

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

January 17, 1976

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to urge you to support the early approval of HJR 549, as amended -- a joint resolution which I transmitted to the Congress last July to approve the "Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America." The House has already approved this legislation and the Senate Interior Affairs Committee reported it out favorably last October.

Approval by the Senate of the Marianas Covenant, which was negotiated over a period of more than two years in close consultation with members of the Congress, will be a major step toward the fulfillment of our international Trusteeship obligations. It is consistent with the national interests and foreign policy of the United States.

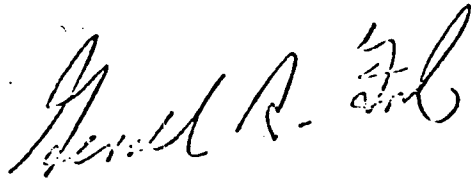
I attach particular importance to the fulfillment of our pledge to give the peoples of the Northern Mariana Islands and the rest of the Trust Territory the right to choose freely their own political future. The people in the Northern Mariana Islands have spoken overwhelmingly in favor of union with the United States in a plebiscite observed by the United Nations last June. I feel we should demonstrate U. S. respect for the due process of self-determination by granting the island inhabitants their wish. Approval by your Committee and the full Senate of HJR 549, as amended, will permit them to move forward without delay toward full self-government as the Covenant provides.

Approval of the Covenant will also be taken as a sign of good faith on the part of the United States in other parts of Micronesia. The Congress of Micronesia representing all the districts has supported Congressional approval of the Covenant. It would serve no purpose to delay acting on the freely expressed wishes of the people of the Northern Marianas while we work to resolve the future status of the rest of Micronesia, again on the basis of self-determination.

Since a defeat or an indefinite delay could indeed adversely affect the long term interests of all parties concerned, I hope the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will take early action to report favorably HJR 549, as amended, with a recommendation for its speedy approval by the full Senate.

For your information, I am enclosing two fact sheets on the Marianas Covenant. Your support for this important legislation is needed and will be appreciated.

Sincerely,



Honorable John Sparkman  
Chairman, Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, D. C. 20510

Identical letter sent to Chairman, Senate Armed Services Committee,  
Ranking Minority Members of Senate Foreign Relations and  
Senate Armed Services Committees