





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

Bill No. 517 <sup>(cor)</sup> -33

Introduced by:

D.G. RODRIGUEZ, JR.   
B.T. MCCREADIE   
T.R. MUÑA-BARNES   
R.J. RESPICIO 

**AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE UP TO SEVENTY TWO THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$72,500) FROM THE FISCAL YEAR 2017 GENERAL FUND REVENUES FOR GUAM'S MEMBERSHIP INTO THE WESTERN INTERSTATE COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION (WICHE) RELATIVE TO PROVIDING AFFORDABLE TUITION RATES FOR GUAM'S UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT OVER 150 INSTITUTIONS WHO ARE PART OF THE WICHE NETWORK.**

2016 MAY 13 PM 1:06 

1           **BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF GUAM:**

2           **Section 1. Legislative Findings and Intent.** *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* finds

3 that for six decades the Western Interstate for Higher Education (WICHE) is a

4 regional non-profit organization created by the Western Regional Education Compact

5 to facilitate resource sharing among the higher education systems of western states

6 and to increase accessibility of educational opportunities for students living in

7 WICHE member states and territories. Guam has the opportunity to join New

8 Mexico, Montana, Arizona, Utah, Oregon, Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, Alaska,

9 Washington, California, Nevada, Hawaii, North Dakota, South Dakota and the

10 CNMI, most of whom have been members since the 1950s, to further these

11 endeavors. Under the Compact, each state commits to support WICHE's operation

12 through annual dues established by the Commission. Member states will be able to

13 benefit by providing undergraduate student residents access to the Western

1 Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) Program. The WUE Program provides a reduced  
2 tuition at no more than 150% of the resident tuition rate at over 150 participating two  
3 and four year public institutions to all residents of member states. The normal tuition  
4 rates for out of state residents of these institutions are at least double or more the  
5 resident tuition rates. Graduate students are eligible for resident tuition for numerous  
6 educational programs through the WICHE consortium. As a member, our  
7 community will have access to following Student Exchange Programs: the Western  
8 Undergraduate Exchange (WUE), the Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP),  
9 the Professional Student Exchange (PSEP) and WICHE Internet Course Exchange  
10 (WICHE ICE).

11 *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* further finds that WICHE has already undergone the  
12 process for approval and has approved membership for the Pacific Island Territories  
13 and the Freely Associated State governments. The Commonwealth of the Northern  
14 Marianas (CNMI) government is the only island government to join under the  
15 Pacific Island Territories and has essentially paved the way for other territories such  
16 as Guam to gain approval and membership into WICHE. The annual dues for  
17 membership for all Pacific Island Territories and FSM governments is \$145,000,  
18 which can be divided proportionately by governments as they join. As the only  
19 government to join as a Pacific Island Territory, the CNMI pays an annual due of  
20 \$145,000. In its first year, the CNMI savings for 19 students was \$165,000. With  
21 Guam's potential membership into WICHE, the annual dues will be split with the  
22 CNMI, thereby requiring the government of Guam to annually commit no more than  
23 \$72,500.00. It is estimated that Guam will potentially have more than the 19 students  
24 the CNMI has enrolled and therefore the savings to Guam students will outweigh  
25 the investment of Guam's annual dues. Moreover, for an additional of \$15,000 per  
26 member (split proportionally), Guam will be eligible to the benefits under the

1 WICHE Mental Health Program whose mission is 1) to assist members in improving  
2 systems of care for mental health consumers and their families, and 2) to advance  
3 the preparation of a qualified mental health workforce in the West. Guam has  
4 benefitted from WICHE training to support objectives for federal system  
5 improvement grants and training in suicide prevention and Mental Health First Aid  
6 as well as consultation on accreditation options for inpatient/residential treatment in  
7 the past. Membership will permit our community to access WICHE's technical  
8 assistance and consultation services under its Mental Health Program.

9 *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* further finds that the 32<sup>nd</sup> Guam Legislature passed on  
10 February 1, 2014 Resolution 234-32 (COR) relative to supporting Guam's  
11 application for membership in the Western Interstate Commission for Higher  
12 Education. The unanimously adopted Resolution 234-32 (COR) resolved the people  
13 of Guam's support to become active members of WICHE and further urged the  
14 government of Guam to work with WICHE to cement Guam's status as a WICHE  
15 member.

16 It is the intent of *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* to enter Guam into the Western  
17 Interstate Commission for Higher Education, beginning in school year 2016 - 2017  
18 in order to provide the opportunity for Guam's students to enroll in two and four  
19 year programs by paying no more than 150% of resident tuition rates at participating  
20 WICHE institutions, providing resident rate tuition for multiple graduate programs  
21 and providing access under all of the Student Exchange Programs (WUE, WRGP,  
22 PSEP and WICHE ICE) provided to members under WICHE.

23 It is further the intent of *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* to join with the CNMI  
24 government in order to split the approximately \$145,000 annual dues and to  
25 welcome other Pacific Island Territories and Freely Associated State governments  
26 to participate in subsequent school years.

1           **Section 2. Guam's Membership into WICHE.** The Director of the  
2 Department of Administration *shall* submit necessary documents, no later than June  
3 15, 2016 Guam's to join the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education  
4 for beginning school year 2016-2017 as a co-member with the government of the  
5 Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Island. Guam's membership shall  
6 continue on an annual basis and its proportionate share be adjusted downward with  
7 the eventual inclusion of other government's from the Pacific Island Territories and  
8 the Freely Associated States.

9           **Section 3. Appropriation.** The sum not to exceed Seventy Two Thousand  
10 Five Hundred Dollars (\$72,500) is hereby appropriated from the Fiscal Year 2017  
11 General Fund revenues to the Department of Administration to fund Guam's  
12 proportionate share of its annual dues to the Western Interstate Commission for  
13 Higher Education for school year 2016-2017. Payment to WICHE *shall* be made no  
14 later than December 31, 2016 for Guam's first year membership. The Department  
15 of Administration shall, beginning in Fiscal Year 2018 submit as a separate line item  
16 on its annual budget request the funds necessary to continue Guam's membership  
17 into WICHE.

18           **Section 4. Statistics Report.** The Director of the Department of  
19 Administration *shall* formulate a report that provides statistics on the number of  
20 Guam students who have enrolled in participating WICHE institutions and the  
21 amount of savings each student has saved as a result of the reduced tuition rate. The  
22 Statistics Report shall be transmitted to the Speaker of *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* on an  
23 annual basis.

24           **Section 5. Severability.** If any provision of this Act or its application to any  
25 person or circumstance is found to be invalid or contrary to law, such invalidity shall  
26 not affect other provisions or applications of this Act that can be given effect without

- 1 the invalid provisions or application, and to this end the provisions of this Act are
- 2 severable.