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PRESS RELEASE FROM POST CONVENTION COMMITTEE

The voters have spoken. Despite the low turnout on Saipan and Rota in particular, there is certainly no reason to doubt that popular sentiment was opposed to ratification of the amendments proposed by the Third Constitutional Convention.

The elected delegates always knew that they were asking the voters to evaluate a broad range of important amendments. Perhaps after more time has passed, we will be able to reflect on what we as a community have learned from this experience -- what the people wanted from their delegates and why they rejected what emerged from the Convention.

We are proud of the work of the Third Constitutional Convention. We considered problems that we believed were -- and continue to be -- of great importance to the Commonwealth. Included among these issues were

the preservation of our public lands for future generations,
the size and cost of Commonwealth government,
reduction of our deficit,
a constitutional basis for our Supreme Court,
real legislative authority for our local governments,
improvement of public education at the local level,
keeping family lands in the hands of the family,
clear-cut rules for enforcing Article 12 ,
more openness in the passing of laws,
more cooperation between the executive and legislative branches of government,
strengthening the civil service system.

The full list of what the Convention delegates wanted to do was a long one. Perhaps too long to be digested and evaluated by the voters at any single time.

But we hope that even the opponents of the amendments will concede that these issues are real ones that should be addressed by the Commonwealth in the near future. We hope that the legacy of the Third Constitutional Convention will prove to be the highlighting of the Commonwealth's problems, the options for solving these problems, and the need to address them in the future.

The task is now in the hands of the executive and legislative branches of the Commonwealth government. They and the voters who elected them will have to decide whether to build on the legacy of the Convention so that those portions of its work that have broad support in the community will become part of the Commonwealth's structure and policies. We are confident that they will rise to the challenge in the months and years ahead.