

I MINA'TRENTAI SIETTE NA LIHESLATURAN GUÁHAN
RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No.	Sponsor	Title	Date Intro	Date of Presentation	Date Adopted	Date Referred	Referred to	PUBLIC HEARING DATE	DATE AUTHORS REPORT FILED	NOTES
44-37 (LS)	Therese M. Terlaje	Relative to recognizing and congratulating Julian J. Aguon as the recipient of the "2023 National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Guam Chapter Public Citizen Award"; and further recognizing him for serving the people of Guam and strengthening healthy relationships in our island community.	3/3/23 12:00 p.m.	3/9/23 3:00 p.m.						

I MINA'TRENTAI SIETTE NA LIHESLATURAN GUÅHAN
2023 (FIRST) Regular Session

Resolution No. 44-37 (LS)

Introduced by:

Therese M. Terlaje *TMT*

Relative to recognizing and congratulating Julian J. Aguon as the recipient of the “2023 National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Guam Chapter Public Citizen Award”; and further recognizing him for serving the people of Guam and strengthening healthy relationships in our island community.

1 **BE IT RESOLVED BY *I MINA'TRENTAI SIETTE NA LIHESLATURAN***
2 ***GUÅHAN*:**

3 **WHEREAS**, Julian J. Aguon is a native son of *Guåhan*, the youngest of four (4)
4 children of the late Peter Perez Aguon and social worker, Annabelle Lee Hemsing Cruz,
5 a past NASW Lifetime Achievement award recipient.

6 **WHEREAS**, Julian is a talented environmental and social justice defender, one
7 who has a gift for advocating for complex and painful issues in the most creative ways
8 possible; and

9 **WHEREAS**, Julian J. Aguon is an indigenous human rights lawyer who, at age
10 twenty-eight (28), founded the law firm, Blue Ocean Law (BOL) an international law
11 firm based here on the island of *Guåhan* and specializes in human an indigenous rights,
12 self-determination, and environmental justice in the Pacific; and

13 **WHEREAS**, Julian also served in the 34th Guam Legislature’s legal counsel and
14 was the lead litigator and special assistant to the attorney general of Guam in the notable

1 *Davis v. Guam* case. In October 2018, Julian went before a panel of judges in the Ninth
2 Circuit Court in Honolulu, Hawai'i. In this landmark case, he argued on behalf of the
3 Government of Guam which addressed the question of Chamorro self-determination,
4 and has been recognized regionally, nationally, and internationally for his tireless work
5 to liberate indigenous people from colonial rule, defend their sacred sites, and obtain
6 justice for a range of harms inflicted upon them by outside forces; and

7 **WHEREAS**, in 2019, Julian was selected by former President Barack Obama as
8 one of twenty-one (21) emerging leaders to join the Obama Foundation for leadership
9 workshop. Through the workshops, Julian was able to participate in critical discussions
10 with other leaders from sixteen (16) countries and territories from across the Asia
11 Pacific region where he shared about the importance of safeguarding the environment
12 and the rights of vulnerable communities; and

13 **WHEREAS**, outside the role as a human rights lawyer, Julian received
14 overwhelming praise from award winning authors such as Alice Walker, who stated,
15 “*A powerful, beautiful book. Its fierce love – of the land, ocean, the elders, and the*
16 *ancestors – warms the heart and moves the spirit,*” and Naomi Klein, who stated, “*The*
17 *Properties of Perpetual Light is philosophy, poetry, memoir, history, and self-help for*
18 *humanity. With bottomless love for his people and place. Aguon guides us through a*
19 *portal to the Pacific, sharing deep insights earned from life on the existential knife’s*
20 *edge*” and other notable writers for his books, “The Properties of Perpetual Light,”
21 published in 2021, and “No Country for Eight-Spot Butterflies: A Lyric Essay,”
22 published in 2022, which featured an introduction by renowned Indian author,
23 Arundhati Roy. In Arundhati Roy’s introduction, she notes, “*With the annihilation of*
24 *everything coded into it, Julian Aguon offers the kind of intelligence that has been*
25 *eroded almost to extinction by another far baser form of intelligence, narrowed,*
26 *blunted, weaponized, and harnessed wholly in the service of modern capitalism, and its*
27 *ideas of progress and happiness. There are songs of love here, deeply personal as well*
28 *as epic and political. They are songs of rage and resistance. Songs of death and*
29 *redemption.*”; and

1 **WHEREAS**, as a Chamorro author and lawyer, Julian has been able to make
2 known, the complex and rich history of the indigenous people of the Pacific in ways
3 that are accessible and incredibly compelling. Young Chamorros, both here and in the
4 diaspora, have been inspired by Julian’s courage. His brilliance has touched the lives of
5 his elders as they watch him continue the fight for land rights and self-determination
6 that began decades ago; and

7 **WHEREAS**, Social Workers are always navigating the systems to find ways to
8 bring the people and communities they serve, a sense of hope and justice. In his own
9 way, Julian has gracefully voyaged the islands, the continent, and international spaces
10 to teach others that the people of this island - geographically small, yet abundant in
11 beauty and culture, deserve to live with a sense of hope and strength. Julian, by exposing
12 his own experiences and vulnerabilities, allows others to know that healing from
13 immense and intergenerational grief from unspeakable losses is not only possible, but
14 an inherent right of a people; and

15 **WHEREAS**, it is the sense of *I Liheslaturan Guåhan* that when individuals of
16 such noble aims and accomplishments that are to the benefit of the people of Guam are
17 brought to its attention, they should be celebrated and recognized throughout the island;
18 now therefore, be it

19 **RESOLVED**, that *I Mina'trentai Siette Na Liheslaturan Guåhan* does hereby,
20 on behalf of the people of Guam, recognize and congratulate Julian J. Aguon as the as
21 the recipient of the “2023 National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Guam
22 Chapter Public Citizen Award”; and further recognizes him for serving the people of
23 Guam and strengthening healthy relationships in our island community; and be it further

24 **RESOLVED**, that the Speaker and the Chairperson of the Committee on Rules
25 certify, and the Legislative Secretary attest to, the adoption hereof, and that copies of
26 the same be thereafter transmitted to Julian J. Aguon; and to the Honorable Lourdes A.
27 Leon Guerrero, *I Maga'hågan Guåhan*.