

COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION - NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

1. ARTICLE II, SECTION 3: COMPOSITION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

- a. A composition of 30 members is much too high based on the number of population to be represented, too costly to operate.
- b. Recommendation: Tinian & Aguigan -2 Member, Rota-3 Member, Saipan -15 and Northern Islands -1 Member.

2. ARTICLE II, SECTION 2: COMPOSITION OF THE SENATE

- a. A composition of nine (9) members again is a bit too high and again very costly to operate:
- b. Recommendation: Tinian & Aguigan - 2, Rota-2, Saipan-2 and until the islands north of Saipan has a chartered municipality or until they reach at least 1,000 population, then should be accommodated with 2 members, but not at this time.

3. ARTICLE II SECTION 2c, ARTICLE II, SECTION 3b, ARTICLE V, SECTION 3 and ARTICLE VI, SECTION 2a.

- a. All have a different age qualification and I believe that the present draft on age qualification should be made uniform to age 25, rather than a 21 for the house or a 25 for the senate and the mayor and a 30 for the Washington Representative;
- b. Recommendation: I believe the best age for any individual to serve in a public office should be 25 (compromise age).

4. ARTICLE II, SECTION 8 - ADVICE & CONSENT

- a. I believe that there were several factors why many of the witnesses have testified against the present draft (Past with the Senate) because then Rota and Tinian will become a majority in this particular situation, but, personally, I believe that our neighbors and friends will be impartial, unbiased and will be consistent in their decision when the time comes.
- b. Recommendation: Should leave the Advice & Consent with the Senate and should be a joint House and Senate.

5. ARTICLE II, SECTION 11 - COMPENSATION OF THE LEGISLATORS

- a. I believe that the initial amount as presented in the Draft Constitution is modest, provided, however that the number of Senators and Congressmen are reduced as recommended above.
- b. Recommendation: The Speaker of the House should be given a slightly higher salary (added into the present Draft Constitution) than the rest of the membership. The rest of the membership should stay as recommended in the present Draft Constitution.

6. ARTICLE III, SECTION 2 - QUALIFICATION OF THE GOVERNOR

- a. In addition to the residency requirements, it is important that at least this important position should continue to be maintained by our people here in the Northern Marianas. A simple residency requirement is too unrestrictive; a Filipino who is a U.S. Citizen or an American from New York can easily become elected after meeting all the residency and domiciliary requirements.
- b. Recommendation: Should include in addition to the residency and domiciliary requirement that a person to be eligible should also be born within the jurisdiction of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, except those born on the island of Kwajalein prior to the effective date of the Constitution of the Northern Mariana Islands.

ARTICLE III, SECTION 4 - TERM OF OFFICE FOR THE GOVERNOR

- a. I believe that a three (3) term as presented in the Draft Constitution is not too long as some of the witnesses have testified, but a grace period should be provided in order for a person to be elected for a third term.

b. Recommendation: An individual may seek election for a third and final term, provided however that if a person was successful on a two (2) consecutive term (8 years), then in order to seek and be eligible for the third and final term, must rest or should not seek for third consecutive term but rest for four years, then may seek election after resting for four years.

8. ARTICLE V, SECTION 2 - TERM OF OFFICE FOR THE WASHINGTON REPRESENTATIVE

a. I believe that a two year term is much too short and much too costly, especially when our elected representative will not have the powers or the authority as Honorable Antonio B. WonPat from Guam or Honorable deLugo from the Virgin Islands, but a mere representative or equal to a Resident Commissioner.

b. Recommendation: Should amend the Present Draft Constitution and make it a four (4) year term until such time that we are authorized by the U.S. Congress for a Non-Voting Washington Delegate, ~~then~~

A complete provision or section should be included now to meet the future change by the U.S. Congress.

9. IF NOT UNCONSTITUTIONAL, PROBABLY MAKE CHAMORRO AND CAROLINIAN LANGUAGES AS A NATIONAL LANGUAGES OR AT LEAST FOR EMPLOYMENT IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTHERN MARIANAS.

*Don't get too optimistic
would want to push in
this particular area*

Joaquin I. Pangelinan
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