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Micronesia Vote Boycott Is Urged

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SAIPAN — Voters in the Marshalls and Marianas are being urged not to vote today in the Micronesia-wide referendum.

Unlike most elections, where "getting people out to vote" is the major concern, today's referendum is different.

Even though many politicians and officials agree the nonbinding referendum results will be "inconclusive," officially the election is on, and legally it must be conducted in each district.

The purpose of the referendum, according to the

law enacted last January, is "to ascertain the wishes of the people of Micronesia with respect to their future political status choice, the unity of Micronesia and the role of the congress as a negotiating agency on behalf of the Micronesian people.

Many observers felt a bill postponing or canceling the referendum would be passed at the Congress of Micronesia (COM) special session that ended last week. Two bills were introduced to delay the referendum, but neither was acted on.

One bill seeking to delay the referendum date was introduced by Palau Sen. Roman Tmetuchl

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and the other by Marianas representatives Herman R. Guerrero and Oscar C. Rasa.

A bill appropriating an additional \$30,000 to pay for the referendum was passed.

People in the Marianas, who expected their islands to be administered separately from the rest of Micronesia by this date, are particularly confused about the referendum when they voted just three weeks ago to become a commonwealth of the United States.

About 30 concerned Marianas citizens came to the opening session of the district legislature yesterday to express their confusion over the referendum.

Legislature President Vicente Santos explained that in the Marshalls, District Administrator Oscar DeBrum was advising the Marshallese that it was not necessary to vote. Santos indicated it would be good if Marianas District Administrator Francisco Ada would also advise the people (in the Marianas) not to vote in the referendum.

"yes" or "no" to each future status choice, making it impossible for a preference to be indicated.

—With respect to future status, shall Micronesia choose:

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| a. Independence — and become a fully independent Sovereign nation? | Yes—
No— |
| b. Commonwealth of the United States — joining the American political family permanently? | Yes—
No— |
| c. Free association with the United States — in a relationship which may be terminated or changed in the future? | Yes—
No— |
| d. Statehood — becoming a state of the United States of America? | Yes—
No— |
| e. The present status — remaining indefinitely as a United Nations Trust Territory administered by the U.S.? | Yes—
No— |
| f. Other than above? | |