

OFFICE OF THE PLEBISCITE COMMISSIONER

Mariana Islands District

Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950

Mr. Schmitz
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Erwin D. Canham
Plebiscite Commissioner

Post Office Box 185
Capitol Hill Rural Branch

May 16, 1975

*Schmitz to plant up
report*

Mr. Joseph Bogner
Immigration and Naturalization Service
Post Office Box DX
Agana, Guam 96910

Dear Mr. Bogner:

On Tuesday, June 17, 1975, any/all Trust Territory citizens domiciled in the (Northern) Mariana Islands District will participate in a plebiscite exercising their right of self-determination - whether they wish to become a Commonwealth of the United States in accordance with the terms of the Covenant signed on February 15, 1975. In order to permit these persons to express their choice, they must be registered.

Our registration form for "out-of-district residents" states: "My permanent domicile in the Mariana Islands District is.... I claim the Mariana Islands as my domicile. ("Domicile" is defined as "that place where a person maintains a residence with the intention of continuing such residence for an unlimited or indefinite period, and to which such person has the intention of returning whenever he is absent, even for an extended period.")" Last week we conducted a registration drive on Guam. According to our records, approximately 187 people registered. 89 of these were identified as students attending the University of Guam or other schools.

We have accepted without question the applicant's statement that he (or she) claims the Mariana Islands as his (or her) domicile. If their registration is not contested, and/or disallowed, they will be permitted to vote at the June Plebiscite.

Our questions to you are: What effect does their claim that they are domiciled in the Mariana Islands have on their "Guam status" - whatever that may be? As we stated previously, we are perfectly willing to

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accept their information and, as a consequence, permit them to vote in June. If their "Guam status" is to be adversely affected, we feel that they should be aware of this possibility. In your judgment, does their residence and status on Guam, such as possession of an alien registration card, or application for U. S. citizenship, or indeed their possession of U.S. citizenship itself, invalidate their claim to domicile in the Northern Marianas and hence their right to vote in the forthcoming plebiscite?

We would appreciate, therefore, an immediate response to this inquiry so that we can take appropriate action. We realize that this request places an additional burden on your already overtaxed office, but the issue is extremely important and time is limited.

Sincerely yours,

Erwin D. Canham

Erwin D. Canham
Plebiscite Commissioner

cc: Director, Office of Territorial Affairs ✓
High Commissioner
District Administrator, Mariana Islands

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