

RCA0141-25+
248613 DOTA UR
5258 HICOTTSMNC

25 APRIL 75

DOTA

1. THIS IS TO CLARIFY OUR CONVERSATION REGARDING KKFCTION MF
PLEBISCITE VOTER REGISTRATION BOARD. SECRETARIAL ORDER STATES
IN SCTION 6(B) THAT "VOTER REGISTRATION SHALL BE CARRIED ODOWN
THE VOTING DISTRICTS BY PANELS OF LVE VMTER REGISTRATION BOARD
CONS ETING OF NOT LESS THAN TWO MEMBERS." YOU TOLD US THIS
MEANS THE REGISTRATION PROCEUS IS TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE
ACTUAL EIGHT MEMBERS AT LARGE OF THE REGISTRATION BOARD
DIVIDED INTO TWO-MEMBER TEAMS JOINED EX OFFICIO BY THE VILLAGE
COMMISSIONER OR MAYOR OF EACH DISTRICT. THERE ARE ELEVEN
VOTING PRECINCTS ON SAIPAN AND ON 3-:0 9, 58,8-,,-, 495-.
THIS MEANS THAT EIGHT MEMBERS MUST BE DISTCIXUTED

THROUGHOUT
THESE THIRTEDN PRECINCTS AND A CENTRAL OFFICE FOR AS LONG
PERIODS OF TIME AS POSSIBLE TO PROVIDE NULLEST OPPORTUNITY FOR
REGISTRATION. CLEARLY THIS IS NOT A SIMPLE FUNCTION CONSIDERING
TIME STORTAGES. NO DOUBT IT CAN BE DONE. WE ASSUME THERE
WOULD BE NO DIFFICULTY IN ALSO DESIGNATING ALTERNATES TO THE
EIGHT MEMBERS IN CASE OF ABSENCE, ILLNESS OR OTHER UNAVAILABILITY.

2. WE ALSO DISCUSSED THE FACT THAT THERE ARE IN EXISTENCE
RIGHT NOW VALID VOTER REGISTRATION ROLLS. ONE OF THESE USED IN
MICRONESIAN CONGRESSIONAL ELECTION IS OBVIOUSLY UNSUITABLE. THIS
IS THE ROLL, WE UNDERSTAND, REGARDING WHICH VARIOUS CONTRAVERSIES
HAVE ARISEN. BUT ZLE SECOND ROLL CONSISHS OF VOTERS REGISTERED FOR
DISTRICT AND MUNICIPAL LEGISLATIVE ELEVTIGNS PRIOR TO RECENT
CHANGES CNFREISTRATION REQUIREMENTS. IN OUR JUDMENT THE
PREVIOUSLY EXISTING REQUIREMENTS UNDER WHICH THIS SECOND ROLL
OF VOTERS WAS COMPILED ARE ENTIRELY CONSISTENT WITH THE CRITERIA FOR
VOTERRRENDSVRAYINUCENMORE SECRETERIALCOORDERT WHEREFURS, IT NNCATYV
EXISTING VOTER REGISTRATION ROLL AS A BASIS. WOLNU

D IQWTOEDALL CITIZEN
AVAILABLE IN ALL VOTING DISTRICTS ANE IF THEY ARE NOT INCLUDEJ AID
BELIEVE THEMIELVES TO M
OIGLVCN THEN TO REGISTER IN ACCORDANCE
WITH CRITERIA OF THE SECRETARIAL ORDER. ANY CHALLENGES TO THOSE NOW
REGISTERED WOULD BE PRESENTED TO AND CONSIDERED BY THE REGISTRATION
VAGD THROUGY THE PROCESSES SET UP IN THE SECRETARIAL ORDER.
WE UNDERSTOOD FROM YOUR CONVERSATION THAT THE EXPECTATION IS TO
CCSATDIAN ENTIRELY NEW REGISTHWTION ROLL REQUIRING EVERYBODY TO BE
REGISTERED DE NOVO. THIS CAN BE DONE, BUT IT INCREASES
EMPLEXITY AND DCMINISHES THE NUMBER OF PBLE LIKELY TO VOTE IN THE
ULTIMATE PLEBISCITE, A SIGNIFICANT POINT.

3. PRIOR TO TELEZUNE CONVERSATION, WE HAD ASSUMED IT WOULD BE

Global Communications

Global Communications

Global Communications

Global Gio

Global Communications

Global Communications

communications

POSSIBLE TO USE ESTABLISHED VOTING REGISTRATION MACHINERY, FIRST WITH EXISTING REGISTRATION ROLL, AND THEN WITH REGISTRATION OF ADDITIONAL VOTERS BY OFFICIALS WHO CUSTOMARILY DO THIS IN VOTING PRECINCTS. WE HAD THOUGHT PLEBISCITE VOTERSHIP UNION BOARD WOULD FUNCTION BY ESTABLISHING AND DELEGATING REGISTRATION PROCESS THROUGH EXISTING MACHINERY AND THEN REVIEWING THE REGISTRATION IN MANNER STIPULATED IN SECRETARIAL ORDER WHICH CALLS UPON BOARD IN SECTION 6(C)(2) = 59 '85 "EN BANC AS AN APPELLATE REVIEW BOARD, HEAR CHALLENGES OF DECISIONS GRANTING OR DENYING REGISTRATION TO ANY PERSON." THERE SEEMS TO US SOME CONFLICT BETWEEN FUNCTION OF BOARD DIVIDED INTO REGISTRATION TEAMS THROUGHOUT THIRTEEN VOTING PRECINCTS AND THIS ADDITIONAL APPELLATE FUNCTION. THE TASK OF THESE EIGHT MEMBERS FIRST TO CONDUCT THE VERY TIME-CONSUMING FUNCTION OF REGISTERING VOTERS DAY AND NIGHT IN THIRTEEN PRECINCTS AND THEN SITTING AS AN APPELLATE REVIEW BOARD. FRANKLY, WE WOULD PREFER DELEGATION OF THE ACTUAL REGISTRATION TO THE EXISTING DISTRICT/MUNICIPAL MAYOR WITH THE REGISTRATION BOARD TAKING FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONDUCT ON THE REGISTRATION, HEARING OF APPEALS AND CERTIFICATION OF THE FINAL LIST DURING THE REGISTRATION PROCESS, BOARD WOULD CERTAINLY CIRCULATE THROUGHOUT REGISTRATION DISTRICTS KEEPING AN EYE ON OPERATION.

4. CERTAINLY PURPOSE OF PROCEDURES ENVISAGED IN SECRETARIAL ORDER IS TO MAKE SURE REGISTRATION LIST IS AS FREE FROM ERRORS AS POSSIBLE. IN VIEW OF THE EXISTING THAT LIST AND AUGMENT OR CORRECT IT AS FACTS WARRANT, I BELIEVE WE WOULD HAVE SATISFACTORY LIST. HOWEVER, IF IT IS FELT IMPERATIVE TO DEVELOP AN ENTIRELY NEW VOTING LIST AND IF REGISTRATION MUST BE PHYSICALLY PERFORMED BY EIGHT MEMBERS OF REGISTRATION BOARD, I BELIEVE I WILL HAVE TO GO WITH THE LARGE AMOUNT OF TIME AVAILABLE TO DO JOB AND ENOUGH PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE TO DO IT EFFECTIVELY. THIS MEANS REGISTRATION BOARD MUST BE COMPOSED OF WORKING TYPES. IF HOWEVER REGISTRATION BOARD WERE TO BE SUPERVISORY AND JUDICIAL, I WOULD APPOINT MORE PEOPLE IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO HANDLE THE DISTRICTS AND CONSIDER BEING USED TO USE ESTABLISHED DISTRICT AND MUNICIPAL MACHINERY AND CONSTITUTE Y

RATION BOARD ON HIGHER LEVEL. MUCH APPRECIATE YOUR CAREFUL CONSIDERATION.

5. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE VOTING LIST IS SEEN TO BE HONEST AND OPEN. IF WE START WITH THE EXISTING DISTRICT AND MUNICIPAL LIST, WE CAN MAKE IT PUBLIC AT ONCE AS A PRELIMINARY LIST. BOTH FACTIONS CAN EXAMINE IT AND MAKE PROTESTS OR REQUEST ADDITIONS. THEN THE REGISTRATION BOARD COULD BEGIN ITS APPELLATE FUNCTION AT ONCE. IF WE MUST DEVELOP A TOTALLY NEW LIST, IT CANNOT BE MADE PUBLIC UNTIL AFTER REGISTRATION IS COMPLETED MAY 16. FEAR THIS DE NOVO LIST MIGHT BE SERIOUSLY INCOMPLETE OR IMPERFECT. ERWIN L. CANHAM, PLEBISCITE COMMISSIONER.

AdeGraffenried/cg/4/25/75

To : Erwin Canham, Plebiscite Commissioner
From : Acting Director, Office of Territorial Affairs
Subject : Interpretation of Secretarial Order 2973

Ref your *(attached)* . With a few exceptions, we generally endorse your suggestions and believe they will generate a fair and impartial registration of voters in the most efficient and practical manner and will afford maximum participation in the plebiscite. More specifically, our views on your inquiries are as follows:

1. Designation of alternates to the Voter Registration Board is contemplated by Section 2 (A)(2), and is not limited, repeat not limited, by Section 6 (A) which creates the board and sets the number of its active membership. Alternative members of the VRB are by implication required to be appointed so as to fill any vacancy, temporary or otherwise in the active membership.

2. Administrative personnel ~~of existing voter registration machinery~~ may be used for actual registration of voters, but presence and involvement of Voter Registration Board is required to insure an impartial registration process. Eleven members of the VRB should therefore be active persons.

3. De Novo registration is required by the Secretarial Order. It is felt that the voter qualifications established by local law to register voters for district and municipal elections are not the same as those voter qualifications established for the plebiscite under the Secretarial Order.

14231

While use of the existing municipal voter registration lists may be used as a working guideline, those on the lists must actually be registered under the new requirements. ~~(It is felt that the eleven voter registration members should be active voter registration members.)~~ Acting DOTA sends