

By Herman T. Guerrero, Chair
Post-Convention Committee

Only five weeks remain before the March 2 vote on the amendments proposed by the Third Northern Mariana Islands Constitutional Convention. We hope that every qualified voter will register before the deadline of February 1!

Up to this point in the political education program, the Post-Convention Committee has concentrated on the broadest possible distribution of newspaper inserts that set forth in detail the changes recommended by the Convention. We are very appreciative of the work of the Tribune, the Variety, the North Star and others in making sure that the English and Chamorro versions of the proposed amendments get wide distribution. There will be further publication of these inserts, including a Carolinian version, over the next few weeks. We hope that the voters will save these inserts, mark them up with questions, and bring their questions and concerns to the public meetings that are coming up in February.

The Committee has gotten good feedback about these inserts. People appreciate the fact that the descriptions are factual, not argumentative, and provide a basis for the voters to decide whether they think the amendments are an improvement over the status quo. That is, after all, the basic issue before the voters on March 2. It is surprising that these descriptions have been dismissed as "propaganda" in these pages by someone "trained in the law" who should know better.

Beginning on February 5, the Post-Convention Committee will conduct 15 village meetings in the evenings to discuss the proposed amendments -- three on Rota, three on Tinian, and the rest on Saipan. Beginning on February 6, ten meetings are scheduled for government employees from specific agencies with the full support of Governor Tenorio. The dates and locations of these meetings will be extensively publicized and the Committee urges every interested voter to attend at least one of these meetings. This is the opportunity to raise questions and to explore the reasoning behind the proposed amendments.

Before the November election, the elected Convention delegates appeared before several groups to explain the amendments and answer questions. These meetings were very successful. The delegates are available now to participate in meetings with business or other groups. If your group would like to have such a meeting, call the Con-Con office (235-0843) and let us know.

In addition to these public and group meetings, Convention delegates and representatives will be explaining the amendments on radio and TV.

The Post-Convention Committee is aware that some of the proposed amendments appear to have aroused more questions than others. The proposed amendments to Article 2 (Legislative Branch) and Article 13 (Education) are two examples. The Committee is concerned, however, that much of the discussion about these proposed amendments (and some others) is

misinformed. We urge the voters who have concerns about the amendments to read the materials that have been distributed, attend some of the meetings, and make certain that they have had their questions satisfactorily addressed. Additional copies of materials on individual amendments or all 19 amendments are available at the Con-Con offices (Joeten Commercial Center - Dandan).

The Post-Convention Committee stands ready to assist in any way possible to ensure that the vote on March 2 is based on the merits of the proposed amendments -- not on politics, or personalities, or misunderstandings of what is at stake.