

United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

JUL 30 1973

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The President

FROM: Secretary

SUBJECT: Presidential Appointments to the Northern Mariana Islands
Commission on Federal Laws

The Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (Public Law 94-241), requires the creation of the above Commission. Section 504 provides in pertinent part that:

The President will appoint a Commission on Federal Laws to survey the laws of the United States and to make recommendations to the United States Congress [as to their applicability to the Northern Marianas]... The Commission will consist of seven persons (at least four of whom will be citizens of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands who are and have been for at least five years domiciled continuously in the Northern Mariana Islands at the time of their appointment) who will be representative of the federal, local, private and public interests in the applicability of laws of the United States to the Northern Mariana Islands.

I recommend that you appoint the following people to the Northern Mariana Islands Commission of Federal Laws:

1. James A. Joseph, Under Secretary of the Interior. Mr. Joseph should be designated as Chairman.
2. Phillip Burton, Congressman from the Sixth District of California. Mr. Burton has been a member of Congress since 1964 and is now the Chairman of the Subcommittee on National Parks and Insular Affairs of the House Interior Committee. Mr. Burton was instrumental in the effort to obtain Congressional approval for the Northern Marianas Covenant. He is a lawyer.

3. Philip C. Sorensen, professor of law at the Ohio State University. Mr. Sorensen was the lieutenant governor of Nebraska from 1965 to 1967.

4. Jesus C. Borja, Assistant Director, Micronesia Legal Services Corporation, Saipan, Mariana Islands. Mr. Borja was graduated from the Georgetown University Law Center in 1974. Mr. Borja was nominated by the Governor of the Northern Mariana Islands.

5. Agnes M. McPhetres, researcher with the Northern Marianas Vocational Advisory Council. Mrs. McPhetres was the Northern Marianas Director for the White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals and the 1973 Chairperson, International Women's Year, for the Trust Territory and the Northern Marianas. Mrs. McPhetres was nominated by the Governor of the Northern Mariana Islands.

6. Edward DLG. Pangelinan, Northern Mariana Islands Representative to the United States. Mr. Pangelinan was the Chairman of the Marianas Political Status Commission that negotiated the Covenant with the United States. Mr. Pangelinan was nominated by both the Governor and the Legislature of the Northern Mariana Islands.

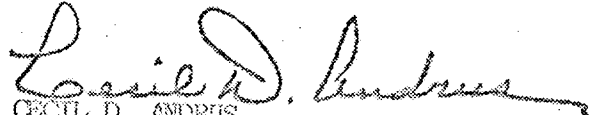
7. Jesus R. Sablan, vice president and general manager of J.C. Tenorio Enterprises, Saipan, Mariana Islands. Mr. Sablan has an undergraduate degree in business economics. Mr. Sablan was nominated by the Northern Marianas Legislature.

I believe these seven individuals will provide the proper balance required for the Commission. Their appointments will meet the statutory requirements outlined by the law and permit the important task of reviewing the application of Federal laws to go forward.

A further note. Since your friend Mr. Paul Austin, has recommended a Mr. Joseph F. Screen to be a member of this Commission, and I have not, an explanation is necessary.

Mr. Joseph F. Screen, is a United States citizen who has resided in the Northern Marianas for several years and who is now in private business there. Mr. Screen, who is well known to us as a former official of the Government of American Samoa and later the Government of the Trust Territory, would unquestionably prove knowledgeable about the area and he would, given his current employment, be representative of "private interests," which are among those the statute requires. His appointment, however, would have to displace one of the three non-Micronesians referred to above, because he is not a citizen of the Trust Territory. I think it important that the Under Secretary of the Interior serve, for this Department has a responsibility for the Northern Marianas; Congressman Burton is anxious to serve on this Commission, and I have confirmed this in a recent conversation.

Mr. Sorenson, it seems to us, ought also to serve, and could bring a perspective to the work of the Commission which would be particularly fresh. He alone has no current Northern Marianas connection; he has no personal or professional prejudices concerning the Northern Marianas and no basis for any biases; he is a lawyer (which Mr. Screen is not), and an academic lawyer at that, and thus especially suited for this kind of study. He would bring a particular strength to the Commission, which neither Mr. Screen nor any of the other six proposed members possess. Mr. Screen's strengths, on the other hand, are likely to be duplicated in large measure by others proposed above, because four will be intimately acquainted with the Northern Marianas, and one of those is also involved in private business there. For these reasons, I have not recommended Mr. Screen to be a member of the this Commission.


CECIL D. ANDRUS

Attachments