



POST CONVENTION COMMITTEE

Third Northern Mariana Islands Constitutional Convention

Joeten Commercial Center - Dandan
Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel. No. (670) 235-0843 • Fax No. (670) 235-0842

HERMAN T. GUERRERO, CHAIR
ESTHER S. FLEMING, VICE CHAIR
JOHN O. OLR. GONZALES, SECRETARY
THOMAS B. ALDAN, SAIPAN
DAVID Q. MARATTA, TINIAN
FELIX R. MOGIS, CAROLINIAN
JUSTO S. QUITUGUA, ROTA

OCT. 05 1995

The Honorable Froilan C. Tenorio
Governor
Commonwealth of the
Northern Mariana Islands
Caller Box 10007
Saipan, MP 96950

Dear Governor Tenorio:

We understand that the Legislature has transmitted for your consideration Senate Bill No. 9-209 postponing the vote on the amendments to the Constitution proposed by the Third Northern Marianas Constitutional Convention until March 1996. I am writing on behalf of the Post Convention Committee to request that you not approve this proposal.

As you know, the Legislature failed to act for many months on the requests of the Pre-Convention Committee and the Convention for deferral of the vote on the proposed amendments. Consequently the Post Convention Committee had no choice but to organize and begin to execute the necessary public education program in anticipation of a vote on the amendments at the general election as required by the Commonwealth Constitution. In addition, consultation with the Board of Elections confirmed the need to have the official ballots drafted and printed early in October in order to meet the November deadline and send the ballots to off-island voters and make them available for absentee voters.

All of this work was well underway by the time that the Legislature finally acted on the deferral proposal last week. Enclosed for your information is a summary of the public education campaign that is now underway. I am sure that you have seen the very detailed descriptions of the 19 amendments that are being published on a daily basis by both the Marianas Variety and the Saipan Tribune. The public meetings to date have been very useful and the Committee is confident that the voters will be fully informed regarding the proposed amendments by the time they are asked to vote on them in early November.

Deferral of the vote on the proposed amendments until March serves no useful purpose. The Committee has seen no evidence that the proposed amendments will become entangled with the campaigns being conducted by candidates for political office, the Convention was thoroughly non-partisan in nature and the proposed amendments are addressed to the institutions and practices of the Commonwealth government and not to the policies or actions of any particular office or government official. Indeed, deferral of the vote will involve the expenditure of additional funds which could be better spend on other important Commonwealth programs and services.

The proposed amendments are the result of the hard work of 27 delegates elected to review and revise the Constitution as they thought appropriate. The delegates identified many

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important problems that they decided should be addressed by proposed amendments to the Constitution. Their deliberations were extensively publicized during the Convention's 60 days and the public meetings and hearings held by the Convention were well attended. The Committee believes that these amendments should be placed before the voters at the general election when these recollections and the public education campaign will have served to inform the voters fully regarding the significance of the proposed amendments that they are being asked to ratify.

If the Committee can be of further assistance to you with respect to your consideration of Senate Bill 9-209, please let me know.

Sincerely,


HERMAN T. GUERRERO
Chair, Post Convention Committee

cc: Members, Post Convention Committee