



Office of the Vice Speaker

## TINA ROSE MUÑA BARNES

*I Mina'trentai Sais Na Liheslaturan Guåhan*

**36<sup>th</sup> Guam Legislature**

GUAM CONGRESS BUILDING  
163 CHALAN SANTO PAPA  
HAGÁTNA, GUAM 96910  
TEL 671-989-5681

SENATORMUNABARNES@GUAMLEGISLATURE.ORG

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TECHNOLOGY

**The Honorable Nancy Pelosi**  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

**The Honorable Charles Schumer**  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

### **Subject: Parity for American Territories**

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Schumer,

*Håfa Adai* (Greetings from Guam)! As the Vice Speaker of the 36th Guam Legislature and a proud daughter of Guam, I write to you today to urge you to fulfill the American Promise to the People of Guam.

Guam is one of the most patriotic jurisdictions in this nation. In fact, we have one of the highest enlistment rates per capita in the entire country. My family, like many on this island, have generations of heroes who have donned the uniform and fought proudly to protect our freedom and liberty. While on the frontlines of battle we are compatriots, during peacetime, Guam and our sister territories continue to be unjustly treated by outdated federal policies. These injustices continue to pose a barrier for many Guamanians who seek equal access to crucial federal services.

One such injustice is the application of the Insular Cases on our territory when it relative to Supplemental Security Income. To challenge this unfair policy, Ms. Katrina Schaller of Guam filed a lawsuit in the District Court of Guam in December of 2018. Katrina and her twin sister Leslie both live with myotonic dystrophy, which severely inhibits muscle function and other critical aspects of daily life. Leslie is able to live independently in Pennsylvania due to the aid she receives from SSI. Katrina, however, is ineligible for the same benefits by virtue of her geographic location.

I am grateful that members of Congress, led by Chairman Raul Grijalva and Vice Chairman Rep. Gregorio "Killili" Sablan, have made strides in ensuring that these injustices are brought to the forefront. Furthermore, thanks to their advocacy, President Joseph R. Biden has also stated that the unjust application of outdated policies which prohibit the application of the SSI program to Guam "is inconsistent" with his "Administration's policies and values." To this end, the President urges Congress to provide legislative fixes for SSI, Medicaid funding, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program so that there is no second-class citizenship in our nation.

These injustices are unconscionable, and their ramifications are tremendous. While I am grateful that there is greater parity for territories under

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both of your leadership, I plead with you to end the second-class treatment of territorial Americans. As Congress finalizes the FY2022 Budget Reconciliation Package, I hope our country takes a stand and stays true to our commitment as Americans that injustices have no place in our history.

In closing, I would like to reflect on founding documents of this great nation, where it states that all men are created equal, with rights that are inseparable from our humanity. My grandfather is the late Colonel Juan Muña, for whom the Guam National Guard's Headquarters bears his name to honor his contributions to the US Armed Forces during World War II. I am also the proud wife of an Air Force Veteran, the mother of an Air Guardsman, mother-in-law of an Air Guard Veteran, and a grandmother-in-law of a deployed Army Soldier—a level of patriotism and service shared by many on Guam. I ask you as a Proud Daughter of Guam, why can we be equals when our sons and daughters fight your wars and not in peace? As our leaders in Congress, only you can act to end this longstanding injustice to the People of Guam, and my fellow Americans who reside in the American Territories. It is my hope that you fulfil the American Promise.

Stronger, *TOGETHER!*



**Tina Rose Muña Barnes (D)**  
Vice Speaker, 36<sup>th</sup> Guam Legislature

*Countersigned:*



**Mary Camacho Torres (R)**  
Senator, 36<sup>th</sup> Guam Legislature

*Cc: Chairman Raúl Grijalva  
Vice Chairman Gregorio "Killili" Sablan  
Rep. Darren Soto  
Rep. Ritchie Torres  
Rep. Nydia Velasquez  
Chairman Richard Neal  
Chairman Ron Wyden  
Sen. Robert Menendez  
Director Gretchen Sierra-Zorita, White House IGA*