



Office of the Speaker  
**THERESE M. TERLAJE**

*I Mina'trentai Sais na Liheslaturan Guåhan* | 36th Guam Legislature  
Committee on Health, Land, Justice and Culture

February 17, 2022

**The Honorable Raúl M. Grijalva**

Chairman

U.S. House of Representatives

Committee on Natural Resources

1324 Longworth House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

Re: Testimony in Support of H.R. 6504, the Native Pacific Islanders of America Equity Act

Hafa Adai and our warmest greetings from Guam.

I am Speaker Therese Terlaje of the 36th Guam Legislature, a unicameral body with 15 senators representing a population of 153,836. I introduced Resolution No. 260-36 (COR) which expresses the support of the Guam Legislature for H.R. 6504. Fourteen out of 15 senators are co-sponsors and one is on military duty. We expect to vote on this resolution on our first day of session tomorrow and will transmit it to your Committee immediately. My colleagues and I are in support of H.R. 6504 because it will bring equity in certain federal contracting preferences and training opportunities to CHamorus, who were the native inhabitants of Guam prior to 1521, the earliest recorded contact with outsiders. Parity for native CHamorus in federal contract preference and in the benefits from a Native CHamoru nonprofit partnered with Section 8(a) businesses is long overdue and necessary, as recognized in Congressional findings in establishment of the Section 8(a) and HUBZone programs.

The definition of Native CHamoru in this bill is tied to 1950 and does not describe the native inhabitants of Guam prior to contact with outsiders, prior to the over 300-year occupation by the Spanish, prior to the treaty of Paris, prior to US Naval rule, prior to World War II occupation of Guam by the Japanese, or prior to the 1950 conveyance by the United States Congress of citizenship on the residents of Guam as of 1950; but I believe for purposes of this particular small business program that this definition will adequately address the disparity and adequately remedy the needs of Native CHamoru businesses of Guam as was the goal of the Section 8 (a) programs.

Following a 300-year occupation by the Spanish and the Treaty of Paris in 1898, the CHamorus on Guam lived under US Naval rule, followed by civilian governors appointed by the President of the United States. They suffered a brutal three-year occupation by the Japanese during WWII, land takings by the United States government of almost all of Guam and wherein the US Department of Defense now still occupies and controls one third of our island. In 1950 the US Congress enacted the Organic Act for Guam, and conveyed US Citizenship. Only in 1970 was Guam allowed to elect its first Governor.

Guam Congress Building, 163 Chalan Santo Papa, Hagåtña, Guam 96910

Tel: (671) 472-3586 | Fax: (671) 969-3590 | Email: [senatorterlajeguam@gmail.com](mailto:senatorterlajeguam@gmail.com) | [www.senatorterlaje.com](http://www.senatorterlaje.com)

*\*For transmittal of official Messages & Communications to the Guam Legislature to be distributed to all Senators,  
please send to: [speaker@guamlegislature.org](mailto:speaker@guamlegislature.org)*

February 17, 2022

---

In 2007, CHamoru owned businesses comprised only .01% of the all businesses in the United States. Currently, there are only seven companies located on Guam that avail of the Section 8(a) program as a minority owned business. Ninety percent of all businesses on Guam are small or micro businesses and report less than \$500,000 in annual revenue. Passage of this bill would create incentives for businesses to apply for the 8(a) program because as super 8(a) businesses, they could continue in the program longer than 9 to 10 years and they would benefit tremendously from technical assistance provided by the Small Business Administration. H.R. 6504 would boost Guam's 8(a) portfolio numbers and provide a stronger platform of federal contract opportunities for Native CHamoru firms.

Despite our people's resilience, the CHamorus continue to suffer from the highest incidences of poverty, diabetes, and cancer. Using 2010 census date, 22.50% of all individuals on Guam for whom poverty status was determined are considered to be in poverty. We look to the nonprofits that will be established pursuant to this bill to assist the government in addressing these high rates of adverse effects suffered by CHamorus. The success of this program is evident in the needs being met for Native Hawaiians, Alaskan Natives, and the Native Americans.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this important measure and provide any additional information requested by the Committee.

Sincerely,



Therese M. Terlaje  
Speaker, 36th Guam Legislature

Attachment: Resolution No. 260-36 (COR)