF THESE THINGS THAT THEY'VE TALKED ABOUT, THE PROCESSING OF CLAIMS. YOU'RE ACTUALLY LIMITED TO PROCESSING INITIAL CLAIMS, IT SAYS. AND THEN THERE'S A LIST OF WHICH BENEFITS AND THEN OF COURSE THE REGISTRY AND THEN SOME OF THE OTHER MORE RECENT STATUTES THAT WERE ADDED ON MORE DUTIES FOR YOUR OFFICE AND THE HEALTHCARE ASSISTANCE. ALL OF THESE THINGS. I GUESS I AGREE THAT REPORTING OF WHAT IS THE STATUS OF ALL THESE THINGS, RIGHT? WHAT IS THE STATUS OF YOUR OFFICE'S ABILITY TO ACCOMPLISH THESE THINGS WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL AND I THINK IT JUST KIND OF IT WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL IF THAT'S ORGANIZED INTO A STANDARD REPORTING FORM BASED ON CHANGING LAWS. WHENEVER IT CHANGES, YOU CHANGE, YOU KNOW, YOUR REPORT FORM SO THAT IT'S GOING TO INCLUDE THAT ALSO OR NOT. AND THEN THEY HAVE AN IDEA OF WHAT YOU'RE DOING AND THEY MIGHT SEE THAT YOU NEED A PLAN TO GO FORWARD AS TO WHICH ONES YOU'RE ACTUALLY GOING TO ACCOMPLISH IN EACH FISCAL YEAR BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW DEPENDING ON YOUR FUNDING IF THAT'S EVEN POSSIBLE RIGHT NOW. AND THEN THAT BRINGS ME TO MY OTHER POINT. SO A LOT OF THIS BILL IS THE CREATION, THE COMPOSITION OF THE COMMISSION. AND I HAVE NO PROBLEM EXCEPT THAT SO THE VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS THAT APPOINT OR PICK MEMBER AMONG THEIR ORGANIZATION TO SERVE ON THIS COMMISSION THAT NOW HAS TO BE APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR. THAT'S DIFFERENT THAN CURRENT. I FIND THAT PERSONALLY, I HEARD SENATOR ADDA'S REASON SAYING THAT WAY THEY'LL BE FAMILIAR WITH THE GOVERNOR. THE GOVERNOR WOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH WHO'S SERVING ON THE COMMISSION. BUT I REALLY THINK FIRST AND FOREMOST IT SHOULD BE WHO CAN REPRESENT YOUR ORGANIZATION THE BEST. BUT THIS IS YOUR RECOMMENDATION. SO THAT'S WHAT WE'RE GOING TO GO WITH I GUESS. BUT THAT'S MY CONCERN ABOUT THAT. LIKE WHY WOULD ANY OF US DICTATE WHO FROM YOUR ORGANIZATION WOULD WANT SHOULD SERVE SHOULD REPRESENT YOUR ORGANIZATION? RIGHT. AND THEN AND THEN THE BIGGEST PART HERE IS WE'RE CHANGING WHAT'S SUPPOSED TO BE CURRENTLY A CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE OF THE OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO AN UNCLASSIFIED HEAD OF THE OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND MAYBE YOU WHOEVER WANTS SENATOR ADA, CAN YOU JUST REITERATE WHY DO WE WANT TO CHANGE THEM TO UNCLASSIFIED? CLASSIFIED WAS SUPPOSED TO PROTECT THEM FROM POLITICAL INFLUENCE. THEY CAN'T BE FIRED IF THEY DON'T GO AGAINST. AND RIGHT NOW, YOU'RE GOING TO BE PITTED. YOU'RE BEING DIRECTED BY A GOVERNOR. YOU'RE ALSO BEING DIRECTED BY A COMMISSION. RIGHT NOW, THIS THIS LAW SAYS A COMMISSION WILL DIRECT YOU. YOU MUST DO THAT. AND I THINK CLASSIFIED WHEN THEY DO THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE PROTECTING FROM YOU KNOW REVOLVING THESE PE POSITIONS BEING REVOLVED EVERY FOUR YEARS OR SO THAT WE GET SOMEBODY TO SERVE FOR A LONG TIME THAT THEY'RE NOT SUBJECT TO POLITICAL INFLUENCE BUT THEY DID SERVE AT THE DIRECTION OF THE GOVERNOR AND THAT KEPT THEM IN VERY CLOSE. THAT'S WHO YOU REPORT TO, NO ONE ELSE. SO THE VETERANS CONCERN SHOULD GO DIRECTLY TO GOVERNOR. THERE'S NO INTERIM, THERE'S NO INTERMEDIARY. THEY SHOULD BE ADDRESSED IMMEDIATELY. I THINK THAT

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WAS THE UNDERLYING PURPOSE. BUT SENATOR ADA, IF YOU COULD JUST CLARIFY, WHY DO YOU WANT UNCLASSIFIED VERSUS CLASSIFIED?

TOM ADA SO SENATOR, FOR THE LONGEST TIME, INITIALLY THE DIRECTOR FOR THE OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS WAS A CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE. AND WHEN YOU TAKE A LOOK AT THE PAY SCALE FOR THAT POSITION, IT WAS REALLY VERY LOW. NOW THE CHANGE WAS PROPOSED TO REALLY REFLECT THE REALITY OF WHAT HAS BEEN TAKING PLACE OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS. YOU HAD BASICALLY YOU HAD SPECIAL ASSISTANTS FROM THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE WHO WERE SENT DOWN THERE AND YOU HAD THE LIKES OF FORMER JUDGE JOHN UNPINGCO, KIM AGUON WHO'S A RETIRED CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT FROM THE AIR FORCE YOU KNOW I DON'T KNOW THAT WE COULD HAVE GOTTEN DIRECTOR SAN AGUSTIN

SENATOR THERESE TERLAJE HE'S THERE BEFORE YES.

TOM ADA WELL HE'S THERE NOW.

SENATOR THERESE TERLAJE BUT HE WAS ALSO THERE BEFORE

TOM ADA OKAY BUT I DON'T KNOW THAT WE WOULD HAVE GOTTEN HIM AT THAT CLASSIFIED PAY SCALE. SO IT'S KIND OF, I DON'T KNOW. YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR. AND AT THAT AND WE WOULD WANT TO PUT SOMEBODY IN THERE WHO'S HAD SOME LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE, MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE. AND I AND I BELIEVE, YOU KNOW, AN UNCLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE, THEN YOU CAN BASICALLY CHERRY-PICK AND PUT THOSE THAT KIND OF TALENT IN THERE. SO, THAT WAS REALLY WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING OVER THE PAST SEVERAL ADMINISTRATIONS. THEY'VE PUT IN THE, HECK, WE HAVE A HARD ENOUGH TIME EVEN HIRING CEMETERY WORKERS, MUCH LESS, YOU KNOW, DIRECTOR FOR OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

SENATOR THERESE TERLAJE ALL RIGHT. THANK YOU. ANYONE ELSE WANT TO WEIGH IN ON THIS CLASSIFIED VERSUS UNCLASSIFIED? YES, MR. SAN AGUSTIN.

JOSE SAN AGUSTIN YOU KNOW, SENATORS, TOMADA, THANK YOU FOR THAT INPUT. LET ME TRY TO MAKE SURE I GET MY THOUGHTS TOGETHER. SO JOHN UNPINGCO WAS SUPPOSEDLY A RETIRED LIEUTENANT COLONEL AS A JOT ADVOCATE IN THE US AIR FORCE. A STELLAR LEADER THAT RAN THE OFFICE BEFORE MR. FORGOT HIS NAME MANGLONA THAT WAS THERE FOR SIX MONTHS AND THEN THEN I TOOK OVER. SO THE CLASSIFIED VERSUS THE UNCLASSIFIED IS, THE CLASSIFIED WHEN THEY'RE NOT DOING THEIR JOB, YOU HAVE TO COUNSEL THEM AT LEAST THREE TIMES TO MAKE CORRECTIVE ACTION BEFORE YOU RID OF THEM. A NON-CLASSIFIED WHICH IS IN MY CASE WHO WAS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR OF GUAM WHO THE GOVERNOR OF GUAM WAS VOTED BY THE PEOPLE OF GUAM WHO THE GOVERNOR OF GUAM SHOULD HAVE CLEAR VISIBILITY WITH AN ENTRUSTED PERSON THE SAME WITH THE BODY OF THE COMMISSION THAT THIS BODY, NO IT'S NOT SHOW, THIS BODY AS A COMMISSION AND AS A DIRECTOR OF THE GUAM OFFICE OF VETERAN AFFAIRS COULD ONLY BE AS GOOD AS THE INFORMATION THAT THEY CONVEY TO THE GOVERNOR. WE COULD ONLY BE AS GOOD AS WE CONVEY TO THE GOVERNOR. AND LIKE I MENTIONED TO YOU ALL, WE STRUGGLE TO DO THAT. I'LL DO THIS JOB FOR FREE. JUST PUT IT IN LAW AND I'LL DO IT FOR FREE. HOWEVER, IN THE INTEREST OF LAW AND IN THE INTEREST OF PROVIDING SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY, WE HAVE TO RESPECT THE LEADER OF THE LAND THAT WAS VOTED AND DECIDED THAT THIS PERSON THROUGH THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE VETERANS ORGANIZATION LEADERSHIP THAT THIS PERSON WILL BE APPOINTED TO RUN THE AGENCY. I DON'T

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NEED THIS JOB. I WANT THE JOB. AND EVEN IF I HAVE TO DO IT FOR FREE, PUT IT ON RECORD. BUT WITH THAT SAID, IF IT WAS A CLASSIFIED PERSON, WOULD THAT CLASSIFIED PERSON REALLY HAVE THE FULL INTEREST TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY? OR WOULD IT BE ONE OF THOSE? WELL, IT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR GOVERNMENT OF GUAM BECAUSE IT'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME. HOPE THAT MAKES SENSE, MR. SANTIAGO.

SENATOR THERESE TERLAJE ALL RIGHT. THIS I BELIEVE JUST LEAVES IT OPEN TO SOME OF THE ISSUES WE'RE HAVING WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND THAT IS LIKE REVOLVING DIRECTORS AND THAT'S ONE CONCERN I HAVE THAT I DON'T WANT TO SEE. AND WE HAD THE PUBLIC AUDITOR IN HERE YESTERDAY OR THE OTHER DAY FOR TWO BILLS AT LEAST TALKING TO US ABOUT WHY ARE WE PUTTING THESE PEOPLE TO BE UNCLASSIFIED WHEN OUR ORGANIC ACT DEMANDS CLASSIFIED AND THAT THOSE ARE FOR PROTECTIONS FROM OTHER INFLUENCE. IS THERE IN YOUR RESEARCH OR EXPERIENCE QUALIFICATIONS FOR THIS POSITION? LIKE DO THEY HAVE THAT IN WRITING ANYWHERE?

JOSE SAN AGUSTIN NO. SO NO. SO WHAT HAPPENS IS DOA HAS TO PUT OUT THAT ANNOUNCEMENT TO ALLOW APPLICANTS TO COME IN AND APPLY FOR THE JOB AND LIKE MR. TOM ADA MENTIONED EARLIER IN THE PAST AND YOU KNOW WHEN I'VE TAKEN OVER IN 17 AND 18 THE SAME THING THAT I FOUND OUT PEOPLE DON'T WANT THE JOB BECAUSE OF THE LOW SALARY.

SENATOR THERESE TERLAJE ALL RIGHT. SO FOR THE HEAD THEY'VE PUT YOU THERE IS A QUALIFICATION SET AT DOA FOR THE HEAD OF THIS AGENCY.

JOSE SAN AGUSTIN YEAH. AND JUST TO LET YOU KNOW BEFORE MR. UNPINGCO.

SENATOR THERESE TERLAJE IT WAS CLASSIFIED.

JOSE SAN AGUSTIN NO. I DON'T THINK THE PERSON WAS A QUAL, WAS CLASSIFIED BUT THE PERSON WAS NOT EVEN A VETERAN.

SENATOR THERESE TERLAJE RIGHT. I'M ASKING YOU DOES DOE HAVE QUALIFICATIONS? HAVE YOU WORKED ON ANY QUALIFICATIONS FOR THIS POSITION? ARE THERE ANY THAT EXIST? NONE.

JOSE SAN AGUSTIN SENATOR, YOU KNOW, SO THE WAY I SEE IT IS AS LONG AS I'M THERE, I THINK DOING THE WORK THAT IS EXPECTED OF THE PEOPLE, RIGHT, AND IS EXPECTED OF ME FROM THE GOVERNOR. I JUST TAKE MY MARCHING ORDER AND MOVE FORWARD.

SENATOR THERESE TERLAJE ALL RIGHT. OKAY.

JOSE SAN AGUSTIN WELL, SO CAN I JUST TAKE THE TOPIC? I WANT TO GO BACK A LITTLE BIT AND I APOLOGIZE BECAUSE THEY DID BRING UP EARLIER ABOUT THIS BOOT CAMP. OKAY, THE BOOT CAMPS ARE GOOD. NO DOUBT ABOUT IT. BUT WHENEVER IT BECOMES SITTING WITH THE COACH, THAT'S WHEN IT BECOMES A PROBLEM. WHEN WE ARE SITTING DOWN WITH THE APPLICANT OR THE CLIENT OR THE VETERAN AND ASSISTING THEM WITH THEIR CLAIM THAT INVOLVES PERSONAL SENSITIVE INFORMATION. THE ONLY INDIVIDUALS OR PERSONNELS THAT ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE THAT HELP ARE VETERAN SERVICE REPS THAT ARE ACCREDITED AND THERE'S FIVE OF THEM ON ISLAND, ACTUALLY SIX. SO WE WANT TO MAKE THAT CLEAR. WHILE THE ORGANIZATION IS DOING A LOT OF GOOD STUFF, WE JUST WANT TO CAUTION THEM. AND

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AGAIN, THERE'S A LAW OUT THERE THAT WE'RE WAITING FOR THE FEDS TO VOTE FOR TO ENSURE THAT PEOPLE THAT ARE IN VIOLATION OF PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO A VETERAN WITH THE EXPOSURE OF ALL THESE SENSITIVE INFORMATION TO BE LET KNOWN THAT THERE TRULY ARE IN VIOLATION OF LAW. OKAY? AND I WANT TO SAY THIS BECAUSE GUYS, WHILE WE WANT TO DO THE GOOD THING, WE WANT TO MAKE SURE TOO THAT, YOU KNOW, WE DON'T GO UP AND DO AN APPEAL FOR A VETERAN BECAUSE HE OR SHE WAS HELPED BY SOMEONE WHO'S NOT ACCREDITED AND NOW THEY'RE TAKING THEIR COMPENSATION BACK AFTER 10 YEARS. SO, IF I COULD KINDLY ASK EVERYONE THAT'S HELPING A VETERAN OUT THERE TO MAKE SURE THAT WE CAUTION, WE SHOW THEM WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE, WHERE TO GO, AND ALL THIS GOOD STUFF. BUT WHEN WE SIT DOWN AND SAY, "THIS IS HOW MUCH WE'RE GETTING, AND THIS IS HOW MUCH THEY'VE BEEN RECEIVING" IT TELLS ME THAT THEY HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO THAT INFORMATION THAT THEY'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE EXPOSED TO. THAT'S ALL I HAVE. THANK YOU.

SENATOR THERESE TERLAJE THANK YOU. HAS YOUR OFFICE EVER PROMULGATED RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THERE'S TWO THINGS YOU'RE AUTHORIZED TO DO IN YOUR IN-OFFICE OPERATIONS AND IN THE HEALTH MEDICARE ASSIST MEDICAL ASSISTANCE. ARE THERE ANY RULES AND REGULATIONS?

JOSE SAN AGUSTIN ARE WE TALKING ABOUT THE BILL?

SENATOR THERESE TERLAJE YES. WELL, YES. SO, YOU ARE AUTHORIZED TO CREATE RULES AND REGULATIONS BECAUSE THEY'VE TALKED ABOUT BYLAWS. SO THAT'S WHY I WANT TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THAT. LIKE IF YOU HAVE RULES AND REGULATIONS, THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE PROMULGATED BY THE AAA ACT THAT GIVES A PUBLIC HEARING. EVERYBODY WILL KNOW WHAT YOUR RULES ARE GOING TO BE AND PERHAPS WHO GETS, YOU KNOW, TAKEN CARE OF FIRST. I DON'T KNOW WHAT BUT ALL OF THAT SUPPOSED TO. YEAH, YOU CAN DO RULES AND REGS. SO THAT'S ANOTHER THING FOR THE COMMISSION TO CONSIDER IS THAT THE RULES AND REGS AS OPPOSED TO BY-LAWS OF YOUR COMMISSION. YOU MIGHT NEED MAYBE WE SHOULD PUT IN HERE AUTHORITY FOR THE COMMISSION ITSELF TO ADOPT RULES AND REGS OF COURSE I THINK THEY SHOULD MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS AS TO THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THIS OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATIVE HEAD YOU'RE GOING TO GIVE YOUR ADVICE IN THE END. I DON'T KNOW. AND THEN OF COURSE, I'M JUST VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE REST OF THE GOALS. I COMPLETELY AGREE. I'M JUST CONCERNED ABOUT AN ORGANIZATION'S CHOICE BEING REJECTED OR VETOED.

TOM ADA-VETERANS COMMISSION MEMBER SENATOR, IF I CAN JUST SPEAK A LITTLE BIT TO THAT. I THINK PART OF THE PROBLEM FUNDAMENTALLY IS THAT YOU HAVE THE OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, YOU HAVE THE COMMISSION, AND THEN OF COURSE THERE'S THE GOVERNOR AND THE AND THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE IS AN ENTITY WITHIN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE. AND ALL THREE ARE DISCONNECTED, RIGHT? SO GRANTED, THE DIRECTOR FOR THE OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ANSWERS TO THE GOVERNOR. AS IT IS RIGHT NOW THE VETERANS COMMISSION REALLY IS NOT AT ALL CONNECTED TO THE OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS. I MEAN THEY CAN SIT THERE AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ALL DAY LONG AND AS THEY SAY IN THE MILITARY YOU CAN YOU KNOW EXPECT TO GET THE RESPONSE OF YES SIR YES SIR TWO BAGS FULL. AND WE GOT TO GET THAT CONNECTED SO THAT THEN WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A GOOD RECOMMENDATION COMES UP YOU KNOW AT SOME POINT YOU THAT THAT LOGGER HEAD HAS TO

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BE BROKEN AND THAT'S WHERE I'M SAYING THAT THAT LANGUAGE OF RECEIVE AND CONSIDER CHANGE IT TO RECEIVE AND IMPLEMENT DULY DELIBERATED POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS.

SENATOR THERESE TERLAJE YES, ABSOLUTELY.

TOMADA AND THEN YOU KNOW THAT THE DISCONNECT WITH THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE WITH THE GOVERNOR WHO REALLY HAS THIS OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS WITHIN HER OFFICE DOESN'T REALLY KNOW. SO WHO ARE THESE GUYS THAT ARE YOU KNOW WANTING TO MAKE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AS TO WHAT THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE SHOULD DO? AND I WOULD THINK SHE IF SHE WAS AWARE OF WHO THESE PEOPLE ARE, THEN SHE MAY HAVE A BIT OF MORE CONFIDENCE IN IN YOU KNOW SITTING, TAKING THE TIME TO LISTEN TO THE ADVICE THAT THEY HAVE.

SENATOR THERESE TERLAJE THANK YOU. ANYONE ELSE? OTHERWISE, THANK YOU AGAIN. OKAY.

ROY GAMBOA THANK YOU. SO, SENATOR, JUST FOR CLARIFICATION, THE REASON WHY THE WORD WAS PUT IN THERE AND HE'S UNFORTUNATELY HE'S NOT HERE IS MR. TIM PUZON. THE WORD WAS USED APPROVED IN IN PLACE OF APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR. MR. PUZON HOLDS A FEDERAL POSITION WITHIN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AS I UNDERSTAND IT AND SWEARING TO AN OATH WHATEVER IT WOULD BE A CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR HIS POSITION. AND SO WE CHOSE TO USE THE WORD APPROVED. BUT MAKE NO MISTAKE IT STARTS WITH THE VETERAN COMMISSION ORGANIZATIONS THE MEMBERSHIPS FIRST. SO THE ORGANIZATIONS ARE THE ONES RESPONSIBLE FOR PUTTING THOSE NAMES ON WHO WAS GOING TO BEST REPRESENT MY ORGANIZATION, WHO'S GOING TO BEST REPRESENT THIRD MARINE DIVISION AND SO ON AND SO FORTH. SO THE WAY WE SEE IT IS AS IT STANDS AS IT'S PUSHED FORWARD, WHO IS THE GOVERNOR TO ARGUE WITH WHAT WE WANT TO SEE OR WHO WE WANT TO SEE ON THAT COMMISSION. BUT IT WAS MERELY A WORD CHANGE. AND WHEN YOU LOOK AT EVERYTHING AND YOU PEEL EVERYTHING BACK, A LOT OF IT CAME TO CHANGING ONE WORD AND HOURS AFTER DISCUSSING IT, CHANGING IT FROM RECOMMENDATION TO IMPLEMENT STARTED THIS BIG CHANGE OR REVISION. AND WHAT THE OTHER POINT THAT I WAS GOING TO TRY TO GET TO WAS THE LAW DOESN'T HAVE TO DICTATE EVERY SINGLE THING BECAUSE IF YOU LOOK AT THE WAY THE LAW IS WRITTEN RIGHT NOW, WE'RE SUPPOSED TO HAVE MEETINGS ON THE FIRST TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH OR WHATEVER THE HECK IT WAS AT A SPECIFIC TIME. THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF REQUIRED MEETINGS WOULD BE THE FOUR, RIGHT? BUT THAT ALSO GIVES SOME TIME INDIVIDUAL IN THE IN-BETWEEN MONTHS FOR THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE TO DO RESEARCH, MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS, DEVELOP, WRITE CERTAIN THINGS DOWN, BY-LAWS TO BE RECOMMENDED, CHANGED. SO ESTABLISH A COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE TO SIT THERE, DO THEIR WORK AND ALL THAT STUFF. SO THAT BY THE TIME WE MEET AT THAT QUARTERLY BASIS ALL OF THAT INFORMATION IS THERE AND THERE'S MEAT AND POTATOES AS OPPOSED TO WELL WE TALKED ABOUT THIS LAST MONTH AND WE TALKED ABOUT THIS TWO MONTHS AGO. LIKEWISE THERE IS A HUGE PART THAT WAS IN THE PREVIOUS BILL THAT WAS REMOVED AND THAT WAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS GRIEVANCES. WE'RE LOOKING AT TOWN HALL MEETINGS AS A WAY FOR VETERANS TO BE ABLE TO COME IN HAVE ALL THE MEMBERSHIPS SIT THERE. WE TAKE THE GRIEVANCES AND THEN EACH MEMBER WILL BE THE ONE TO SAY THIS INDIVIDUAL BROUGHT THIS GRIEVANCE TO ME. WE'RE GOING TO BRING IT UP HERE. AS OPPOSED TO SPENDING, YOU KNOW, WE DON'T WANT TO LIMIT INDIVIDUALS TO TWO TO THREE MINUTES TO AIR THEIR GRIEVANCES. WE WANT THEM TO BE ABLE TO VERBALIZE IT AND

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THAT IN MY OPINION CONSTITUTES A WHOLE SEPARATE MEETING OTHER THAN JUST THE COMMISSION MEETING ITSELF. WE HAVE A GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE THAT SITS THERE, RECORDS AGAIN USING AI, USING THE INTERNET. SAME THING WHAT WE THAT WE'VE BEEN DOING. WE HAVEN'T STOPPED FROM USING THE ZOOM RECORDINGS. WE HAVEN'T STOPPED FROM USING THE FACEBOOK PAGE IF THE ZOOM IS NOT AVAILABLE. LOOKING FOR THE COMMUNICATIONS OR THE HISTORY. UNFORTUNATELY, THAT'S WHERE THE ARCHIVES ARE AT RIGHT NOW. SENATOR TOM ADA SHARED WITH US AI TOOLS SO THAT MEETING MINUTES CAN BE EXTRACTED, ALL THE AUDIO CAN BE EXTRACTED AND TURNED INTO MEETING MINUTES. AND THAT'S USUALLY THE SNAP OF A FINGER. A LOT BETTER AND A LOT FASTER THAN HAVING SOMEBODY HAVE TO SIT THERE AND SCRIBE. SO HOPEFULLY THAT SHEDS A LITTLE BIT LIGHT A LITTLE BIT MORE ON SOME OF THE STUFF THAT WE ARE BEHIND THE INTENT OF THE WAY WE HAD DRAFTED THIS BILL. THANK YOU.

SENATOR THERESE TERLAJE I AGREE. BUT EXCEPT THAT THAT'S NOT CORRECT THAT THAT WAS JUST ONE WORD CHANGE WHERE RIGHT NOW ORGANIZATIONS APPOINT WHO'S GOING TO SERVE ON THIS COMMISSION. THIS BILL CHANGES THAT APPOINTMENT MUST BE APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR. THAT'S A BIG CHANGE. SO YEAH.

SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE-CHAIRPERSON OF HEALTH AND VETERANS AFFAIRS
THANK YOU, SENATOR TERLAJE. YEAH, YOU CAN STILL ADDRESS HER QUESTION.

CHARLIE HERMOSA SENATOR, JUST REAL QUICK ON YOUR POINT IN REGARDS TO THE PROGRESS REPORT AND HOW LENGTHY IT COULD BE. THE ONLY THING THAT I WOULD SAY IS MY POINT WAS THAT WE NEED TO HAVE A MECHANISM IF WE ARE GOING TO BE QUARTERLY SO THAT YOU CAN SEE EXACTLY WHAT THE PROGRESS IS. THE REASON WHY I BROUGHT THAT UP IS BECAUSE RIGHT NOW EVEN WITH THE CURRENT COMMISSION THEY DON'T HAVE A GOOD TRACK RECORD. SO YOU NEED TO MAKE SURE THAT EVERY SO THAT THE MECHANISM HAS TO BE THERE WITHIN 6 MONTHS. IF NOTHING IS GETTING DONE, THERE HAS TO BE SOMETHING THERE HAS TO BE ACTION TAKEN PLACE. WE CAN'T JUST WAIT ANOTHER YEAR AND THERE'S NOTHING HAPPENING.

SENATOR THERESE TERLAJE I THINK I AGREE. I THINK IF THE COMMISSION SEES THE LIST AND LIKE ALL THE THINGS THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE DOING AND WHAT THE REPORT SAYS KIND OF LIKE WE DIDN'T GET TO THIS OR WHATEVER, WE'RE THIS IS MINIMAL PROGRESS. IT'S GOING TO BE VERY VERY CLEAR TO THE COMMISSION. AND IT SHOULD BE CLEAR RIGHT NOW THAT THEY NEED A PLAN LIKE WHICH ONES ARE WE GOING TO PRIORITIZE AND THAT'S HOW THEY ADVISE WHICH ONES DO YOU PRIORITIZE FOR THIS FISCAL YEAR FOR THIS TIME IN OUR HISTORY WHICH ONES DO WE PRIORITIZE AND THEN ALL THOSE REPORTS WILL BE TRANSPARENT SO EVERYBODY CAN BE ACCOUNTABLE AND EVERYBODY CAN LOOK AND SEE WHAT PRIORITIES THE COMMISSION SET IS THAT WHAT THEY'RE DOING OR NOT. I I THINK IT WOULD WORK, BUT IT JUST NEEDS A LITTLE BIT MORE TIGHT. YEAH. LIKE A REPORTING SYSTEM AND I AGREE. THANK YOU.

SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE-CHAIRPERSON OF HEALTH AND VETERANS AFFAIRS
THANK YOU, SENATOR TERLAJE. MR. HERMOSA, I DON'T BELIEVE YOU WERE HERE EARLIER BECAUSE THE COMMISSION DID SPEAK ON THESE QUARTERLY REPORTS. MR. GAMBOA OR MR. SANTIAGO, DID YOU WANT TO CLARIFY SOME OF OR ADDRESS SOME OF THE CONCERNS THAT WERE RAISED BY MR. HERMOSA REGARDING THESE QUARTERLY REPORTS AND ANYTHING ELSE.

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VINCE SANTIAGO THANK YOU SENATOR. SO WITH REGARDS TO QUARTERLY REPORTS, SO THE MEETINGS WENT FROM MONTH TO QUARTERLY, RIGHT? AND TO GO BACK TO WHAT ROY SAID. SO WHAT JUST MY TIME ATTENDING THE MEETINGS, THE FIRST TWO TIMES ALL I SAW WAS JUST A LOT OF BICKERING WITH NO ACTION. WITH THE CURRENT COMMISSION EXACTLY WHAT SENATOR TERLAJE SAID WAS COME UP WITH A PLAN RIGHT IN THE MILITARY WE CALL A POAM A PLAN OF ACTION AND MILESTONES RIGHT IN ORDER TO MEET THAT END STATE WITH A TIMELINE BECAUSE WITH, RIGHT, WE CAN HAVE AN OPINION WE CAN HAVE A RECOMMENDATION BUT IF YOU DON'T PUT AN END DATE ON THERE IT'S JUST A DREAM. SO THAT'S WHAT THIS COMMISSION IS GOING AFTER AGAIN I GO BACK TO MOVING FROM GOOD TO GREAT IN ORDER FOR US TO GET TO GREAT FIRST WE GOT IDENTIFY WITH THE FLAWS AND THE GAPS AND SEAMS WITHIN OUR OWN VETERAN COMMISSION AND THEN WE GET AFTER IT. NOW, IS TIME ON OUR SIDE? NO, IT'S NOT AND WE RECOGNIZE THAT. BUT THIS BILL WAS THE FIRST TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY, MORE IMPORTANTLY RESPONSIBILITY FOR US TO ADDRESS. NOW, WE QUICKLY PIVOT TO WHAT WE ARE SUPPOSED TO BE DOING AS A COMMISSION, RIGHT? AND THEN MOVE OUT SO THAT WAY WE CAN MAKE IT TRANSPARENT TO ALL THE VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES MORE IMPORTANTLY TO YOU ALL, RIGHT, TO RENDER THAT AID SO WHERE WE'RE NOT STRUGGLING RIGHT TO USE THE WORDS OF OUR DIRECTOR OF GOVA RIGHT SO HE'S NOT STRUGGLING BUT I CAN TELL YOU THAT THERE'S A LOT OF US AT THIS TABLE AND A LOT OF US WHO ARE NOT HERE WHO ARE HELPING HIM OUT RIGHT AND WE'RE NOT LOOKING FOR PATS ON THE BACK WE'RE JUST AT THE END STATE AND THE END STATE AND I'LL AND I'LL SAY WHAT TIM PUZON SAID IN ONE OF OUR MEETINGS IS TAKING CARE OF THE VETERAN. NOW, HOW WE GET THERE, WE NEED TO EXACTLY WHAT SENATOR TERLAJE SAID AND SENATOR GUMATAOTAO ALWAYS. WE GOT TO STREAMLINE THAT SO THAT WAY WHEN WE DO OUR REPORTS, YOU ALL CAN PIVOT QUICKLY AND HELP US WHEN WE DO NEED THAT HELP. THANK YOU.

SENATOR SABRINA SALAS MATANANE-CHAIRPERSON OF HEALTH AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

WELL, THANK YOU FOR EVERYONE THAT CAME HERE TO TESTIFY ON BILL 192. MOST ESPECIALLY I WANT TO THANK OUR VETERANS WHO TOOK THE TIME TO BE HERE AND SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES. ESPECIALLY WITH WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH, EXCUSE ME, THE VETERANS COMMISSION AND THE GUAM OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS. THERE'S CERTAINLY A LOT OF WORK THAT STILL HAS TO BE DONE. MR. SAN AGUSTIN, I VISITED YOUR OFFICE, VISITED THE VETERAN CEMETERY, AND THERE'S CERTAINLY A LOT THAT WE NEED TO DO WITH REGARDS TO SECURING THIS FEDERAL GRANT OPPORTUNITY. AND LIKE MR. SENATOR ADA SAID, YES, I WAS DISAPPOINTED REGARDING THE PULLBACK OF THAT THAT GRANT OPPORTUNITY IN FEBRUARY. SO, I HOPE THERE IS PROGRESS TO REPORT WHEN WE DISCUSS THAT ISSUE AGAIN BECAUSE I DO PLAN ON HOLDING ANOTHER INFORMATIONAL BRIEFING IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO GET UPDATES ON WHERE YOU ARE WITH MOVING OUT OF ANIGUA. MR. FRANCISCO, I KNOW YOU HAVE BEEN VERY AGGRESSIVE WITH TRYING TO GET THEM INTO THAT OFFICE SPACE IN IN AGANA AND HOPEFULLY IN MY DISCUSSIONS WITH ADELUP AS WELL, WE CAN FIND A HOME FOR THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE. AGAIN, THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR COMING DOWN TODAY. THERE'S STILL MORE WORK THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE ON BILL 192 AND I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH MY COLLEAGUES AS WELL AS ALL OF YOU THAT ARE HERE WITH US AND THOSE THAT ARE JOINING US ONLINE. AGAIN, THAT CONCLUDES THIS PUBLIC HEARING ON BILL 192. THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND VETERANS AFFAIRS HEARING IS NOW ADJOURNED. THE TIME IS 11:14. SI YU'OS MA'ASE.

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The Public Hearing was adjourned at 11:14 AM.

III. Findings and Recommendations

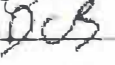
The public hearing on Bill 192-38 as amended by the Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs, held by the Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs, addressed proposed reforms to the Guam Veterans Commission and the Office of Veterans Affairs. The bill, built through broad collaboration with veterans' organizations, aims to strengthen the commission's authority, clarify the appointment and duties of the Veterans Affairs Officer, and update the definition of a veteran under Guam law. Testimony from veterans and commission members highlighted the need for greater accountability, improved communication and knowledge management, and more robust advocacy for veterans' interests. Some supported the bill's efforts to empower the commission and broaden membership, while others raised concerns about changes such as shifting to quarterly meetings, potential board compensation, and the inclusion of ethics training. There was consensus on the necessity to ensure commission members are vetted, that veteran organizations maintain proper nonprofit status, and that more accredited VA representatives are available. The committee's overall finding is that reform is needed to make the commission more effective and responsive; its recommendation is to move forward with Bill 192-38, with additional technical amendments to enhance transparency, accountability, and the commission's ability to serve Guam's veterans.

The Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs hereby reports- out on [Bill No. 192-38 \(COR\)](#) as amended by the Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs— Sabrina Salas Matanane - AN ACT TO AMEND §67100, §67101, §67103, AND §67107 AND TO REPEAL § 67107.1 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER, THE COMPOSITION AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, AND THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN. With the recommendation _____ TO DO PASS _____.

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

Bill No. 192-38 (COR)

Introduced by:

Sabrina Salas Matanane 
Therese M. Terlaje 
William A. Parkinson 
Frank F. Blas, Jr. 
Jesse A. Lujan 
Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao 
V. Anthony Ada 
Christopher M. Duenas 
Shelly V. Calvo 
Tina Rose Muna Barnes 
Vincent A.V. Borja 
Joe S. San Agustin 
Telo T. Taitague 
Chris Barnett 

AN ACT TO AMEND §67100, §67103, AND §67107 AND TO REPEAL § 67107.1 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER, THE COMPOSITION AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, AND THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF GUAM:

Section 1. Legislative Findings and Intent. *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* finds that in 1970 P.L. 10-123 was enacted establishing the Guam Office of Veterans Affairs (GOVA). In 2005, P.L. 28-46 was enacted establishing the Guam Veterans

1 Commission (Commission) to work collaboratively with the GOVA in meeting its
2 mandate to assist Guam's Veterans in the filing of compensation claims for service-
3 connected disabilities and other benefits available to eligible Veterans and their
4 families. The Commission has since evolved to be the Voice of the Veterans
5 community.

6 *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* further finds that GOVA and the Commission must
7 work collaboratively so that the needs voiced by the Veterans community can be
8 duly prioritized and effectively addressed.

9 **Section 2. §67100 of Chapter 67, Title 10, Guam Code Annotated, is**
10 **amended to read as follows:**

11 **§ 67100. Creation of Office.**

12 There is within the Office of *I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan* an Office of
13 Veterans Affairs. The Veterans Affairs Officer is the administrative head of the
14 Office of Veterans Affairs and is a member of the ~~classified~~ unclassified service,
15 appointed by *I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan* and is the administrative head of
16 the Office of Veterans Affairs subject to the with advice of the Guam Veterans
17 Commission. ~~direction and control of *I Maga'hagan/Maga'låhen Guåhan*, who is~~
18 ~~the appointing authority.~~

19 **Section 3. §67103 of Chapter 67, Title 10, Guam Code Annotated is**
20 **amended to read as follows:**

21 **§ 67103. Powers and Duties of Officer.**

22 The Officer:

23 (a) shall administer the Office and implement the provisions set forth in
24 Section 67102 above;

25 (b) shall exercise and discharge the duties of the Office through such
26 organizational units as he may establish;

1 (c) shall enforce the provisions of this Chapter and of any other laws
2 granting him jurisdiction pertaining to veterans of the Armed Forces of the
3 United States;

4 (d) may administer and certify oaths and affirmations, take and certify
5 affidavits and acknowledgments, and exercise any other power of a notary
6 public, but only as part of his duties under this Chapter and neither he nor
7 his office shall charge any fee for such certification or notarial service;

8 (e) may formulate and adopt rules necessary or proper for the internal
9 administration of the Office; and

10 (f) may study and plan for the establishment of a Guam Veterans
11 Cemetery, seeking such assistance, advice and support from the Armed
12 Forces of the United States, the Federal Veterans Administration, other local
13 and Federal agencies, and veterans and veterans organizations.

14 (g) Shall receive and ~~consider~~ execute the policy recommendations of the
15 Guam Veterans Commission to the extent said recommendations are not in
16 contravention to existing law or directives.

17 **Section 4. §67107 of Chapter 67, Title 10, Guam Code**

18 **Annotated is amended to read as follows:**

19 **§ 67107. Guam Veterans Commission.**

20 (a) Commission Membership. There is hereby established a Guam
21 Veterans Commission which *shall*, at a minimum, be composed of a
22 total of ~~nine~~ six approved Veteran organizations whose representatives
23 to the Commission are Veterans members who have been nominated by
24 their respective organizations and approved by *I Maga'hāgan/Maga'lāhen*
25 *Guāhan*. The members ~~to~~ shall include, but not limited to, the following
26 representation:

1 (1) ~~four~~ a members, each of whom *shall* be representative of a
2 veterans or retirees association for each branch of the U.S. Armed
3 Forces to consist of:

4 (A) U.S. Army Retirees ~~(or Veterans)~~ Association;

5 (B) U.S. Marine Corps ~~Air Force~~ Retirees ~~(or Veterans)~~
6 Association;

7 (C) U.S. Navy Retirees ~~(or Veterans)~~ Association;

8 (D) U.S. Air Force ~~Marine Corps~~ Retirees ~~(or Veterans)~~
9 Association;

10 (E) U.S. Space Force

11 (F) U.S. Coast Guard;

12 (2) ~~two~~ a members from the officially chartered Guam chapters of
13 multi-service Veteran Service Organizations to include but not limited
14 to: the American Legion (AL), Military Order of the Purple Heart
15 (MOPH), Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), and the Vietnam Veterans
16 of America (VVA). ~~Organizations to be represented on the Guam~~
17 ~~Veterans Commission, pertaining to this subsection Subsections (1) and~~
18 ~~(2), are required to be duly registered as a non profit organization with~~
19 ~~the Guam Department of Revenue and Taxation, in accordance with~~
20 ~~Title 18 of Guam Code Annotated; and/or is registered as a non profit~~
21 ~~organization within the United States and recognized as exempt under~~
22 ~~IRC 501(c)(19). The organizations shall furnish the Guam Veterans~~
23 ~~Affairs Office (GOVA) with a copy of an official documentation~~
24 ~~reflecting such requirement; and~~

25 (3) Approved Veteran Organizations. Organizations to be
26 represented on the Guam Veterans Commission, pertaining to
27 Subsections (1) and (2), are required to be duly registered as a non-

1 profit organization with the Guam Department of Revenue and
2 Taxation, in accordance with Title 18 of Guam Code Annotated;
3 and/or is registered as a non-profit organization within the United
4 States and recognized as exempt under IRC 501(c)(19), IRC 501 (4),
5 or IRC 501(c)(3). The organizations shall furnish the Guam Veterans
6 Affairs Office (GOVA) a copy of official documentation reflecting
7 their non-profit status, a current certificate of Good Standing, and a
8 copy of the organization's By-Laws. GOVA shall maintain a file of
9 each organization represented on the Commission; and

10 ~~(3) a maximum of three members, whom each shall be a veteran, may~~
11 ~~be appointed from other veteran organizations on Guam, to include the~~
12 ~~Coast Guard. Should a Veteran Service Organization have more than~~
13 ~~one Chapter, each Chapter may recommend a representative to serve as~~
14 ~~a member of the Commission, of which said appointment may be~~
15 ~~authorized to serve as provided herein.~~

16 (4)Ex-Officio Members. With the recommendation of the Guam
17 Veterans Commission, *I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan* may
18 appoint as an ex-officio, non-voting member a veteran of a foreign
19 country who has fought alongside U.S. armed forces members as
20 allies in combat, who is a representative of an established allied
21 veterans organization on Guam which is compliant with
22 §67107(a)(3), and is a resident of who has resided on Guam for a
23 minimum of three years immediately preceding the appointment.
24 Said veteran *shall* serve for a term of three years from the date of
25 appointment.

26 (b) Commission Membership Terms and Conduct of Business.

27 (1)Veteran Organization Nominations. Appointments. The

1 Commander, or designee, of a Veteran Service Organizations *shall*
2 present in writing to the Chairman of the Commission the names of
3 two the individuals, to be transmitted to I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen
4 Guåhan who shall for approval to the Commission to represent their
5 respective veteran organization to serve on the Commission, which
6 *shall* be subject to the aforementioned provisions ~~above~~. The
7 nominating Organization shall designate each nominee as the Primary
8 and Alternate representative, respectively.

9 (2) Terms of Commission Representatives Members. Every
10 representative member of to the Commission shall serve for a term of
11 three years, to commence on the date of appointment approval by the
12 Governor.

13 (A) Should the approved primary Commission representative
14 terminate his/her term prior to the conclusion of the three years,
15 the approved Alternate shall assume the Primary representative
16 position. In the event both approved representatives terminate,
17 the nominating Veteran Service Organization *shall* ~~appoint~~
18 nominate a successor to serve for a new the balance of the three
19 year term, which *shall* commence upon the date of appointment
20 approval by the Governor.

21 (B) Said ~~appointment~~ nomination shall be in writing and
22 presented to the Chairman of the Guam Veterans Commission
23 for transmittal to I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan, with a copy
24 to be furnished to the Veterans Affairs Officer of the Office of
25 Veterans Affairs.

26 (3) Quorum Requirements. The presence of fifty percent (50%)
27 plus one of the appointed primary or alternate members shall be

1 ~~required to establish quorum. For purposes of a quorum and for the~~
2 ~~official conduct of business, a minimum of five voting members on~~
3 ~~the Commission shall constitute a quorum.~~ For the official conduct of
4 business, a majority of the members present, following the
5 constituting of a quorum, *shall* be required to conduct official
6 business.

7 (4) ~~Scheduled Meetings.~~ The Commission *shall* meet at least once
8 every quarter. However, nothing herein prevents the convening of
9 additional meetings to deliberate on emergent issues. ~~monthly and~~
10 ~~shall advise the Veterans Affairs Officer regarding matters affecting~~
11 ~~Veterans and related issues.~~ Said meeting times, place and dates *shall*
12 ~~be decided to allow the greatest level of participation and attendance~~
13 ~~by Commission members.~~

14 (5) Conduct of meetings. The Commission shall conduct its
15 meetings in accordance with the Open Government Law, 5GCA
16 Ch 8.

17 (6) Use of Video Teleconferencing. Commission members may
18 participate in regular meetings via video teleconferencing and in
19 accordance with 5GCA Ch 43 § 43121. Participation of a member
20 via teleconferencing may be counted towards quorum
21 requirements. The Commission shall broadcast regular meetings
22 in accordance with 5GCA Ch 43 § 43122.

23 (7) Removal from Commission for Unexcused Absences. The
24 unexcused absences of a member from three (3) consecutive
25 regular meetings of the Commission shall constitute a cause for
26 removal of the member from the Commission. *I*
27 Maga'hāgan/Maga'lāhen Guāhan may thereupon remove the

1 member from the Commission. The determination of whether a
2 member's absence is excused or unexcused shall be made by the
3 Commission.

4 ~~(8)(5)~~ Veteran Community Participation. The Commission *shall*
5 provide veterans and their families ~~with~~ the opportunity to ~~air~~
6 present grievances and concerns for the purpose of effecting
7 corrective action or change to existing policies that affect the
8 delivery of benefits and services to the Guam's Veteran
9 population.

10 ~~(9)(6)~~ Administrative Support. The Guam Veterans Office (VAO)
11 through the direction of the ~~VAO Administrator~~ Veterans Affairs
12 Officer, shall provide administrative support to the Guam Veterans
13 Commission in the conduct of its meetings.

14 ~~(10)~~ ~~(7) Commission Activities. Upon official written request~~
15 ~~by the Chairman of the Commission for information or action by~~
16 ~~the VAO Administrator on issues affecting the Commission or~~
17 ~~Veterans, the VAO Administrator shall provide a written timely~~
18 ~~response to the Commission within four weeks by the next regularly~~
19 ~~scheduled Commission meeting, or sooner from the date of receipt~~
20 ~~of such communication. Should the VAO Administrator require~~
21 ~~additional time to provide a sufficient response to the matter, the~~
22 ~~VAO shall request in writing a time extension, not to exceed an~~
23 ~~additional four weeks, and further provide justification for the need~~
24 ~~for such time extension in said written communication. Such~~
25 ~~request shall be granted upon receipt by the Chairman of the~~
26 Commission. Ethics Training. Commission representatives shall
27 complete an ethics training within six months from the date of

1 approval.

2 **Section 5.** § 67107.1 of Chapter 67, Guam Code Annotated, is
3 hereby repealed in its entirety

4 ~~§ 67107.1. New Membership Process.~~

5 ~~The process for new membership to the Guam Veterans~~
6 ~~Commission is as follows:~~

7 ~~(a) The Guam Veterans Affairs Office shall receive new~~
8 ~~membership requests and submit same~~
9 ~~to the Chairman of the Guam Veterans Commission.~~

10 ~~(b) The Veterans Commission shall review the new~~
11 ~~membership request and forward its~~
12 ~~recommendation to I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan for~~
13 ~~appropriate action.~~

14 **Section 6. Severability.** If any provision of this Act or its application to any
15 person or circumstance is found to be invalid or inorganic, such invalidity shall not
16 affect other provisions or applications of this Act that can be given effect without
17 the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this Act are
18 severable.

19 **Section 7. Effective Date.** This Act shall be effective upon enactment.

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

Bill No. 192-38 (COR)

As amended by the Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs

Introduced by:

Sabrina Salas Matanane
Therese M. Terlaje
Willliam A. Parkinson
Frank F. Blas, Jr
Jesse A. Lujan
Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao
V. Anthony Ada
Christopher M. Duenas
Shelly V. Calvo
Tina Rose Muna Barnes
Vincent A.V. Borja
Joe S. San Agustin
Telo T. Taitague
Chris Barnett

**AN ACT TO AMEND §67100, §67101, §67103, AND §67107
AND TO REPEAL § 67107.1 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10,
GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO THE
APPOINTMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS
OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE GUAM VETERANS
COMMISSION, THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE
VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER, THE COMPOSITION
AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUAM VETERANS
COMMISSION, AND THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN.**

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF GUAM:

Section 1. Legislative Findings and Intent. *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* finds
that in 1970 P.L. 10-123 was enacted establishing the Guam Office of Veterans
Affairs (GOVA). In 2005, P.L. 28-46 was enacted establishing the Guam Veterans

Commission (Commission) to work collaboratively with the GOVA in meeting its mandate to assist Guam's Veterans in the filing of compensation claims for service-connected disabilities and other benefits available to eligible Veterans and their families. The Commission has since evolved to be the Voice of the Veterans community.

I Liheslaturan Guåhan further finds that GOVA and the Commission must work collaboratively so that the needs voiced by the Veterans community can be duly prioritized and effectively addressed.

Section 2. §67100 of Chapter 67, Title 10, Guam Code Annotated, is amended to read as follows:

§ 67100. Creation of Office.

There is within the Office of *I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan* an Office of Veterans Affairs. The Veterans Affairs Officer is the administrative head of the Office of Veterans Affairs and is a member of the ~~classified~~ unclassified service, appointed by *I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan* and is the administrative head of the Office of Veterans Affairs subject to the with advice of the Guam Veterans Commission. ~~direction and control of *I Maga'hagan/Maga'låhen Guåhan*, who is the appointing authority.~~

Section 3. §67101 (c) of Chapter 67, Title 10, Guam Code Annotated is amended to read as follows:

(c) A veteran means a person who served in the active military, naval, air service to include and was discharged or released there from under conditions other than dishonorable. Veteran included veterans of the Guam Combat Patrol, the United States Insular Force, Philippine Scouts of World War II, and the United States Armed Forces.

Section 4. §67103 of Chapter 67, Title 10, Guam Code Annotated is amended to read as follows:

1 **§ 67103. Powers and Duties of Officer.**

2 The Officer:

3 (a) shall administer the Office and implement the provisions set forth in
4 Section 67102 above;

5 (b) shall exercise and discharge the duties of the Office through such
6 organizational units as he may establish;

7 (c) shall enforce the provisions of this Chapter and of any other laws
8 granting him jurisdiction pertaining to veterans of the Armed Forces of the
9 United States;

10 (d) may administer and certify oaths and affirmations, take and certify
11 affidavits and acknowledgments, and exercise any other power of a notary
12 public, but only as part of his duties under this Chapter and neither he nor
13 his office shall charge any fee for such certification or notarial service;

14 (e) may formulate and adopt rules necessary or proper for the internal
15 administration of the Office; and

16 (f) may study and plan for the establishment of a Guam Veterans
17 Cemetery, seeking such assistance, advice and support from the Armed
18 Forces of the United States, the Federal Veterans Administration, other local
19 and Federal agencies, and veterans and veterans organizations.

20 (g) Shall receive and ~~consider~~ execute the policy recommendations of the
21 Guam Veterans Commission to the extent said recommendations are not in
22 contravention to existing law or directives.

23 **Section 5. §67107 of Chapter 67, Title 10, Guam Code**

24 **Annotated is amended to read as follows:**

25 **§ 67107. Guam Veterans Commission.**

1 (a) Commission Membership. There is hereby established a Guam
2 Veterans Commission which *shall*, at a minimum, be composed of a
3 total of ~~nine~~ six approved Veteran organizations whose representatives
4 to the Commission are Veterans members who have been nominated by
5 their respective organizations and approved by *I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen*
6 *Guåhan*. The members ~~to~~ shall include, but not limited to, the following
7 representation:

8 (1) ~~four~~ a members, each of whom *shall* be representative of a
9 veterans or retirees association for each branch of the U.S. Armed
10 Forces to consist of:

11 (A) U.S. Army ~~Retirees (or Veterans)~~ Association;

12 (B) U.S. Marine Corps ~~Air Force Retirees (or Veterans)~~
13 ~~Association~~;

14 (C) U.S. Navy ~~Retirees (or Veterans)~~ Association;

15 (D) U.S. Air Force ~~Marine Corps Retirees (or Veterans)~~
16 ~~Association~~;

17 (E) U.S. Space Force;

18 (F) U.S. Coast Guard;

19 (2) ~~two~~ a members from the officially chartered Guam chapters of
20 multi-service Veteran Service Organizations to include but not limited
21 to: the American Legion (AL), Military Order of the Purple Heart
22 (MOPH), Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), and the Vietnam Veterans
23 of America (VVA). ~~Organizations to be represented on the Guam~~
24 ~~Veterans Commission, pertaining to this subsection Subsections (1) and~~
25 ~~(2), are required to be duly registered as a non-profit organization with~~
26 ~~the Guam Department of Revenue and Taxation, in accordance with~~
27 ~~Title 18 of Guam Code Annotated; and/or is registered as a non-profit~~

1 ~~organization within the United States and recognized as exempt under~~
2 ~~IRC 501(c)(19). The organizations shall furnish the Guam Veterans~~
3 ~~Affairs Office (GOVA) with a copy of an official documentation~~
4 ~~reflecting such requirement; and~~

5 (3) Approved Veteran Organizations. Organizations to be
6 represented on the Guam Veterans Commission, pertaining to
7 Subsections (1) and (2), are required to be duly registered as a non-
8 profit organization with the Guam Department of Revenue and
9 Taxation, in accordance with Title 18 of Guam Code Annotated;
10 and/or is registered as a non-profit organization within the United
11 States and recognized as exempt under IRC 501(c)(19), IRC 501 (4),
12 or IRC 501(c)(3). The organizations shall furnish the Guam Veterans
13 Affairs Office (GOVA) a copy of official documentation reflecting
14 their non-profit status, a current certificate of Good Standing, and a
15 copy of the organization's By-Laws. GOVA shall maintain a file of
16 each organization represented on the Commission; and

17 ~~(3) a maximum of three members, whom each shall be a veteran, may~~
18 ~~be appointed from other veteran organizations on Guam, to include the~~
19 ~~Coast Guard. Should a Veteran Service Organization have more than~~
20 ~~one Chapter, each Chapter may recommend a representative to serve as~~
21 ~~a member of the Commission, of which said appointment may be~~
22 ~~authorized to serve as provided herein.~~

23 (4)Ex-Officio Members. With the recommendation of the Guam
24 Veterans Commission, *I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan* may
25 appoint as an ex-officio, non-voting member a veteran of a foreign
26 country who has fought alongside U.S. armed forces members as
27 allies in combat, who is a representative of an established allied

1 veterans organization on Guam which is compliant with
2 §67107(a)(3), and is a resident of ~~who has resided on~~ Guam for a
3 ~~minimum of three years immediately preceding the appointment.~~
4 Said veteran *shall* serve for a term of three years from the date of
5 appointment.

6 (b) Commission Membership Terms and Conduct of Business.

7 (1) Veteran Organization Nominations. ~~Appointments.~~ The
8 Commander, or designee, of a Veteran Service Organizations *shall*
9 present in writing to the Chairman of the Commission the names of
10 two the individuals, to be transmitted to I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen
11 Guåhan ~~who shall~~ for approval to the Commission to represent their
12 respective veteran organization ~~to serve on the Commission~~, which
13 *shall* be subject to the aforementioned provisions ~~above~~. The
14 nominating Organization shall designate each nominee as the Primary
15 and Alternate representative, respectively.

16 (2) Terms of Commission Representatives ~~Members.~~ Every
17 representative member of ~~to~~ the Commission *shall* serve for a term of
18 three years, to commence on the date of ~~appointment~~ approval by the
19 Governor.

20 (A) Should the approved primary Commission representative
21 terminate his/her term prior to the conclusion of the three years,
22 the approved Alternate shall assume the Primary representative
23 position. In the event both approved representatives terminate,
24 the nominating Veteran Service Organization *shall* ~~appoint~~
25 nominate a successor to serve for ~~a new~~ the balance of the three
26 year term, which shall commence upon the date of ~~appointment~~
27 approval by the Governor.

1 (B) Said ~~appointment~~ nomination shall be in writing and
2 presented to the Chairman of the Guam Veterans Commission
3 for transmittal to *I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan*, with a copy
4 to be furnished to the Veterans Affairs Officer of the Office of
5 Veterans Affairs.

6 (3) Quorum Requirements. The presence of fifty percent (50%)
7 plus one of the appointed primary or alternate members shall be
8 required to establish quorum. ~~For purposes of a quorum and for the~~
9 ~~official conduct of business, a minimum of five voting members on~~
10 ~~the Commission shall constitute a quorum.~~ For the official conduct of
11 business, a majority of the members present, following the
12 constituting of a quorum, shall be required to conduct official
13 business.

14 (4) ~~Scheduled~~ Meetings. The Commission shall meet at least once
15 every quarter. However, nothing herein prevents the convening of
16 additional meetings to deliberate on emergent issues. ~~monthly and~~
17 ~~shall advise the Veterans Affairs Officer regarding matters affecting~~
18 ~~Veterans and related issues. Said meeting times, place and dates shall~~
19 ~~be decided to allow the greatest level of participation and attendance~~
20 ~~by Commission members.~~

21 (5) Conduct of meetings. The Commission shall conduct its
22 meetings in accordance with the Open Government Law, 5GCA
23 Ch 8.

24 (6) Use of Video Teleconferencing. Commission members may
25 participate in regular meetings via video teleconferencing and in
26 accordance with 5GCA Ch 43 § 43121. Participation of a member
27 via teleconferencing may be counted towards quorum

1 requirements. The Commission shall broadcast regular meetings
2 in accordance with 5GCA Ch 43 § 43122.

3 (7)Removal from Commission for Unexcused Absences. The
4 unexcused absences of a member from three (3) consecutive
5 regular meetings of the Commission shall constitute a cause for
6 removal of the member from the Commission, I
7 Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan may thereupon remove the
8 member from the Commission. The determination of whether a
9 member's absence is excused or unexcused shall be made by the
10 Commission.

11 (8)(5) Veteran Community Participation. The Commission shall
12 provide veterans and their families with the opportunity to air
13 present grievances and concerns for the purpose of effecting
14 corrective action or change to existing policies that affect the
15 delivery of benefits and services to the Guam's Veteran
16 population.

17 (9)(6)Administrative Support. The Guam Veterans Office (VAO)
18 through the direction of the VAO Administrator Veterans Affairs
19 Officer, shall provide administrative support to the Guam Veterans
20 Commission in the conduct of its meetings.

21 (10) (7)Commission Activities. Upon official written request
22 by the Chairman of the Commission for information or action by
23 the VAO Administrator on issues affecting the Commission or
24 Veterans, the VAO Administrator shall provide a written timely
25 response to the Commission within four weeks by the next regularly
26 scheduled Commission meeting, or sooner from the date of receipt
27 of such communication. Should the VAO Administrator require

1 additional time to provide a sufficient response to the matter, the
2 VAO ~~shall request in writing a time extension, not to exceed an~~
3 additional four weeks, and further provide justification for the need
4 for such time extension in said written communication. Such
5 request ~~shall be granted upon receipt by the Chairman of the~~
6 ~~Commission.~~ Ethics Training. Commission representatives shall
7 complete an ethics training within six months from the date of
8 approval.

9 (11) Commission Duties and Responsibilities. The
10 Commission shall have the authority to:

11 (a) Develop appropriate policies to address the concerns of all
12 veterans;

13 (b) Recommend any legislation including budgetary requirements
14 which may be necessary for the implementation, operation and
15 maintenance of the Guam Office of Veterans Affairs;

16 (c) Develop and adopt internal rules and procedures to govern the
17 conduct of the Commission and to facilitate coordination with the
18 Guam Office of Veterans Affairs;

19 (d) Perform all functions necessary to carry out the provisions of
20 this Chapter; and

21 (e) Submit a written report no later than May 1st of each year to I
22 Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan and the Speaker of I Liheslaturan
23 Guåhan summarizing the Commission's activities,
24 accomplishments, challenges, and plans to support the Guam
25 Office of the Veterans Affairs. The report shall also include
26 information regarding costs and agreements related to veterans'
27 claims data. All veterans' claims data shall be consistent with

1 federal-data sharing and privacy regulations."

2 (f) The Guam Office of Veterans Affairs is authorized to provide
3 resource and/or administrative support to fulfill the Commission's
4 expanded reporting and oversight responsibilities

5
6 **Section 6.** § 67107.1 of Chapter 67, Guam Code Annotated, is
7 hereby repealed in its entirety

8 **~~§ 67107.1. New Membership Process.~~**

9 ~~The process for new membership to the Guam Veterans~~
10 ~~Commission is as follows:~~

11 ~~(a) The Guam Veterans Affairs Office shall receive new~~
12 ~~membership requests and submit same~~
13 ~~to the Chairman of the Guam Veterans Commission.~~

14 ~~(b) The Veterans Commission shall review the new~~
15 ~~membership request and forward its~~
16 ~~recommendation to I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan for~~
17 ~~appropriate action.~~

18 **Section 7. Severability.** If any provision of this Act or its application to any
19 person or circumstance is found to be invalid or inorganic, such invalidity shall not
20 affect other provisions or applications of this Act that can be given effect without
21 the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this Act are
22 severable.

23 **Section 8. Effective Date.** This Act shall be effective upon enactment.

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

Bill No. 192-38 (COR)

As amended by the Committee on Health and Veterans Affairs

Introduced by:

Sabrina Salas Matanane
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**AN ACT TO AMEND §67100, § 67101, §67103, AND §67107
AND TO REPEAL § 67107.1 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10,
GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO THE
APPOINTMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS
OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE GUAM VETERANS
COMMISSION, THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE
VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER, THE COMPOSITION
AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUAM VETERANS
COMMISSION, AND THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN.**

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

2 **Section 1. Legislative Findings and Intent.** *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* finds
3 that in 1970 P.L. 10-123 was enacted establishing the Guam Office of Veterans
4 Affairs (GOVA). In 2005, P.L. 28-46 was enacted establishing the Guam Veterans

1 Commission (Commission) to work collaboratively with the GOVA in meeting its
2 mandate to assist Guam's Veterans in the filing of compensation claims for service-
3 connected disabilities and other benefits available to eligible Veterans and their
4 families. The Commission has since evolved to be the Voice of the Veterans
5 community.

6 *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* further finds that GOVA and the Commission must
7 work collaboratively so that the needs voiced by the Veterans community can be
8 duly prioritized and effectively addressed.

9 **Section 2. §67100 of Chapter 67, Title 10, Guam Code Annotated, is**
10 **amended to read as follows:**

11 **§ 67100. Creation of Office.**

12 There is within the Office of *I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan* an Office of
13 Veterans Affairs. The Veterans Affairs Officer is the administrative head of the
14 Office of Veterans Affairs and is a member of the ~~classified~~ unclassified service,
15 appointed by *I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan* and is ~~the administrative head of~~
16 ~~the Office of Veterans Affairs~~ subject to the with advice of the Guam Veterans
17 Commission. ~~direction and control of *I Maga'hagan/Maga'låhen Guåhan*, who is~~
18 ~~the appointing authority.~~

19 **Section 3. §67101 (c) of Chapter 67, Title 10, Guam Code Annotated is**
20 **amended to read as follows:**

21 (c) A veteran means a person who served in the active military, naval,
22 air service to include and was discharged or released there from under
23 conditions other than dishonorable. Veteran included veterans of the
24 Guam Combat Patrol, the United States Insular Force, Philippine
25 Scouts of World War II, and the United States Armed Forces.

26 **Section 4. §67103 of Chapter 67, Title 10, Guam Code Annotated is**
27 **amended to read as follows:**

1 **§ 67103. Powers and Duties of Officer.**

2 The Officer:

3 (a) shall administer the Office and implement the provisions set forth in
4 Section 67102 above;

5 (b) shall exercise and discharge the duties of the Office through such
6 organizational units as he may establish;

7 (c) shall enforce the provisions of this Chapter and of any other laws
8 granting him jurisdiction pertaining to veterans of the Armed Forces of the
9 United States;

10 (d) may administer and certify oaths and affirmations, take and certify
11 affidavits and acknowledgments, and exercise any other power of a notary
12 public, but only as part of his duties under this Chapter and neither he nor
13 his office shall charge any fee for such certification or notarial service;

14 (e) may formulate and adopt rules necessary or proper for the internal
15 administration of the Office; and

16 (f) may study and plan for the establishment of a Guam Veterans
17 Cemetery, seeking such assistance, advice and support from the Armed
18 Forces of the United States, the Federal Veterans Administration, other local
19 and Federal agencies, and veterans and veterans organizations.

20 (g) Shall receive and ~~consider~~ execute the policy recommendations of the
21 Guam Veterans Commission to the extent said recommendations are not in
22 contravention to existing law or directives.

23 **Section 5. §67107 of Chapter 67, Title 10, Guam Code**

24 **Annotated is amended to read as follows:**

25 **§ 67107. Guam Veterans Commission.**

1 (a) Commission Membership. There is hereby established a Guam
2 Veterans Commission which *shall*, at a minimum, be composed of a
3 total of ~~nine~~ six approved Veteran organizations whose representatives
4 to the Commission are Veterans members who have been nominated by
5 their respective organizations and approved by I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen
6 Guåhan. The members to shall include, but not limited to, the following
7 representation:

8 (1) ~~four~~ a members, each of whom *shall* be representative of a
9 veterans or retirees association for each branch of the U.S. Armed
10 Forces to consist of:

11 (A) U.S. Army ~~Retirees (or Veterans)~~ Association;

12 (B) U.S. Marine Corps ~~Air Force Retirees (or Veterans)~~
13 ~~Association~~;

14 (C) U.S. Navy ~~Retirees (or Veterans)~~ Association;

15 (D) U.S. Air Force ~~Marine Corps Retirees (or Veterans)~~
16 ~~Association~~;

17 (E) U.S. Space Force;

18 (F) U.S. Coast Guard;

19
20 (2) ~~two~~ a members from the officially chartered Guam chapters of
21 multi-service Veteran Service Organizations to include but not limited
22 to: the American Legion (AL), Military Order of the Purple Heart
23 (MOPH), Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), and the Vietnam Veterans
24 of America (VVA). ~~Organizations to be represented on the Guam~~
25 ~~Veterans Commission, pertaining to this subsection Subsections (1) and~~
26 ~~(2), are required to be duly registered as a non-profit organization with~~
27 ~~the Guam Department of Revenue and Taxation, in accordance with~~

1 Title 18 of Guam Code Annotated; and/or is registered as a non-profit
2 organization within the United States and recognized as exempt under
3 IRC 501(c)(19). The organizations ~~shall~~ furnish the Guam Veterans
4 Affairs Office (GOVA) with a copy of an official documentation
5 reflecting such requirement; and

6 (3) Approved Veteran Organizations. Organizations to be
7 represented on the Guam Veterans Commission, pertaining to
8 Subsections (1) and (2), are required to be duly registered as a non-
9 profit organization with the Guam Department of Revenue and
10 Taxation, in accordance with Title 18 of Guam Code Annotated;
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12 States and recognized as exempt under IRC 501(c)(19), IRC 501 (4),
13 or IRC 501(c)(3). The organizations shall furnish the Guam Veterans
14 Affairs Office (GOVA) a copy of official documentation reflecting
15 their non-profit status, a current certificate of Good Standing, and a
16 copy of the organization's By-Laws. GOVA shall maintain a file of
17 each organization represented on the Commission; and

18 ~~(3) a maximum of three members, whom each shall be a veteran, may~~
19 ~~be appointed from other veteran organizations on Guam, to include the~~
20 ~~Coast Guard. Should a Veteran Service Organization have more than~~
21 ~~one Chapter, each Chapter may recommend a representative to serve as~~
22 ~~a member of the Commission, of which said appointment may be~~
23 ~~authorized to serve as provided herein.~~

24 (4)Ex-Officio Members. With the recommendation of the Guam
25 Veterans Commission, *I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan* may
26 appoint as an ex-officio, non-voting member a veteran of a foreign
27 country who has fought alongside U.S. armed forces members as

1 allies in combat, who is a representative of an established allied
2 veterans organization on Guam which is compliant with
3 §67107(a)(3), and is a resident of ~~who has resided on~~ Guam for a
4 ~~minimum of three years immediately preceding the appointment.~~
5 Said veteran *shall* serve for a term of three years from the date of
6 appointment.

7 (b) Commission Membership Terms and Conduct of Business.

8 (1) Veteran Organization Nominations. ~~Appointments.~~ The
9 Commander, or designee, of a Veteran Service Organizations *shall*
10 present in writing to the Chairman of the Commission the names of
11 two the individuals, to be transmitted to I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen
12 Guåhan ~~who shall~~ for approval to the Commission to represent their
13 respective veteran organization to serve on the Commission, which
14 *shall* be subject to the aforementioned provisions ~~above~~. The
15 nominating Organization shall designate each nominee as the Primary
16 and Alternate representative, respectively.

17 (2) Terms of Commission Representatives ~~Members.~~ Every
18 representative member of to the Commission *shall* serve for a term of
19 three years, to commence on the date of ~~appointment~~ approval by the
20 Governor.

21 (A) Should the approved primary Commission representative
22 terminate his/her term prior to the conclusion of the three years,
23 the approved Alternate shall assume the Primary representative
24 position. In the event both approved representatives terminate,
25 the nominating Veteran Service Organization *shall* ~~appoint~~
26 nominate a successor to serve for ~~a new~~ the balance of the three
27 year term, which shall commence upon the date of ~~appointment~~

1 approval by the Governor.

2 (B) Said ~~appointment~~ nomination shall be in writing and
3 presented to the Chairman of the Guam Veterans Commission
4 for transmittal to *I Måga'hågan/Måga'låhen Guåhan*, with a copy
5 to be furnished to the Veterans Affairs Officer of the Office of
6 Veterans Affairs.

7 (3) Quorum Requirements. The presence of fifty percent (50%)
8 plus one of the appointed primary or alternate members shall be
9 required to establish quorum. ~~For purposes of a quorum and for the~~
10 ~~official conduct of business, a minimum of five voting members on~~
11 ~~the Commission shall constitute a quorum.~~ For the official conduct of
12 business, a majority of the members present, following the
13 constituting of a quorum, shall be required to conduct official
14 business.

15 (4) ~~Scheduled~~ Meetings. The Commission shall meet at least once
16 every quarter. However, nothing herein prevents the convening of
17 additional meetings to deliberate on emergent issues. ~~monthly and~~
18 ~~shall advise the Veterans Affairs Officer regarding matters affecting~~
19 ~~Veterans and related issues. Said meeting times, place and dates shall~~
20 ~~be decided to allow the greatest level of participation and attendance~~
21 ~~by Commission members.~~

22 (5) Conduct of meetings. The Commission shall conduct its
23 meetings in accordance with the Open Government Law, 5GCA
24 Ch 8.

25 (6) Use of Video Teleconferencing. Commission members may
26 participate in regular meetings via video teleconferencing and in
27 accordance with 5GCA Ch 43 § 43121. Participation of a member

1 via teleconferencing may be counted towards quorum
2 requirements. The Commission shall broadcast regular meetings
3 in accordance with 5GCA Ch 43 § 43122.

4 (7)Removal from Commission for Unexcused Absences. The
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7 removal of the member from the Commission, I
8 Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan may thereupon remove the
9 member from the Commission. The determination of whether a
10 member's absence is excused or unexcused shall be made by the
11 Commission.

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13 provide veterans and their families with the opportunity to air
14 present grievances and concerns for the purpose of effecting
15 corrective action or change to existing policies that affect the
16 delivery of benefits and services to the Guam's Veteran
17 population.

18 (9)(6)-Administrative Support. The Guam Veterans Office (VAO)
19 through the direction of the VAO Administrator Veterans Affairs
20 Officer, shall provide administrative support to the Guam Veterans
21 Commission in the conduct of its meetings.

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23 by the Chairman of the Commission for information or action by
24 the VAO Administrator on issues affecting the Commission or
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26 response to the Commission within four weeks by the next regularly
27 scheduled Commission meeting, or sooner from the date of receipt

1 of such communication. Should the VAO Administrator require
2 additional time to provide a sufficient response to the matter, the
3 VAO shall request in writing a time extension, not to exceed an
4 additional four weeks, and further provide justification for the need
5 for such time extension in said written communication. Such
6 request shall be granted upon receipt by the Chairman of the
7 Commission. Ethics Training. Commission representatives shall
8 complete an ethics training within six months from the date of
9 approval.

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11 Commission shall have the authority to:

12 (a) Develop appropriate policies to address the concerns of all
13 veterans;

14 (b) Recommend any legislation including budgetary requirements
15 which may be necessary for the implementation, operation and
16 maintenance of the Guam Office of Veterans Affairs;

17 (c) Develop and adopt internal rules and procedures to govern the
18 conduct of the Commission and to facilitate coordination with the
19 Guam Office of Veterans Affairs;

20 (d) Perform all functions necessary to carry out the provisions of
21 this Chapter; and

22 (e) Submit a written report no later than May 1st of each year to I
23 Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan and the Speaker of I Liheslaturan
24 Guåhan summarizing the Commission's activities,
25 accomplishments, challenges, and plans to support the Guam
26 Office of the Veterans Affairs. The report shall also include
27 information regarding costs and agreements related to veterans'

1 claims data. All veterans' claims data shall be consistent with
2 federal-data sharing and privacy regulations."

3 (f) The Guam Office of Veterans Affairs is authorized to provide
4 resource and/or administrative support to fulfill the Commission's
5 expanded reporting and oversight responsibilities
6

7 **Section 6.** § 67107.1 of Chapter 67, Guam Code Annotated, is
8 hereby repealed in its entirety

9 **~~§ 67107.1. New Membership Process.~~**

10 ~~The process for new membership to the Guam Veterans~~
11 ~~Commission is as follows:~~

12 ~~(a) The Guam Veterans Affairs Office shall receive new~~
13 ~~membership requests and submit same~~
14 ~~to the Chairman of the Guam Veterans Commission.~~

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17 ~~recommendation to I Maga'hågan/Maga'låhen Guåhan for~~
18 ~~appropriate action.~~

19 **Section 7. Severability.** If any provision of this Act or its application to any
20 person or circumstance is found to be invalid or inorganic, such invalidity shall not
21 affect other provisions or applications of this Act that can be given effect without
22 the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this Act are
23 severable.

24 **Section 8. Effective Date.** This Act shall be effective upon enactment.



COMMITTEE ON RULES

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

October 16, 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. 192-38 (COR)**

Håfa Adai!

Find the attached, Fiscal Note for the following bill:

Bill No. 192-38 (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. 192-38 (COR)

AN ACT TO AMEND §67100, §67101, §67103, AND §67107 AND TO REPEAL § 67107.1 OF CHAPTER 67, TITLE 10, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER AND MEMBERS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER, THE COMPOSITION AND OPERATIONS OF THE GUAM VETERANS COMMISSION, AND THE DEFINITION OF A VETERAN.

Department/Agency Appropriation Information

Dept./Agency Affected: Guam Office of Veterans Affairs (GOVA)	Dept./Agency Head: Jose San Agustin, Director
Department's General Fund (GF) appropriation(s) to date:	\$1,246,443
Department's Other Fund (Specify) appropriation(s) to date:	\$0
Total Department/Agency Appropriation(s) to date:	\$1,246,443

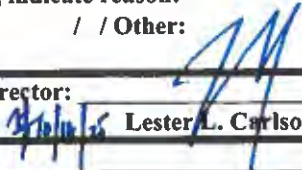
Fund Source Information of Proposed Appropriation

	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	\$0	1/	1/	1/	1/	1/
Special Fund	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	1/	1/	1/	1/	1/

- | | | |
|--|------------|---------|
| 1. Does the bill contain "revenue generating" provisions? | / / Yes | /X/ No |
| If Yes, see attachment | | |
| 2. Is amount appropriated adequate to fund the intent of the appropriation? | /X/ N/A | / / Yes |
| If no, what is the additional amount required? \$ _____ | /X/ N/A | / / No |
| 3. Does the Bill establish a new program/agency? | / / Yes | /X/ No |
| If yes, will the program duplicate existing programs/agencies? | /X/ N/A | / / Yes |
| Is there a federal mandate to establish the program/agency? | / / Yes | /X/ No |
| 4. Will the enactment of this Bill require new physical facilities? | / / Yes | /X/ No |
| 5. 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: 	Date: 10/14/25	Director: 	Date: OCT 16 2025
Jasmine C. Tereas, BMA III		Lester L. Carlson, Jr.	

Comments:

1/ See attached comments for Bill No. 192-38 (COR).

Bureau of Budget and Management Research
Comments on Bill No. 192-38 (COR)

The proposed legislation seeks to clearly define the powers and duties of the Veterans Affairs Officer and amend the composition of the Guam Veterans Commission. It should be noted that the Bureau had sought input on Bill 192-38 (COR) from the GOVA, however, has not received their official comments as of the date of this fiscal note.

If Bill 192-38 (COR) is enacted, there could be a potential cost impact to the GOVA to comply with the mandate to broadcast regular meetings and the use of video teleconferencing, as well as to have representatives of the Guam Veterans Commission complete an ethics training. However, the Bureau is unable to provide the cost impact absent GOVA's assessment of its requirement such as equipment needs, computer hardware and software applications to conduct such broadcast and teleconferencing of regular meetings, and the number of representatives requiring ethics training which is currently at a cost of \$80.00 per participant as provided by the Guam Ethics Commission.