

Rasa Praises Burton War-Claims Promise

SAIPAN (COM) — Reaching to States Congress for its interest news that U.S. Rep. Philip Burton, D-Calif., has promised to amend war-claims legislation to pay 100 percent of all Micronesian claims, Marianas Rep. Oscar Cruz Rasa Wednesday praised the United States' on the

States Congress for its interest in the long-standing issue.

At the same time, Rasa said Burton's pledge "clearly proves the need for the Marianas Political Status Commission to deal directly with the Congress of the United States" on the

question of Marianas status, instead of with Ambassador Franklin Hayden Williams, who represents the U.S. executive branch.

Emphasizing that commonwealth supporters in the past said that "No more changes could be made in the covenant," Rasa said: "The people of the Marianas must remember that those who signed the commonwealth covenant did so in the belief that they negotiated the 'best-possible'

arrangement with Ambassador Williams.

"Congressman Burton's actions prove this is not true; Burton has shown us that the U.S. Congress can be more receptive to the needs of our people in the Marianas."

Rasa said he believes that the U.S. Congress "should and must review the entire Marianas commonwealth covenant before the Marianas people vote in the June 17 plebiscite. "We have been negotiating

with the wrong people," said Rasa. "Williams has deceived the Marianas people and our political status commission by telling us no more improvements are possible.

"Judging from Congressman Burton's statements to the ambassador one year ago urging him to expedite these claims," said Rasa, "I would say Williams has been fooling both sides — the U.S. Congress and the Marianas status commission."