

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND OTHER ELECTED OFFICES

Public Hearing: Wednesday, June 21, 1995

SUMMARY OF ISSUES WITH RESPECT TO ARTICLE XV: EDUCATION  
BEING CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE

ARTICLE XV: EDUCATION

Section 1: Elementary and Secondary Education

Section 1(a): Terms of public education

1. Free education

- . Should primary and secondary education continue to be provided on a free basis in the Commonwealth?
- . Should fees be charged for primary and secondary education in the public schools?

2. Compulsory education

- . Should all primary and secondary grades continue to be compulsory?
- . Should education be voluntary?

3. Legislative language

- . The 1985 amendments contain extensive legislative language (everything after the first sentence). Should this legislative language be removed?

Section 1(b) and (c): Governance of education system

1. Centralized or decentralized

- . The 1976 Constitution provided for a centralized school system in which all schools are operated through one central system financed by the Commonwealth.

. Should the system be decentralized so that Saipan, Rota, and Tinian each has an independent school district responsible to the local government but with financial support from the Commonwealth?

2. Executive department or school board

. Should the system be changed by deleting the school board and providing for an executive department headed by an appointed superintendent?

3. Elected or appointed school board

. The 1976 Constitution provided that the education system should be governed by an appointed school board.

. The 1985 amendments provided that the education system should be governed by an elected school board.

. Should the system be changed back to an appointed board?

. Should the composition of the school board be changed?

- All elected?

- All appointed?

4. Size of the board

. Should the size of the board be increased or decreased?

Section 1(d): Qualifications for school board

1. Additional qualifications

. The 1985 amendments specified qualifications for the school board

- 25 years of age

- five year residence in the CNMI

- qualified to vote in the CNMI

. Should the qualifications for the school board be changed to add educational degrees or experience?

Section 1(e): Guaranteed percentage of Commonwealth revenues

1. The 1985 amendments provided that a guaranteed 15% of total Commonwealth revenues must be allocated to the public elementary and secondary education system.

- . Should this allocation be abolished?
- . Should this allocation be adjusted upward or downward?

Section 2: Post-secondary education

Section 2(a): Northern Marianas College

1. Place in the Constitution

- . The 1985 amendments added a section covering the Northern Marianas College.
  - Should the Northern Marianas College be covered in the Constitution?
  - Should this section be deleted?

2. Governance

- . The 1985 amendments provided that the College is governed by a board of regents appointed by the Governor, but left the size and composition to the legislature.
  - . Should the governance of the College be specified in more detail in the Constitution?

Section 2(b): Mission statement

- . The 1985 amendments provided a mission statement for the College. This is legislative language.
  - . Should the legislative language be deleted from the Constitution?

Section 2(c): Guaranteed percentage of Commonwealth revenues

. The 1985 amendments provided that a guaranteed 1% of total Commonwealth revenues must be allocated to them College.

. Should this allocation be abolished?

. Should this allocation be adjusted upward or downward?

Other issues

1. Should Chamorro and Carolinian be required subjects?
2. Should the open government provisions apply to the school system?
3. Should the Board of Education have taxing authority?
4. Should parents of school-age children be required to contribute school-oriented community service each year?