

We can only be confused by all this. English is your native language, not ours. Why would you not state your meaning plainly? If you mean to tell us that by voting "No", we will be deprived of the right to negotiate separately with the United States for Commonwealth or some alternative political status, why do you not say that? Why merely suggest the absence of rights by naming one right which we will have?

If no implication that a "No" vote will deprive us of the right to continue separate negotiations is intended, then we ask deletion of that language from the "No" ballot.

D. "No" Language Unnecessarily Injects Bias And Emotion Into The Vote - Finally, we believe it only fair to apprise you of a general impression that exists in the Northern Marianas. Many people here contend that the reference in the "No" ballot to "other Districts" has been inserted, not to assist voters to understand the issue before them, but to encourage them to cast "Yes" ballots for emotional reasons, which almost warrant the label racism.

You surely are aware that significant numbers of persons in the Northern Marianas consider themselves somehow inherently superior to other Micronesian peoples. It is not an overstatement to say that some persons would opt for practically any form of political arrangement with almost any nation, in order to separate from other Micronesians, thereby confirming their own superiority.

Most unfortunately the present "No" language plays upon this aspiration for superiority. The "No" ballot will pointedly suggest to the voter, at the crucial moment, that a "No" vote means further participation with the other Trust Territory districts. As already pointed out, that is not necessarily so. A "No" vote will not alter the period of time during which the Northern Marianas will remain a Trust Territory district, and it need not preclude the possibility of separate political status, even Commonwealth, for the Marianas.

Nevertheless the plain implication is there. This will cause some persons to cast their plebiscite ballot, not on the basis of being for or against "Commonwealth as set forth in the Covenant", but instead because of their desire to be seen as distinct from and superior to persons in the "other Districts."

We acknowledge this may be the motivating factor for many persons regardless of the ballot wording. This does not alter the fact that ballot language should be aimed at minimizing, not maximizing, such undesirable motivation.

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