

November 12, 1975

The Honorable _____
United States Senate
Washington, D. C.

Dear _____:

This letter is to urge your favorable vote on the Covenant to establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in political union with the United States of America. This legislation (H. J. Res. 549 as amended) is scheduled to come before the Foreign Relations Committee for mark-up on Thursday afternoon, November 13, and before the Armed Services Committee for a hearing on Monday, November 17.

The Northern Marianas comprise an area and a people whom I know well. I have visited them and I know firsthand their long and earnest political aspirations. They are Hawaii's neighbors in the Pacific, and over the past 30 years of U. S. administration, we in Hawaii have welcomed many of them to our schools and universities. We know them as friends and we hope to know them also as fellow Americans.

The Northern Marianas are even closer to, even within sight of, the U. S. Territory of Guam. In fact, only an accident of history has separated these two areas whose people maintain close family ties across the 40 miles of ocean between them. Now they wish to live under the same flag and share the same citizenship.

The Congress has been interested and involved in these islands of the Pacific and their political destiny since World War II, and the Interior Committees of both the Senate and the House have been kept informed at every step of the negotiations for the Covenant. Although I am not a member of that Committee, my colleagues and I who have special interest in this development have been consulted continuously, and I have met with many Mariana leaders.

The people of the Northern Marianas have been telling the U. S. Government for 25 years that they want political union with the U. S. They negotiated the Commonwealth Covenant with us to that end and approved it by a 78.8 percent majority in a U. N.-observed plebiscite last June. Now the matter is on the threshold of resolution in a manner that does honor to our country and complies fully with the spirit and the ideals for which the U. N.

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Trusteeship system was created. It is true to the traditional American commitment of self-determination for a people for whom we have been responsible for a quarter of a century.

The Covenant is clearly the choice of the people of the Northern Marianas and is likewise fully in accord with both our national interests and our international responsibilities.

I urge you to vote yes in your respective committees so that the full Senate may act promptly in joining the House in approving the Covenant for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Sincerely yours,

Hiram L. Fong

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