

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
366-38 (LS)	Sabrina Salas Matanane	AN ACT TO <i>ADD</i> A NEW § 28611 TO ARTICLE 6 OF CHAPTER 28 OF TITLE 17, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED; AND TO <i>AMEND</i> §§ 28602, 28603, 28604, 28605, 28608, 28609, AND 28610 OF ARTICLE 6 OF CHAPTER 28 OF TITLE 17, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO EXTENDING THE NURSING TRAINING PROGRAM TO NURSING STUDENTS AT THE GUAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE.	9/28/26 4:23 p.m.						

I MINA'TRENTAI OCHO NA LIHESLATURANGUÅHAN
2026 (SECOND) Regular Session

Bill No. 366-38 (LS)

Introduced by:

Sabrina Salas Matanane 

AN ACT TO ADD A *NEW* § 28611 TO ARTICLE 6 OF CHAPTER 28 OF TITLE 17, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED; AND TO *AMEND* §§ 28602, 28603, 28604, 28605, 28608, 28609, AND 28610 OF ARTICLE 6 OF CHAPTER 28 OF TITLE 17, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, RELATIVE TO EXTENDING THE NURSING TRAINING PROGRAM TO NURSING STUDENTS AT THE GUAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF GUAM:

Section 1. Legislative Findings and Intent. *I Mina'trentai Ocho Na*

Liheslaturan Guåhan finds that the island of Guam continues to face a critical and chronic shortage of qualified nursing professionals. According to data from the Guam Board of Nurse Examiners and local healthcare administrators, the island's vacancy rate for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses remains at levels that necessitate a heavy reliance on expensive off-island contractual or "travel" nurses. This reliance not only drains the financial resources of the Guam Memorial Hospital Authority and the Guam Regional Medical City but also hinders the development of a sustainable, locally-rooted healthcare workforce that understands the unique cultural and social dynamics of the island's population.

I Liheslaturan Guåhan further finds that the Guam Community College (GCC) serves as a vital engine for workforce development, particularly through its

1 Practical Nursing and Allied Health programs. While Chapter 15 of Title 17, Guam
2 Code Annotated, originally established various student financial assistance
3 programs intended to bolster the nursing profession, those programs were recodified
4 into Chapter 28 of Title 17 GCA, and the Nursing Training program now appears as
5 Article 6 of Chapter 28. Many of those statutory provisions were historically drafted
6 with a primary focus on baccalaureate programs at the University of Guam. Research
7 into national healthcare education trends indicates that community colleges are often
8 the most accessible entry point for non-traditional students and those from lower-
9 income backgrounds. By providing financial parity to students at GCC, the
10 government can effectively broaden the recruitment pipeline, allowing students to
11 begin their nursing careers as Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) and eventually
12 transition into Registered Nurse (RN) roles through established "bridge" programs.

13 The legislative approach of expanding financial aid to community college
14 nursing students is mirrored in several other jurisdictions seeking to mitigate similar
15 shortages. For instance, the Pennsylvania Legislature recently enacted the Nursing
16 Shortage Assistance Program, which specifically targets financial barriers for
17 students in nursing programs across various institutional levels to ensure a steady
18 flow of graduates into the workforce. Similarly, the California Legislature has
19 consistently utilized its community college system as a primary vehicle for
20 healthcare workforce expansion, recognizing that localized training leads to higher
21 retention rates within the state. *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* finds that applying these same
22 principles to Guam's statutory framework will ensure that financial barriers do not
23 prevent qualified local residents from pursuing nursing credentials at the institution
24 that best fits their educational and career trajectory.

25 Furthermore, *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* finds that the current cost of living and
26 the rising price of higher education necessitate a more inclusive application of the
27 Nursing Training Program and other merit-based scholarships. According to the

1 Guam Department of Labor's workforce statistics, healthcare practitioners and
2 technical occupations are among the highest-demand fields on the island, yet the
3 financial burden of tuition, fees, and clinical supplies often deters potential students.
4 By explicitly including the Guam Community College as an eligible institution for
5 relevant nursing financial assistance programs under Title 17, the government of
6 Guam reaffirms its commitment to investing in its people and its public institutions.
7 This expansion ensures that every dollar appropriated for nursing education is
8 utilized to its maximum potential by supporting students at both the vocational and
9 professional levels of the nursing hierarchy.

10 It is the intent of *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* to amend Article 6 of Chapter 28 of
11 Title 17, Guam Code Annotated, to ensure that the Nursing Training program is fully
12 applicable to students enrolled in nursing programs at the Guam Community
13 College, with the Board of Trustees of the Guam Community College administering
14 awards for students attending the Guam Community College in parallel to the
15 administration by the Board of Regents of the University of Guam for students
16 attending the University of Guam. This legislation seeks to eliminate statutory
17 ambiguity and provide equitable access to government-funded scholarships and
18 loans for all nursing students, regardless of whether they are pursuing a certificate,
19 an associate degree, or a baccalaureate degree. By doing so, *I Liheslaturan Guåhan*
20 intends to foster a robust, home-grown nursing workforce, reduce the island's
21 dependence on external labor, and improve the overall quality and consistency of
22 patient care in the territory.

23 **Section 2.** A New § 28611 is hereby *added* to Article 6 of Chapter 28 of
24 Title 17, Guam Code Annotated, to read:

25 **§ 28611. Use of Nursing Training Benefits at the Guam Community**
26 **College.**

1 (a) Eligibility of Guam Community College Students. Notwithstanding
2 any other provision of this Article, nursing students enrolled at the Guam
3 Community College in a nursing program leading to a certificate, an associate
4 degree, or a baccalaureate degree may receive Nursing Training awards under
5 this Article on the same terms, and subject to the same conditions, as nursing
6 students enrolled at the University of Guam.

7 (b) Parallel Governance. The Board of Trustees of the Guam
8 Community College shall administer Nursing Training awards under this
9 Article for students enrolled at the Guam Community College, in parallel to
10 the Board of Regents of the University of Guam, which shall continue to
11 administer Nursing Training awards under this Article for students enrolled at
12 the University of Guam.

13 (c) Interinstitutional Collaboration. The Board of Trustees of the Guam
14 Community College and the Board of Regents of the University of Guam shall
15 collaborate, and shall enter into one (1) or more written agreements, on:

16 (1) joint or coordinated application procedures and forms for the
17 Nursing Training program at both institutions;

18 (2) articulation agreements identifying the courses, credits, and
19 clinical hours earned at the Guam Community College that shall be
20 accepted for transfer toward a nursing degree at the University of
21 Guam, and vice versa;

22 (3) the transfer of academic credit between the two (2)
23 institutions for recipients of Nursing Training awards; and

24 (4) procedures governing recipients who initially use Nursing
25 Training benefits at one (1) institution and subsequently continue,
26 transfer, or matriculate to the other, including the continuity of stipends,

1 tuition allowances, service-back obligations under § 28604, and
2 probationary or good-standing determinations under § 28609.

3 (d) Rulemaking Authority. The Board of Trustees of the Guam
4 Community College is hereby authorized to adopt rules and regulations, in
5 accordance with the Administrative Adjudication Law, to administer the
6 Nursing Training program at the Guam Community College, including, but
7 not limited to, application procedures, enrollment and full-time status
8 requirements, academic standards, disbursement schedules, repayment,
9 default, and the procedures contemplated by subsection (c) of this Section.

10 (e) Application of Article 6 to Guam Community College Students.
11 Except as otherwise provided in this Section, all other provisions of this
12 Article shall apply equally to nursing students enrolled at the Guam
13 Community College, and the Board of Trustees of the Guam Community
14 College shall exercise, with respect to students enrolled at the Guam
15 Community College, the functions that the Board of Regents of the University
16 of Guam exercises with respect to students enrolled at the University of Guam.

17 **Section 3.** § 28602 Of Article 6 of Chapter 28 of Title 17, Guam Code
18 Annotated, is hereby *amended* to read:

19 **§ 28602. Stipends.**

20 There are hereby established the following stipends for nursing students
21 at the University of Guam, and for nursing students at the Guam Community
22 College:

23 (a) A monthly allowance shall be paid to a nursing student recipient at
24 the following rates: Freshmen, Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00) per
25 month; Sophomore, Three Hundred Seventy-five Dollars (\$375.00) per
26 month; Junior, Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) per month; Senior and

1 Graduate Standing, Six Hundred Twenty-five Dollars (\$625.00) per month.
2 The same monthly allowance schedule shall apply to nursing students enrolled
3 at the Guam Community College, based on the recipient's year of program:
4 the first year of the recipient's nursing program at the Guam Community
5 College shall be paid at the Freshmen rate; the second year, at the Sophomore
6 rate; the third year, if applicable, at the Junior rate; and the fourth year, if
7 applicable, at the Senior and Graduate Standing rate.

8 (b) As a condition for continuing full entitlement to the benefits
9 provided in this Chapter, recipients must maintain a full-time enrollment, as
10 defined by regulation of the University of Guam or the Guam Community
11 College, as applicable to the institution where the recipient is enrolled, and be
12 of good academic standing. No recipient may receive benefits beyond the
13 number of calendar years normally required to complete such nursing
14 student's program.

15 (c) Registration, tuition and other related fees normally assessed by the
16 University of Guam or the Guam Community College, as applicable, and an
17 allowance in the amount of Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00), shall be
18 allowed each recipient for each regular semester, and One Hundred Dollars
19 (\$100.00) per summer session in which a nursing student is enrolled to cover
20 costs of textbooks and supplies.

21 **Section 4.** § 28603 Of Article 6 of Chapter 28 of Title 17, Guam Code
22 Annotated, is hereby *amended* to read:

23 **§ 28603. Selection of Trainees.**

24 The program shall be open to any student who has completed high
25 school, or is otherwise declared by the University of Guam or the Guam
26 Community College as eligible for admission to the program; who is a United

1 States citizen or permanent resident alien; and who has been a resident of
2 Guam for at least one (1) year prior to the beginning of the academic semester
3 or term the student is admitted, registered and enrolled in the program. The
4 number of trainees who may enroll in the program annually shall be limited
5 only by the capacity of the University of Guam or the Guam Community
6 College, as applicable, and by funds made available to it by annual
7 appropriation. In the event of limited space and/or funds, priority shall be
8 given to students at the highest level of training and closest to the completion
9 of their program. No student may receive stipends beyond the number of
10 calendar years normally required to complete a training program.
11 Notwithstanding any other provision of law or administrative rules and
12 regulations, students who hold a Bachelor's Degree in a subject other than
13 nursing shall be eligible for the program, provided that such students meet all
14 other requirements herein.

15 **Section 5.** § 28604 Of Article 6 of Chapter 28 of Title 17, Guam Code
16 Annotated, is hereby *amended* to read:

17 **§ 28604. Employment of Trainees: Reimbursement.**

18 (a) As a condition of selection and enrollment in the programs of
19 ~~Chapters 15 and 15A of Title 17, Guam Code Annotated~~ Article 6 of Chapter
20 28 of Title 17, Guam Code Annotated, each trainee shall agree to accept
21 employment as a nurse, either professional or practical, in the public health
22 system of Guam, including the Guam Memorial Hospital Authority, the
23 Department of Public Health and Social Services, and the Guam Behavioral
24 Health and Wellness Center, as school health counselors in the Guam
25 Department of Education or the Guam Community College, or in private
26 clinics or private hospitals licensed to do business on Guam, and to continue

1 in such employment for a period of time equal to the period of training under
2 the program.

3 (b) The recipient shall further agree that in the event of the recipient's
4 failure or refusal to fulfill the obligation set forth in Subsection (a), the
5 recipient shall then repay the government of Guam an amount equal to the
6 total monthly allowances paid to the recipient pursuant to ~~§ 151002~~§ 28602
7 of this Article, including actual costs to the government for textbooks and
8 supplies.

9 **Section 6.** § 28605 Of Article 6 of Chapter 28 of Title 17, Guam Code
10 Annotated, is hereby *amended* to read:

11 **§ 28605. In-service Training for Resident Nurses.**

12 (a) Any non-contract professional or practical nurse employed by the
13 government of Guam in a permanent position, who is a U.S. citizen and a bona
14 fide resident of Guam, who lacks not more than two (2) years or their
15 equivalent in requirements for a degree in nursing shall be entitled to enroll at
16 the University of Guam or the Guam Community College for the purpose of
17 completing work toward such degree as an in-service training program,
18 whereby the recipient continues to receive the recipient's regular salary from
19 the government of Guam, including all scheduled pay increases, so long as
20 the recipient maintains passing work at the University of Guam or the Guam
21 Community College, as applicable, and so long as the program leading to the
22 issuance of the degree in nursing is pursued; provided, however, that no
23 person shall participate in such in-service program in excess of two (2) years
24 or their equivalent.

25 (b) In addition, every person who participates in such program shall be
26 obligated to work for the government of Guam for a period of two (2) years

1 for each year of training received, failing which the recipient shall be liable to
2 repay the cost of the recipient's training to the government.

3 **Section 7.** § 28608 Of Article 6 of Chapter 28 of Title 17, Guam Code
4 Annotated, is hereby *amended* to read:

5 **§ 28608. Annual Report and Budget Request.**

6 ~~The University~~The University of Guam and the Guam Community
7 College, each as to the nursing programs it administers under this Article, shall
8 submit to the Governor and the Speaker of the Legislature an annual report
9 and budgetary request to fund the programs established in this Chapter.

10 **Section 8.** § 28609 Of Article 6 of Chapter 28 of Title 17, Guam Code
11 Annotated, is hereby *amended* to read:

12 **§ 28609. Minimum Grade-Point-Average.**

13 For students entering the Nursing Training Program after the enactment
14 of this Section, the minimum cumulative grade-point-average to remain in the
15 program in good standing is '2.5.' In the event such a student participating in
16 the Nursing Training Program drops below the minimum cumulative grade-
17 point-average herein, the student shall be placed on probation for a period ~~to~~
18 ~~be determined by the Board of Regents~~to be determined by the Board of
19 Regents for students enrolled at the University of Guam, or by the Board of
20 Trustees of the Guam Community College for students enrolled at the Guam
21 Community College, but such probationary period shall not exceed three (3)
22 semesters exclusive of summers or inter-sessions.

23 **Section 9.** § 28610 Of Article 6 of Chapter 28 of Title 17, Guam Code
24 Annotated, is hereby *amended* to read:

25 **§ 28610. Garnishment of Income Tax Refunds in the Event of**
26 **Default.**

1 ~~The University of Guam may, subject to~~The University of Guam and
2 the Guam Community College, each as to defaults on awards administered by
3 that institution, may, subject to the terms and conditions of a Memorandum of
4 Understanding with the Department of Revenue and Taxation, garnish the tax
5 refunds due to any recipient of assistance pursuant to this Article and/or the
6 recipient's co-signer(s) who has defaulted on the repayment of such assistance
7 and a judgment has issued. Such garnishment shall not exceed the judgment
8 amount.

9 **Section 10. Severability.** If any provision of this Act or its application to any
10 person or circumstance is found to be invalid or inorganic, such invalidity shall not
11 affect other provisions or applications of this Act that can be given effect without
12 the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this Act are
13 severable.

14 **Section 11. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon enactment.