

**MEMORANDUM**

TO : Chairman  
Committee, Finance & Other Matters  
Second Constitutional Convention

FROM : Member, Chamorro/Carolinian Language Commission

DATE: 7-9-85

SUBJECT: Testimony on Delegate Proposal No. 293-85

In reference to Delegate Proposal No. 293-85, I am submitting to you and the Committee members on Finance & Other Matters my rationale as to why I am expressing my disapproval for such proposal.

From an educational perspective, the key assumptions of the aforementioned proposal is to alienate ourselves and shy away from the attempts in valuing our languages and cultures. At least in principles, it deemphasizes our languages and cultural values.

I am sure that the Chamorro/Carolinian of the Northern Marianas have cultures of a background different from that of the Anglo-American in the United States, and we should try to keep it and pass it down to our children. Evidently, some of our traditional customs have been atraditionalized due to the three components, Americanizing our language and heritage, cultural values and teaching styles which is implemented in American public education.

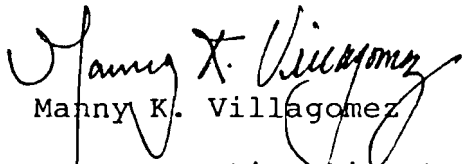
The concept of respeto and a rongfel illustrate the esteem held in traditional Chamorro/Carolinian communities and families for role and status definition. Age and sex are important determinants of roles and status. Older people hold more status and are accorded more respect than other members of the community; they are respected for their knowledge of the history of community and ethnic group, and for having had more experience in life. Parents in particular are accorded much respect. Children are expected to model themselves closely after their parents.

Within the family structure, roles are assigned in accordance with age. The eldest child is usually given more responsibility status being determined by how well responsibilities are fulfilled. In large families, it is common for older children to be responsible for the socialization of younger siblings.

Children and young adults who are well-behaved are referred to as rongfel or ma-eduka. To be well-educated socially is considered as important and at times even more important than being well-educated academically. Children who behave properly in social situation and fuilfill the responsibilities of their roles give honor to their family in the community.

If the indigeneous people of the Marianas are to develop positive attitudes toward officialization of the Chamorro/Carolinian and English languages, the proposal must give equal emphasis to all three languages; one or the other must not be relegated to the secondary role. Regardless of the socialcultural characteristics of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, equal status, value and importance of all three languages must be ensured.

Hopefully this testimony will enable your committee on Finance and Other Matters, to bring precision and focus to the issue of indigeneous language retention in the Northern Marianas in view of the language commission promulgated by Public Law 3-26.

  
Manny K. Villagomez

cc: Executive Director, Chamorro/Carolinian Language Commission  
Chairman, Chamorro/Carolinian Language Commission  
Members, Chamorro/Carolinian Language Commission