

I MINA'TRENTAI TRES NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN
2016 (SECOND) Regular Session

Bill No. 384 -33 (COE)

Introduced by: _____

R. J. Respicio

2016 OCT 10 PM 3:03 AM PAM

AN ACT TO AMEND § 5109(a) OF CHAPTER 5, TITLE 12, GUAM CODE ANNOTATED, TO PROVIDE A PREFERENCE FOR VETERANS IN ACCESS TO PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS AVAILABLE FOR RENT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF GUAM:

Section 1. Legislative Findings. *I Liheslatura Guåhan* finds that the problem of homeless veterans has become cause of national concern. It is estimated that as many 40,000 veterans are homeless on any given night. In addition to the root causes of all homelessness – extreme shortage of affordable housing, livable income and access to health care – a large number of displaced and at-risk veterans live with lingering effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and substance abuse. Furthermore, military occupations and training are not always transferable to the civilian workforce, creating challenges for veterans in seeking gainful employment. Those who have served our nation in the military, often in combat, are deserving of not only our respect but the support of the community in securing safe, clean housing in a supportive environment free of drugs and alcohol. For this reason, *I Liheslatura Guåhan* finds that the Guam Housing and Urban Renewal Authority, as the main public housing agency, should provide for a preference for veterans in the selection process for public housing rental units.

Section 2. § 5109(a) of Chapter 5, Title 12 of the Guam Code Annotated is amended to read:

1 “§ 5109. Duties of Authority with Respect to Tenant Selection.

2 Subject to such requirements as the Federal Government may impose
3 with respect to federally aided low-rent housing projects, which shall in any
4 event prevail, the Authority, in the operation and management of low-rent
5 housing projects, shall observe the following criteria:

6 (a) It may rent or lease the dwelling accommodations in a
7 housing project only to families who lack the amount of
8 income deemed necessary by the Authority to enable them, without
9 financial assistance, to secure decent, safe and sanitary dwellings,
10 within the area of operation of the Authority, and to provide an
11 adequate standard of living for themselves. The Authority shall charge
12 rentals which it determines to be within the financial reach of such
13 families. In the selection process, the Authority shall provide a
14 preference for any veteran. The preference shall extend to:

15 (1) The household of which the veteran is a member.

16 (2) The surviving household members of a deceased
17 service member or veteran who died of service-connected
18 causes, provided:

19 (i) The death occurred during active duty
20 service or within five years of discharge from service.

21 (ii) The death occurred not more than five years
22 from the date of application for housing.

23 The preference established by this section shall be cumulative with
24 any other preference allowed by the Authority for which the applicant
25 qualifies, so that veterans have priority over non service members and
26 nonveterans within each preference category.”