

We note with approval that this language involves no attempt to have the voter "recognize" the various effects of a "Yes" vote. The language appropriately contains no reference to the fact that if "Yes" prevails, the Constitution of the Northern Marianas Islands will not be "the supreme law of the land" in the Marianas where it conflicts with the Covenant or the United States Constitution, or federal laws applying to the Northern Marianas.

The language also requires no statement of recognition that if "Yes" prevails, citizens here will be required to pay income taxes at rates specified by the United States Government. Nor is there specific mention that no provision is made for our representation in the Congress of the United States, although Congress will have power to enact laws binding the people here.

Finally, there is no specific recognition that a "Yes" vote will mean that Marianas citizens will have no defense against a possible influx of United States citizens and businesses who may put great stress on the physical resources of the islands, drive up the price of land so that few Marianas citizens will have the wherewithal to buy or retain land, take jobs and business opportunities from people here, and ultimately may destroy the character of the Marianas as being essentially the home islands of Chamorro and Carolinian persons.

All of these considerations, and many more, are embraced within a "Yes" vote, yet you have rightly recognized that specific reference to them would be confusing and seen as having political or biased overtones.

"No" Ballot Is Confusing
Inconsistent And Biased

Your wording of the "No" ballot is in startling contrast. As with "Yes", various rights and possibilities may flow from voting "No." The difference is that the "No" ballot for some reason includes reference to a selected few of those possibilities. This confuses, and serves no discernible purpose whatever:

NO - I vote against Commonwealth in political union with the United States as set forth in the Covenant recognizing that, if Commonwealth is rejected, the Northern Mariana Islands will remain as a District of the Trust Territory with the right to participate with the other Districts in the determination of an alternative future political status.

14251