

December 26, 1975

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The Honorable Charles H. Percy
United States Senate
4321 Dirksen (NSOB) Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Percy:

We, the elected and appointed leaders, members of the civic and community groups, and the common people of the Northern Mariana Islands are writing to you to humbly ask for your assistance in our efforts to gain the support of the United States Senate for its favorable and prompt approval of the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Covenant.

Senator Percy, we need your help and understanding to make possible our desire to be a part of the United States and to be brought together with our brother and cousins in Guam under the American flag.

We are humbly asking for your help and understanding in light of your long stated commitment to the human factors in national decisions.

We are aware of your proposed amendment to the Covenant to delay action on it, and we respectfully request you to reconsider your proposal in light of the following:

First, delaying action on the Covenant would deny to the people of the Northern Marianas substantially increased and legally secured rights of self-government. These rights -- promised under the Trusteeship Agreement -- will be denied the people of the Marianas if congressional action is delayed.

Second, deferral of action on the Covenant will serve no useful purpose. There is no possibility that the people of the Marianas will ever voluntarily agree to join in a common political status with the other five districts of Micronesia. Our differences are far too great, and delay cannot change this fundamental political fact.

Third, all of the information that is needed to make a sound judgment on the Covenant is before the Congress now. In this connection, we recognize your concern regarding the status of the other five districts upon separation. As you are aware, members of the Congress of Micronesia together with our representatives have developed some basic understandings regarding problems that the Congress of Micronesia is concerned about during separate administration. A letter to you on this matter has been sent. The letter notes that agreement in principle has been reached and virtually all of the issues reached by the Congress of Micronesia and that neither the Congress of Micronesia nor the Marianas representatives believe that the few remaining issues pose any problems that would warrant delay congressional action of the Covenant.

Fourth, delay threatens to extend the Trusteeship Agreement into the indefinite future, which is plainly inconsistent with our mutual interest in bringing the trusteeship to a prompt and honorable conclusion. Congressional approval of the Covenant at this time would provide concrete evidence of the willingness of the United States to terminate the Trusteeship Agreement as soon as the peoples of Micronesia have expressed their desire with respect to their political future.

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Finally, rejection of the Covenant, whether in the form of deferral or not, would deny the people of the Marianas their basic rights of self-determination. Once the United States undertook the responsibilities of an Administering Authority under the United Nations Trusteeship Agreement, it undertook obligations to the people of Micronesia different from those which it has for any other people outside the United States. The theoretical discussions of international law advanced by opponents of the Covenant cannot obscure two basic facts:

(1) Previous trusteeships have been terminated by dividing the dependent territory into separate political entities, so it would not be unprecedented if Micronesia were not to remain a single political entity after termination; and

(2) Rejection of the Covenant would amount to forcing the people of the Marianas into a political arrangement with the other five districts contrary to the expressed wishes of all the people of Micronesia.

Opponents of the Covenant seem to be saying that the peoples of Micronesia -- both those of the Marianas and those of the other five districts -- should be forced into a common political status whether they like it or not. We do not think that the Senate should or will accept this proposition, for it would deny us the basic human rights that the United States has long defended.

Senator Percy, we want to stress the fact that the Northern Marianas have never been a part of the islands that constitute the Carolines and the Marshalls, but rather a part of the Marianas archipelago. The people of the Northern Marianas have been moved around among all of the islands of the Marianas by the Spanish, the Germans and the Japanese. There are many families that are currently divided with some members of the extended families in the Northern Marianas and other members on Guam. These families desire to be united once again under the same flag. The people of the Northern Marianas have never felt an affinity for the Palauans, the Marshallese, the Yapese, the Trukese, or other ethnic and cultural groups which make up the Caroline and Marshall Islands.

Our desire to become a permanent part of the United States is a deeply-held desire based on our ethnic, culture, geographic, linguistic, religious and family identification with Guam and our recognition of the political stability and freedoms inherent in American citizenship and our desire to obtain economic opportunities to enable us to develop a productive and self-sufficient economy. This desire for permanent membership in the American political family was not derived from any moves by the United States military or the Administration. It originated among the people. This desire and sentiment is therefore based on firm convictions and there is absolutely no chance that they will ever be changed in the direction of joining the other islands of the Trust Territory in a loose and temporary relationship with the United States. The Northern Marianas would not object to the other islands of the Trust Territory remaining with them on the condition that their common political status be a close and permanent relationship with the United States. However, it has been clear for many years that the other island groups do not desire such a political status. The recently completed Micronesian Constitution would establish a Federated States of Micronesia without close and permanent relations with the United States. The people of the Northern Marianas would never accept living under such a constitution. Delaying action on the Covenant would serve no useful purpose in changing the political status desire of the Marianas' people.

We want to state again that agreement has been reached in principle and in substance between the Northern Marianas and the Congress of Micronesia for separate administration and that both see an early separation as a mutual benefit. A delay in the Senate's approval of the Covenant, even if the terms of the delay permitted separate administration, would leave the question of our future political status in doubt, and will create uncertainties and make impossible the rational planning for such matters as relocation of the capital and the economic programs for both sides. The final political goal of the Marianas must be known before the economic development plans can be formulated and executed. This is also true for the other five districts of Micronesia. Delay would also complicate matters for the other five districts of Micronesia, especially their course of economic development and the ratification of their draft constitution. The involuntary participation of the Northern Marianas in the political processes of these other islands, mandated by law although both sides have irreversibly started down different roads, would harm the interests of both parties.

We are certain that you recognize that the entire matter of the future political status, including the detrimental effects of a delay of approval of the Commonwealth Covenant, is a complicated one.

We ask that you review this letter carefully in the interest of assisting us to reach our political status objective as well as the political status objective of the other five districts of Micronesia.

We understand that certain members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will be visiting our island in early next year. We would like to extend our invitation for you to come out and visit us at this opportune time so that you can see the situation firsthand and arrive at a firm understanding of the situation, which is of vital importance to our people.

In closing, Senator Percy, once again, we are appealing to you for your help because of your interest in the welfare of our people. We can assure you that your visit to our island will be most beneficial to you in understanding this very complicated matter, and your visit would undoubtedly be beneficial to us in our strong desire to join the American political family.

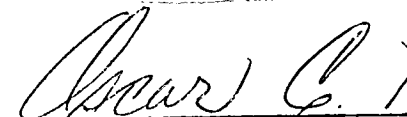
On behalf of all of our people, we want to thank you for your interest and understanding, and we wish you and your family the very best for the Christmas holiday and the New Year.

Respectfully yours,


MARIANAS DELEGATION, CONGRESS OF MICRONESIA


 Senator Pedro A. Tenorio, Chairman

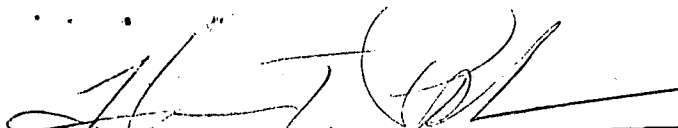

 Senator Olympia T. Borja

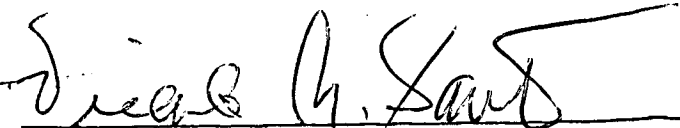

 Congressman Oscar C. Rasa

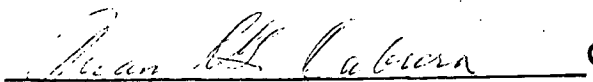

 Congressman Herman R. Guerrero


 Congressman-elect Herman T. Palacios

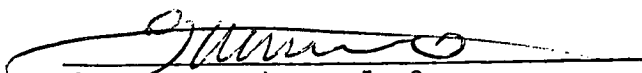
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Congressman-elect Herman Palacios
Congress of Micronesia

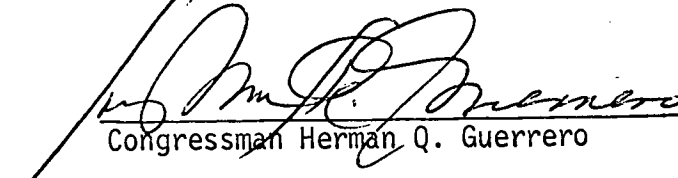

President Vicente N. Santos
Mariana Islands District Legislature

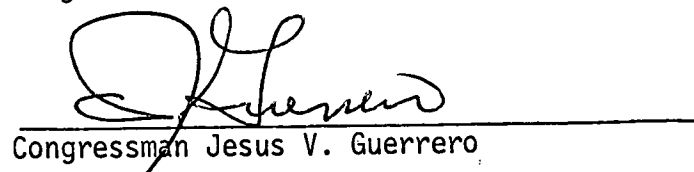

Juan L.G. Cabrera, Vice-President
Mariana Islands District Legislature

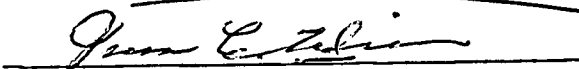

Congressman Daniel T. Muna


Congressman Larry I. Guerrero


Congressman Manuel D. Muna



Congressman Herman Q. Guerrero



Congressman Jesus V. Guerrero

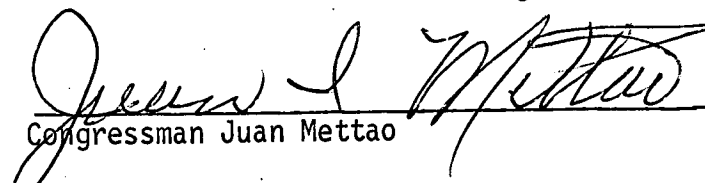

Congressman Juan C. Diaz

*
Congressman Herman M. Manglona

Congressman Julian S. Calvo


Congressman Francisco M. Diaz


Congressman Ricardo R. Duenas


Congressman Juan Mettao


Congressman Santiago B. Magofna

*
Congressman Benjamin T. Manglona

* OFF ISLAND OR COULD NOT BE REACHED

Edward DLG Pangelinan
Edward DLG Pangelinan, Chairman
Marianas Political Status Commission

Francisco T. Palacios
Francisco T. Palacios

*
Joaquin Pangelinan

Jose R. Cruz
Jose R. Cruz

Juan DLG Cabrera
Juan DLG Cabrera

Pedro A. Tenorio
Pedro A. Tenorio

*
Bernard Hofschneider

*
Benjamin T. Manglona

Johannes Taimanao

Oscar C. Rasa
Oscar C. Rasa

Vicente T. Camacho
Vicente T. Camacho

Vicente N. Santos
Vicente N. Santos

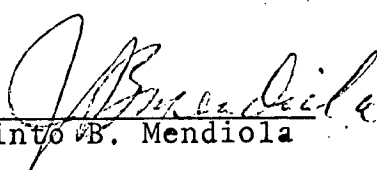
Daniel T. Muna
Daniel T. Muna


*
Felix Rabauliman

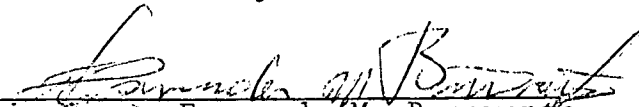
Manuel A. Sablan
Manuel A. Sablan

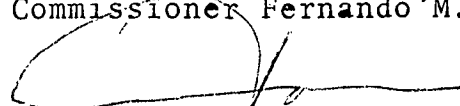
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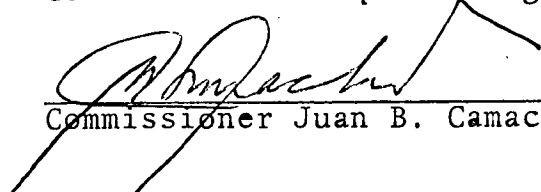
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Commissioner Jacinto B. Mendiola



Commissioner Alexandro Barcinas

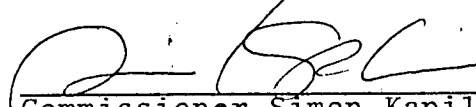

Commissioner Fernando M. Benavente

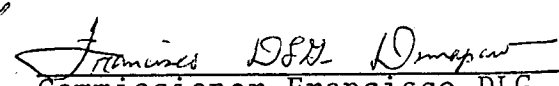

Commissioner Joaquin M. Aguan



Commissioner Juan B. Camacho



Commissioner Juan B. Tudela


Commissioner Joaquin D. Cepeda


Commissioner Simon Kapileo


Commissioner Francisco DLG. Demapan


Commissioner Jose Norita


Commissioner Perdencio Cabrera

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Vicente D. Sablan
Vicente D. Sablan, Mayor
Municipality of Saipan

Vicente T. Camacho
Vicente T. Camacho, Speaker
Saipan Municipal Council

Juan D.L.G. Demerzon
Councilman Juan D.L.G. Demerzon

Pedro R. Guerrero
Councilman Pedro R. Guerrero

Egredino M. Jones
Councilman Egredino M. Jones

Jose Q. Guerrero
Councilman Jose Q. Guerrero

Pedro T. Nakatsukasa
Councilman Pedro T. Nakatsukasa

* *Joaquin I. Pangelinan*
Councilman Joaquin I. Pangelinan

Joaquin P. Villanueva
Councilman Joaquin P. Villanueva

Antonio A. Santos
Councilman Antonio A. Santos

Joaquin B. Cruz
Councilman Joaquin B. Cruz

Roman Tuilla
Councilman Roman Tuilla

Concepcion Q. Santos
Councilman Concepcion Q. Santos

Gregorio M. Quiangua
Councilman Gregorio M. Quiangua

Albert S. Camacho
Councilman Albert S. Camacho

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Francisco S. Chong
Francisco S. Chong
District Administrator's
Representative, Tinian

Felipe C. Mendiola
Felipe C. Mendiola
Mayor of Tinian

Herman M. Manglona
Herman M. Manglona
Member, Marianas District Legislature

Harry L. Cruz
Harry L. Cruz
Speaker, Tinian Municipal
Council

Bernard V. Hofschneider
Bernard V. Hofschneider
Tinian Representative, MPSC

Jose R. Cruz
Jose R. Cruz
Tinian Representative, MPSC

Franklin T. Cabrera
Franklin T. Cabrera
Representative, Tinian Minority
Political Party

Antonio S. Borja
Antonio S. Borja
Representative, Tinian Majority
Political Party

Silvestre T. Cruz
Silvestre T. Cruz
Member, Tinian Municipal Council

Alfonso S. Borja
Alfonso S. Borja
Member, Tinian Municipal Council

Vicente S. Sablan
Vicente S. Sablan
Vice-Speaker, Tinian
Municipal Council

Leonardo F. Diaz
Leonardo F. Diaz
Member, Tinian Municipal Council

Silvestre Palacios
Silvestre Palacios
Member, Tinian Municipal Council