





I MINA'TRENTA NA LIHESLATURAN GU HAN  
2009 (FIRST) Regular Session

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Resolution No. 30-160COR)

Introduced by:

F. F. Blas, Jr.   
T. R. Muña-Barnes   
J. T. Won Pat   
J. V. Espaldon   
v c. pangelinan

Relative to requesting the United States Congress to acknowledge the sacrifices of the people of Guam and to grant Guam full voting rights in the United States House of Representatives for all matters relating to and affecting Guam and the military buildup on Guam and for hearings to be conducted on Guam on legislation that relate to and affect Guam and the military buildup on Guam.

1 BE IT RESOLVED BY I MINA'TRENTA NA LIHESLATURAN  
2 GU HAN :

3 WHEREAS, over 233 years ago the forefathers of the United States of  
4 America established our great country on the premise that there should be no taxation  
5 without representation. Although not really about the taxes imposed by the British  
6 Parliament on the colonies, it was more about many in those colonies who believed  
7 that the lack of meaningful representation in the Parliament was an illegal denial of  
8 their rights; and

9 WHEREAS, the people of Guam (Chamorros) have remained steady and  
10 increasingly persistent in their call for political equality and civilian rule. This began  
11 in 1901 with a petition calling for a permanent civilian government; and

1           **WHEREAS**, in 1917 at the opening of the first Guam Congress, Tomas Calvo  
2 Anderson affirmed that “*It is high time that there be granted to the people, respectful,*  
3 *loyal and devoted to the Great American nation, the same rights that have been*  
4 *granted to the different states, territories and possessions... Our ideals are realized by*  
5 *the giving of that which by right should be granted, that is to say, the defining of the*  
6 *status of the Chamorro people.*”; and

7           **WHEREAS**, in 1926 and again in 1929, the Guam Congress adopted and  
8 endorsed petitions for the granting of U.S. citizenship to Chamorros. A few years  
9 later, the Guam Recorder of 1933 contained two statements, one by Congressmen  
10 Manuel F. Ulloa and Dr. Ramon M. Sablan and a second by Guam Postmaster James  
11 Underwood calling for American citizenship. In response, naval Governor Captain  
12 George A. Alexander endorsed this effort by transmitting the citizenship petition to  
13 the White House signed by 2,000 Chamorros; and

14           **WHEREAS**, there was dead silence from Washington D.C. officials; and

15           **WHEREAS**, in spite of the dead silence from Washington, D.C. in response to  
16 all these petitions, the push for citizenship and civil rights continued with the efforts  
17 of local political leaders and men of prominence. In 1936, Baltazar J. Bordallo and  
18 Francisco Baza Leon Guerrero made the long trip to Washington using donations from  
19 school children and their own funds to personally lobby the U.S. Congress for a  
20 citizenship bill; and

21           **WHEREAS**, a citizenship bill was introduced in 1937 and 1939 into both the  
22 75th and 76th Congresses where both bills eventually failed because of the Navy’s  
23 opposition; and

24           **WHEREAS**, during World War II, although Guam was a possession of the  
25 United States, her people were not citizens of the United States. Despite this,  
26 thousands of Chamorros were brutalized and enslaved by an enemy force who took  
27 out its aggression against the United States on them. Because of their loyalty,

1 patriotism, and belief in the United States, hundreds of Chamorros were killed by the  
2 Japanese aggressors before the island was recaptured by American forces on July 21,  
3 1944; and

4 **WHEREAS**, after World War II, one which Chamorros demonstrated great  
5 loyalty to the United States, some 600 Chamorro war veterans could and did become  
6 naturalized American citizens. In a January 1947 resolution, the Guam Congress  
7 requested Governor Charles A. Pownall (a Vice Admiral) to ask the U.S. Congress to  
8 grant American citizenship to Chamorros and pass organic legislation establishing a  
9 civilian government; and

10 **WHEREAS**, the Navy Department postponed action on this request while it  
11 awaited the results of a study commissioned by President Harry S. Truman's Secretary  
12 of Defense concerning Guam and American Samoa. That study was conducted to  
13 inspect and recommend changes in the government of American Samoa and Guam as  
14 well as one completed by a cabinet level committee; and

15 **WHEREAS**, both groups made nearly identical recommendations. They  
16 proposed that congressional legislation provide civilian government via an organic  
17 act, American citizenship, a bill of rights, and local legislative powers be established  
18 by law. Friends of Guam on the U.S. mainland, including former Governor Willis W.  
19 Bradley, then a congressman from California, lobbied for these changes and made  
20 Guam's plight a national issue; and

21 **WHEREAS**, what really broke the Navy's opposition and got President  
22 Truman's attention was the 1949 walkout of the Guam Congress over a serious  
23 disagreement with Governor Charles A. Pownall. Besides refusing to grant subpoena  
24 powers to the congress (the reason for the walkout), Governor Pownall also declared  
25 their seats vacant and stated that he would fill them by appointment. The walkout and  
26 the heavy military hand were reported in both The New York Times and The  
27 Washington Post and caught President Truman's attention. In early 1949 the President

1 ordered the Department of Interior to draft an Organic Act for Guam, approved it in  
2 May, and had it introduced into the 81st Congress. Hearings were held on Guam in  
3 late 1949 that led to numerous changes to the draft. Even the Navy testified in favor of  
4 the organic legislation. After all, it already had about thirty-six percent of Guam's  
5 land under its control; and

6 **WHEREAS**, in the summer of 1950, the U.S. Congress passed the Guam  
7 Organic Act and President Truman signed it into law on August 1, 1950. At a 1998  
8 celebration of the forty-eighth anniversary of the Organic Act, former Guam  
9 Congressman Carlos P. Taitano who was the only Chamorro present when President  
10 Truman signed the Organic Act publicly stated that the approval of the Organic Act  
11 *"... was the beginning of the decolonization of Guam. Unfortunately, almost half a*  
12 *century after ... the Chamorros are still trying to set up an island government without*  
13 *the bounds or restraints of colonialism."*; and

14 **WHEREAS**, In addition to the 435 voting members who represent districts  
15 throughout the United States, the House of Representatives features five non-voting  
16 seats. These seats are filled by representatives from the District of Columbia, the U.S.  
17 territories of American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands; and

18 **WHEREAS**, traditionally, delegates are permitted to serve on committees, as  
19 well as vote on legislation at the committee level, floor voting, however, was never  
20 permitted. The rights of non-voting members were expanded by rule changes in 1993  
21 and 2007, respectively; and

22 **WHEREAS**, In 2007, Congress changed the rules to allow delegates and the  
23 resident commissioner to vote on the House floor in the "Committee of the Whole,"  
24 whereby bills are debated and amendments are added. The rule, however, stipulated  
25 that if a delegate's vote was decisive, the committee would disband and a new vote  
26 would be taken without the non-voting members; and

1           **WHEREAS**, Guam has been the focus of both national and international  
2 discussions because of a major military buildup being planned; and

3           **WHEREAS**, it has been recognized at the highest levels of the United States  
4 government that the military buildup on Guam is necessary for the defense of our  
5 nation and the maintenance of peace in our region; and

6           **WHEREAS**, the military buildup has an estimated cost of over \$15 billion and  
7 will relocate approximately 30,000 active military, support, and dependent personnel  
8 to Guam. The buildup is anticipated to increase Guam's population by 25% over the  
9 next five years; and

10          **WHEREAS**, in the planning for the military buildup, Guam's voice has been  
11 relegated to pre-decisional planning meetings and quieted by a democratic process  
12 that prevents it's representative to Congress from participating in the full decision-  
13 making process; and

14          **WHEREAS**, in the recently passed House version of the Defense Authorization  
15 Act, there were provisions that were included dealing primarily with the military  
16 buildup on Guam. At least two of those provisions will significantly impact Guam  
17 long after the military construction is completed, and there is the possibility that other  
18 provisions may have similar effects; and

19          **WHEREAS**, further measures relating to the military buildup and Guam will  
20 be deliberated and decided over the course of the very near future, Guam's  
21 representative to Congress will not have the ability to participate fully in the decisions  
22 that will shape the future of our island; and

23          **WHEREAS**, for over six decades the people of Guam have been waiting for a  
24 formal resolution from our nation for a war that we neither wanted nor provoked; and

25          **WHEREAS**, in the Vietnam War, a conflict that relied heavily on the drafting  
26 of soldiers, Guam lost more of her sons than any other place in the United States per  
27 capita; and

1           **WHEREAS**, in the current War on Terror, Guam has already lost more than  
2 her share of her sons to defend the principles and way of life for our country; and

3           **WHEREAS**, along with the recognition by many U.S. military commanders of  
4 the exemplary performance of military units comprised of members from Guam,  
5 military recruitment levels on Guam have consistently exceeded levels reached  
6 anywhere else in our country; and

7           **WHEREAS**, the people of Guam continue to wonder if our sacrifices and  
8 continued patriotism will ever result in our ability to meaningfully participate in  
9 decisions that will affect our future; now, therefore, be it

10           **RESOLVED**, that *I Mina'Trenta na Liheslaturan Guåhan*, on behalf of the  
11 people of Guam, does hereby earnestly and urgently request the committed action of  
12 the members of the United States House of Representatives to provide full voting  
13 rights and privileges to Guam's representative to Congress for all matters relating to  
14 and affecting Guam and the military buildup on Guam; and be it further

15           **RESOLVED**, that *I Mina'Trenta na Liheslaturan Guåhan* further respectfully  
16 requests the United States House of Representatives to conduct hearings also on Guam  
17 for all matters relating to and affecting Guam and the military buildup on Guam so  
18 that the people of Guam can be provided the opportunity to meaningfully participate  
19 in the democratic process that will shape their future; and be it further

20           **RESOLVED**, that *I Mina'Trenta na Liheslaturan Guåhan* requests that the  
21 Executive Branch of the government of Guam also submit to the Speaker of the  
22 United States House of Representatives a letter of support for the requests expressed  
23 herein; and be it further

24           **RESOLVED**, that the Speaker certify, and the Secretary of the Legislature  
25 attest to, the adoption hereof, and that copies of the same be thereafter transmitted to  
26 the Honorable Barack H. Obama, President of the United States of America; to the  
27 Honorable Joseph Biden, Vice President of the United States; to the Honorable Robert

1 C. Byrd, Senate President Pro Tempore; to the Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of  
2 the House of Representatives; to the Chairman and Members of the Senate Committee  
3 on Energy and Natural Resources; to the Chairman and Members of the House  
4 Subcommittee on Insular Affairs; to the Chairman and Members of the Senate Armed  
5 Services Committee; to the Chairman and Members of House Armed Services  
6 Committee; to the Honorable Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Department of the Interior;  
7 to the Honorable Robert Gates, Secretary of Defense; to the Honorable Gregorio Kilili  
8 Camacho Sablan, the CNMI's Congressional Delegate to the United States House of  
9 Representatives; to the Honorable Madeleine Z. Bordallo, Guam's Congressional  
10 Delegate, U. S. House of Representatives; and to the Honorable Felix P. Camacho, *I*  
11 *Maga'lahaen Guåhan*.