

2026 Congressional Address
Representative James C. Moylan
October 23, 2026

Hafa Adai, Speaker Blas, distinguished members of the 38th Guam Legislature, Governor Leon Guerrero, Lieutenant Governor Tenorio, Chief Justice Maraman, community leaders, honored guests, and most importantly, my fellow people of Guam.

I want to first recognize those who have been my greatest source of strength and encouragement throughout this journey: my family.

To my wife, Sandy, thank you for your love, patience, and constant support. Public service comes with many demands, and I know the sacrifices are not mine alone to make.

To our children and grandchildren, thank you for keeping me grounded and always reminding me of what matters most.

Everything I do in public service is guided by the future we want for our families and the generations who will come after us. And I am grateful to have my family standing beside me through it all.

Over these past four years in Washington, one lesson stands out: making progress for Guam takes persistence. There's no shortage of red tape, closed doors, and obstacles, some that take months, even years, to push through.

But through every challenge, my mission has stayed the same: Guam first, Guam always.

Tonight, I want to share what we've accomplished together, the priorities we're pushing forward, and the opportunities ahead of us as one island community.

Before we begin, I want to recognize Governor Lou Leon Guerrero and Lieutenant Governor Joshua Tenorio as they near the close of their administration.

They have led our island through a global pandemic, devastating storms, and difficult economic times. Public service demands sacrifice, and I want to thank them both for their eight years of dedicated service to the people of Guam.

We have not always seen eye to eye, but together, we have demonstrated what true partnership across party lines can accomplish for the people of Guam.

Through that collaboration, we have secured meaningful investments for Guam through Community Project Funding, with projects already funded and additional priorities moving forward in Congress.

I also want to recognize the administration's directors and agency staff who have worked closely with our office throughout the funding process. Thank you for your cooperation and the vital role you have all played in bringing these priorities forward.

This is the kind of partnership I hope we can continue building upon, across administrations, across party lines, and always in service to the people of Guam.

I also want to acknowledge Speaker Frank Blas, Jr. and every member of this Legislature. When our leaders work together and keep Guam's families at the heart of every decision, our island is better for it.

When you sent me to Washington, D.C., you didn't send me to blend in. You sent me to fight for Guam as a conservative voice on the Armed Services, Foreign Affairs, and Education and Workforce committees.

I also saw early on that smaller delegations have to stand together to be heard. That's why I helped launch the Congressional Territories and Commonwealths Caucus, where I proudly serve as co-chair.

I'm proud to say Guam is leading the way, bringing the territories together to push for fair trade, better services for our veterans, and critical investments in our communities.

Building those relationships, across the aisle and across the country, helps our colleagues understand Guam's story.

Over my time in Congress, my office has brought two congressional delegations to Guam, invited senior staff from presidential administrations, and led staff delegations to our island. Bringing decisionmakers here helps them understand the issues we face every day, and that contributes directly to our success on Capitol Hill.

But at the end of the day, those relationships matter only if they deliver meaningful for our people.

In this 119th Congress, we have secured House passage of two standalone bills I introduced: the Deliver for Veterans Act and the Territorial Student Access to Higher Education Act.

One would help eligible veterans receive the adaptive vehicles they need by covering the cost of shipping. The other would give qualifying students from Guam and our fellow territories access to in-state college tuition.

For our veterans and our students, these are practical changes that could make a real difference. Getting both bills through the House is an important accomplishment, and we're pressing to get them across the finish line.

And while we continue working to improve the lives of those we serve today, we must also remember those whose courage and sacrifice helped shape the freedoms we enjoy.

Tonight, I want to recognize one of Guam's greatest sons, whose extraordinary service to our nation deserves its highest honor.

As a fellow Army veteran, it's a true privilege to speak tonight about the late Sergeant Major Juan Ogo Blaz. His remarkable courage has brought him right to the threshold of being the first-ever servicemember from Guam to receive our nation's highest military decoration, the Medal of Honor.

Tonight, we're honored to be joined by his daughter, Darlene. I'd like to ask her to please stand and be recognized.

I'm proud to share that Secretary of War Pete Hegseth has approved the upgrade of Sergeant Major Blaz's award. All that remains is the President's signature.

To understand why this recognition means so much, we need to go back to the day his fellow soldiers depended on his courage.

It was January 18, 1969, in Vietnam. Then-Staff Sergeant Blaz was serving with the 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division.

When his platoon was pinned down by heavy enemy fire and his leader was wounded, he stepped up, risking his own life to bring wounded soldiers to safety. Even after being wounded himself, he kept fighting.

When machine-gun fire threatened his unit, he crossed open ground toward the enemy and was hit again. With aircraft unable to find the enemy through the jungle, Sergeant Major Blaz exposed himself again and again to set smoke grenades and guide friendly fire.

His courage brought fellow soldiers home.

He received the Distinguished Service Cross, and the effort to upgrade that recognition is a testament to the courage and sacrifice he showed that day.

For his family, this is deeply personal. For our island, it's a powerful reminder of the generations who have answered the call to serve.

To all the veterans and servicemembers with us tonight, thank you. And to the families who stand beside them, thank you for your support and sacrifice as well.

As we recognize the selfless service of our veterans, we must also remain focused on the needs of the people and communities they have helped protect. That brings me to the work we are advancing here at home.

When I talk with parents, workers, retirees, and small business owners, I hear the same concern over and over: it is getting harder to afford a life on Guam.

Families are doing everything they can to make ends meet, but too much of each paycheck goes to electricity, groceries, transportation, and childcare.

My job in Congress is to fix federal policies that drive those costs up and to fight for investments that can bring them down.

A major part of that effort is addressing the federal restrictions that limit Guam's access to more affordable energy sources.

America produces plenty of natural gas. Guam should be able to get it at a price we can afford.

Our families feel the cost of imported fuel every month when the power bill arrives. Giving the Guam Power Authority more reliable, affordable options is one way we can work to ease that burden.

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That is why I've been working closely with GPA and our federal partners to address Guam's energy challenges, including restrictions that limit our access to liquefied natural gas, or LNG.

And we're backing those efforts with action in Congress.

I joined Representatives Ritchie Torres and Ed Case in introducing the Noncontiguous Energy Relief and Access Act.

This bipartisan legislation would remove Jones Act shipping restrictions on qualifying energy shipments to Guam, including American LNG.

I brought this issue straight to the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, because expanding our energy options must be part of the answer to rising power bills.

Getting there requires the right infrastructure, reliable supply, and sound financial decisions. My job in Congress is to help clear the federal barriers so Guam can pursue the options that best serve our ratepayers.

Alongside that effort, we're pressing for assistance with the costs and challenges GPA faces today.

At the September 29 Interagency Group on Insular Areas meeting, I joined Governor Leon Guerrero in pushing for faster FEMA reimbursements, help with joint procurement, better access to U.S. refining, and new investments to make our power system stronger and more resilient.

We must also continue strengthening the grid against typhoons. Undergrounding transmission and distribution lines can help reduce damage, shorten outages, and protect the services our community depends on.

Our families deserve a power system they can rely on and energy costs that no longer place such a heavy burden on their budgets.

And when we talk about bringing down the cost of living, we also have to look at how much of what we consume comes from off-island.

Strengthening local agriculture means producing more of our own food, supporting Guam's farmers, and reducing our dependence on imports.

One opportunity lies right here on our island. With a significant military presence on Guam, we are working to open more doors for our local farmers, ranchers, and fishermen to supply fresh, locally produced food to our military installations.

This would create new markets for our local producers while keeping more of those federal dollars circulating within Guam's economy.

Stronger supply chains create more reliable business opportunities. They can help support more food production on Guam and a more dependable supply for our families.

We also see opportunities to expand local seafood production through aquaculture, creating new possibilities for Guam's economy and food security.

Working with Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett, I offered an amendment that the House adopted as part of the Farm Bill. It calls for the U.S. Department of Agriculture to work with Guam's Department of Agriculture to identify suitable locations for aquaculture businesses and examine their infrastructure needs, water quality, and environmental requirements.

That information can help producers know where they can operate responsibly and what they need to succeed.

I also requested \$2 million in Community Project Funding for the University of Guam's proposed Aquaculture Innovation Center. The project would provide shared facilities, training, and technical assistance to help producers develop their businesses.

All of this can help Guam produce more seafood locally, create good-paying jobs, and reduce our dependence on imported food.

In the next Community Project Funding cycle, I intend to pursue funding to help move Guam's slaughterhouse effort forward, building on previous federal support and addressing the remaining needs of the project.

Our local producers need safe processing facilities, practical support, and customers who are ready to buy what they produce.

We can't control every change in global food prices or shipping costs. But by strengthening every link in our local food economy, from production to processing to the marketplace, we can build a more reliable food supply and keep more of our food dollars right here on Guam.

Even as we produce more food locally, Guam will continue to depend on goods arriving by sea. And the cost of getting those goods here reaches far beyond the port.

We feel it at the grocery store, at the gas pump, and in the everyday expenses that add up for families across Guam.

That's why I've joined Congressman Ed Case to push for more shipping competition, fairer rates, and broader Jones Act relief. I've also introduced bills to open up more shipping options when disaster hits, and I support exemptions for energy shipments, like American LNG.

I also participate in a bipartisan, bicameral Maritime Policy Working Group, where we work across the aisle and across chambers to address policies that raise the cost of living.

Together, we're pursuing lower energy and food costs and maritime regulations that meet the needs of the twenty-first century.

President Trump's temporary waiver has been in place for more than seven months. It's limited, but it gives the federal government real experience to examine.

Now is the time to build on that opportunity and push for lasting solutions.

I'm having my team prepare language for the next NDAA that requires an independent review of the Jones Act's impact on Guam and what this waiver really means for us.

What cargo moved? At what cost? Did savings reach our families? Did it affect shipping reliability, U.S. maritime strength, and military readiness?

Let's put the findings on the table. Let's make them public.

If the evidence shows that relief lowers costs for Guam while preserving our security and reliable service, we'll have a stronger case for lasting change.

I'll keep fighting for a full exemption for Guam.

Our families deserve every chance to bring down the cost of living. And I'll keep working until Washington gives us a fair shot.

The high cost of transportation affects more than the goods we ship to Guam. It also impacts something many of our families know all too well: the cost of buying a plane ticket.

For families here in the Marianas, flying is often necessary for medical care, education, or being with loved ones. Yet high fares and limited competition put those journeys out of reach for too many.

Just recently, a round-trip ticket to Honolulu was advertised at more than thirteen hundred dollars for one person. For a family, that price tag can make travel nearly impossible.

Working with Congresswoman King-Hinds, I introduced the Pacific Island Flight Alternatives Act to open the door to more competition and lower costs.

We're now working with a Senate committee chair on companion legislation, addressing concerns with the U.S. Department of Transportation, and pressing the Administration to publicly support this effort.

But the impact of high airfares goes beyond the cost of travel. It has broader implications for Guam that deserve Washington's attention.

Imagine a young airman stationed on Guam, with leave approved and family waiting at home, still unable to afford a ticket for Christmas.

Our residents understand that disappointment. It is the same calculation a Guam family makes when a loved one needs medical care or a child is leaving for school.

That shared burden strengthens our case for addressing these challenges through the next NDAA.

I'll introduce language directing the Department of War and the Department of Transportation to come up with a plan that expands commercial air service and makes travel to and from Guam more affordable. That means looking at more airlines, targeted cabotage relief, and a pilot program to open up new options for all of us.

Let me be clear: the goal is affordable commercial air travel for everyone, Guam's residents, visitors, and military families alike.

By bringing Guam's priorities together with the military's responsibility to support its people, we can make a stronger case for federal action.

For our people, that could mean finally taking a trip they've put off for too long, getting the care they need, or being there when family needs them most.

And just as we are working to address the federal policies that make travel more expensive, we must also address those that place unnecessary burdens on our residents and businesses.

Guam isn't a foreign country. Our people are Americans, and the de minimis exemption must be restored.

Together with our partners in the Congressional Territories and Commonwealths Caucus, we've made our position clear: trade policies meant to strengthen U.S. industries should not come at the expense of the people who call our territories home.

When the \$800 exemption was suspended, everyday packages became more expensive and complicated to receive. For families who order goods because they can't find or afford them locally, the fees and delays add another burden to an already stretched budget.

I spoke directly with the U.S. Trade Representative, Ambassador Jamieson Greer, about how this policy hits Guam. He agreed these consequences weren't intended, and we've called on the White House to fix it.

We joined our colleagues to introduce the Territorial De Minimis Exemption Act and signed a unified caucus letter calling for quick relief. We'll keep pushing Congress and the Administration to permanently restore the exemption for our islands.

While that effort moves forward, we are also working directly with local businesses on practical ways to reduce the paperwork.

Just this week our office helped connect local online retailer Crowns with the US Postal Service's technology provider Zonos. They met to discuss integrating Zonos directly into Crowns' point-of-sale system, which will eliminate duplicate data entry and simplify the required paperwork for overseas shipping.

This coordination provides an immediate, practical solution to keep local e-commerce running smoothly while we continue working to restore the de minimis duty exemption.

We are also seeking relief from administrative fees and improved access to customs processing through local post offices.

Our families and businesses need relief now. They shouldn't have to pay the price while Washington fixes this policy.

Restore the exemption. Give our people relief.

And that same need for relief extends to another major expense weighing on families across Guam: the cost of childcare.

I've heard directly from working parents who are struggling to afford childcare, yet earn too much to qualify for assistance. I brought those concerns to our Education and Workforce hearings because this is a challenge that deserves greater attention at the federal level.

These parents are doing everything they can to provide for their families and get ahead. But when childcare takes too much of their paycheck, working more hours can leave them wondering how much better off they will be.

A parent should be able to accept a raise and know it will help the family move forward.

My Childcare Cost Relief Act would target additional federal funding to qualifying states and territories where childcare costs place a disproportionate burden on family incomes.

Federal support should reflect what families here are actually facing. Our childcare policies need to keep pace with the costs and responsibilities parents face today.

I've also asked experts how employers can help expand access to care and keep parents in the workforce. We need options that work for Guam's families and the people providing these essential services.

And our responsibility to family doesn't end there. It continues when a loved one gets sick or needs help recovering.

Here on Guam, we know that care often comes from extended family. A sister steps in. A grandparent helps when they can. Someone rearranges their life because a loved one needs them.

Our laws should recognize that reality and support those who step up.

That is why I joined Representative April McClain Delaney and Senator Tammy Duckworth in leading the bipartisan MIL Family and Medical Leave Act

This legislation would expand access to unpaid, job-protected leave for eligible people caring for seriously injured or ill servicemembers and veterans, including more extended family caregivers. It would also remove restrictions that leave some veteran families without these protections.

These proposals address pressures that families know well: finding dependable care for a child, keeping a job, and being there when someone you love needs you.

I'll keep working to move them forward, because supporting Guam's working families means helping them meet those responsibilities with greater security and peace of mind.

Alongside our legislative efforts, we have also worked to secure federal funding that directly addresses the needs of our communities.

For fiscal year 2026, we secured more than \$55 million for critical projects across Guam.

Of that amount, \$50 million will support critical road projects across Guam, addressing longstanding infrastructure needs and strengthening our island's transportation network.

The remaining investments support essential services and facilities throughout our communities.

For healthcare, we secured \$1.5 million for the Todu Guam Foundation Health and Wellness Center, expanding access to much-needed care for our people.

For public safety and emergency preparedness, we secured:

- Over \$1.5 million for Guam Customs and Quarantine, including new inspection equipment and an integrated emergency response and command system.
- Nearly \$1 million for Guam Police Department patrol vehicles.
- As well as additional funding for Guam Fire Department vehicles and life-saving equipment.

For housing and community support, we secured:

- Just under \$1 million for WestCare to provide housing assistance for individuals experiencing homelessness.
- And nearly \$700,000 for the Chalan Pago-Ordot Multipurpose and Emergency Center, strengthening our community's ability to respond when disaster strikes.

These investments mean better access to healthcare, safer streets, stronger emergency response, more shelter and housing support, and roads that connect us to work, school, medical care, and each other.

And we're not stopping there. For fiscal year 2027, my office submitted 20 more funding requests, totaling nearly \$145 million, for priorities across transportation, public safety, healthcare, education, housing, senior services, and economic development.

Our efforts remain focused on seeing these projects through Congress and bringing meaningful improvements to communities across Guam.

Getting federal resources to Guam is one part of the job. Making sure our people can reach the services they need is another.

For our veterans, that is why I've kept pressing for a Veterans Benefits Administration Regional Office here at home.

Federal law already gives the VA Secretary the authority to establish regional offices in our territories under Title 38.

That includes Guam. I'm simply asking the VA Secretary to use it.

For a veteran waiting on a disability claim, having the right staff here could mean getting a paperwork problem resolved sooner or reaching someone who can help move the claim forward.

The whole family feels that wait. Bills still come in, groceries still cost money, and uncertainty adds pressure to a household that needs answers.

When the authority for the Manila regional office approached expiration, I saw an opportunity to put Guam forward.

And we have made progress, step by step.

The House adopted my amendment to the fiscal year 2026 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs funding bill urging the VA to develop a plan for a regional office on Guam.

Now, the House committee report accompanying the fiscal year 2027 funding bill calls for the VA to report on the feasibility of establishing that office within 180 days of enactment. We are urging the VA to move quickly and examine what it would take to make this happen.

The report also encourages the agency to expand services in our region using office space it already leases.

Our veterans should not have to wait until a regional office is established to receive better access. The VA can and should act now to make the process easier for Guam's veterans and their families.

The legislation is before the Senate. We are working to keep this language in the final package, and I am hopeful the bill can reach the President's desk when Congress returns in a few weeks.

Each step strengthens our case. Next, we need to turn that support into a real plan with the staff, space, and resources needed to serve our veterans here.

For Guam and our neighbors in the Western Pacific, this could mean easier access to benefits and fewer delays from paperwork and unanswered questions.

Our veterans served when their country called. When they turn to the VA for the benefits they've earned, they deserve timely answers and help close to home.

We've also made progress on another expense that can stand between a veteran and greater independence.

My Deliver for Veterans Act passed the House in April of last year. It would require the VA to cover shipping costs when providing an adaptive vehicle to an eligible veteran.

For someone living on Guam, getting that vehicle here can be a significant expense. That delivery cost should be covered as part of the benefit.

And as we continue working to support our veterans and military families, we must also focus on strengthening the economy and expanding opportunities for everyone who calls Guam home.

That includes helping our tourism industry recover, attracting new investment, and creating more opportunities for our people to earn a living.

When more visitors come to Guam, everyone benefits: the hotel employee, the restaurant owner, the tour operator, and the families who rely on those paychecks.

That is why, alongside Senator Jesse Lujan and Congresswoman Kimberlyn King-Hinds, we are pressing the Administration and building support in Congress to expand the Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver Program to include the Philippines. Congresswoman King-Hinds and I have also introduced the Marianas Tourism Advancement Act to move that effort forward.

Our ties with the Philippines run deep through family, history, faith, and friendship. Making it easier for visitors to come here can strengthen those bonds and bring more customers to our businesses.

We must do that responsibly, with strong security screening, information sharing, and safeguards against overstays.

We should also be bringing more regional meetings and conferences to Guam.

When I return to Washington, I will begin working with the Department of State, the relevant congressional committees, and our regional partners to put Guam forward as the host location for at least two major regional summits.

America regularly brings its allies and partners together to talk about security and cooperation in the Pacific. Guam should be at the table when those meetings happen.

I will also press for Guam to be considered for a future special summit between the United States and ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Imagine bringing those regional leaders together on American soil, right here on Guam.

Hosting these gatherings means hotel bookings, more restaurant customers, more work for local businesses, and a chance for our business community to build relationships across the region.

To attract more official travel, federal travel allowances must also reflect what it costs to stay here.

I pushed for a review of Guam's per diem rates through the House Armed Services Committee. Per diem is the daily allowance eligible government travelers receive for lodging, meals, and other expenses.

Effective September 1st, the meals and incidental expenses allowance increased from \$124 to \$138 a day. With lodging, the combined daily ceiling is now \$317.

I welcome that increase. It helps travelers meet the cost of visiting Guam and can support the businesses that serve them.

But we also have to look beyond visitor spending to industries that can provide lasting careers in new and revitalized sectors.

Ship repair is one of those industries.

I have pressed Navy leaders in congressional hearings to expand Guam's role as a regional ship-repair hub. Through the fiscal year 2026 defense bill process, we secured direction for the Navy to examine how more of that work could be done here.

That includes exploring options for a drydock facility, expanding workforce training, and helping Guam businesses obtain the certifications needed to compete for Navy contracts.

Now we are beginning the work of turning that groundwork into real jobs here on Guam.

For our people, that means careers in welding, electrical work, engineering, and other skilled trades. For our businesses, it would mean contracts to provide materials, equipment, and services.

The Navy needs dependable repairs close to where its ships operate. Guam has workers and businesses ready to help meet that need. We must keep working to connect the two.

Times are changing, and Guam must adapt. Tourism will always be important, but we need to diversify our economy so our families have more stability and more ways to earn a good living.

That will take our government, businesses, educators, and federal partners working together to attract investment and prepare our people for the jobs we want to bring here.

Our young people should be able to build their future right here at home. Let's build an economy that gives them that choice.

Creating more opportunities for our people also means making sure they have access to the same federal services available to Americans across the country.

One area where we continue to push for improvements is passport services here on Guam.

When someone needs to travel urgently for medical care, school, work, or a family emergency, delays in obtaining a passport can become a serious hardship.

We are pursuing a dedicated passport issuance office on Guam so our people can receive more of that service here at home.

During a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing, I raised this need directly with Secretary of State Marco Rubio. We continue working with the State Department to move the proposal forward.

A local issuance office would strengthen the services already available and help address urgent cases that require more than routine application acceptance.

For American citizens living in the western Pacific, access to essential federal services should reflect the distance we face and the unique needs of our island community.

That same principle of ensuring fair access to opportunities must extend to our students pursuing higher education.

And we are working to make college more affordable and accessible for students from Guam.

Too many Guam families face sky-high out-of-state tuition rates when they seek degrees that are not offered here at home, placing an enormous financial burden on a student's education.

My Territorial Student Access to Higher Education Act passed the House with overwhelming bipartisan support. It would guarantee in-state tuition rates for qualifying territorial students at covered public colleges and universities, and I am continuing to press for enactment before the end of the year.

For a parent helping a child pursue a degree, that difference in tuition can determine where their child can afford to study, how much debt the family takes on, or whether college is financially within reach at all.

We want our young people to gain the skills they need and have the opportunity to bring those skills home.

That connects directly to the economy we are trying to build. As Guam develops new industries and expands existing ones, we will need more trained professionals, skilled workers, and entrepreneurs.

When we make higher education more affordable, we are not just investing in our students. We are investing in the talent, leadership, and workforce that will drive Guam's future.

But as we look toward Guam's future, we must also continue addressing the injustices of our past.

For many families on Guam, that includes the long-standing fight for justice and recognition for those affected by radiation exposure.

We have continued the fight to include Guam and our Pacific radiation survivors in federal compensation through the bipartisan Radiation Exposure Compensation Reauthorization Act of 2026.

This effort brings together Members of Congress, advocates, and organizations from across the country fighting for the same thing: justice for those who were harmed in the name of national security.

For families who have spent years caring for loved ones battling cancer and other serious illnesses, or who have lost family members to these diseases, this fight is deeply personal. Their experiences deserve to be heard, and their calls for recognition and justice must not go unanswered.

Throughout this effort, the voices of survivors, their families, and community advocates have been essential in keeping the call for radiation justice alive. I want to especially recognize the Pacific Association for Radiation Survivors and the many advocates who have continued to bring these concerns before Congress and the American public.

Their persistence has helped ensure that Guam's experience remains part of the national conversation.

We will continue pressing for legislation that recognizes our people and provides the compensation they have fought for, for so long.

And while we work to address the lasting impacts of decisions made in the past, we must also ensure that the decisions being made today serve Guam's long-term interests.

That brings me to the ongoing military buildup, which will shape Guam's economy and our communities for decades.

At my request, the Congressional Research Service examined the funding associated with our island. Let me put that scale into perspective.

For fiscal years 2023 through 2026, more than \$4.3 billion in military construction funding was directed to our island.

In fiscal year 2023 alone, \$2.4 billion in defense contract spending associated with Guam.

And from fiscal years 2023 through 2025, more than \$23 million in grants through the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation, supporting the services and infrastructure our community relies on.

With investment of that scale, our responsibility is to help Guam's people make the most of it.

I have always said that I support the military buildup. But I have always said that the buildup must happen the right way for Guam.

That means preparing our workers for the jobs ahead, helping our businesses compete for the work taking place here, and investing in infrastructure that can serve our people for generations.

And part of that work has been making sure our local workforce receives fair treatment and access to the same benefits as their counterparts elsewhere.

That is why I fought to expand access to the Living Quarters Allowance, or LQA, for eligible Department of War civilian employees stationed on Guam, including those hired locally.

We secured that change, and we're already beginning to hear what it means for our people.

Constituents have called our office to share that their human resource offices have contacted them to begin processing their allowances. For families waiting for this help with housing costs, that's welcome progress.

I will keep calling on the Department of War to follow through until every eligible employee has the opportunity to receive this benefit.

We worked to get this provision into law. Now we want to see that relief reach the people it was intended to help.

Supporting Guam's workforce is one part of strengthening our economy. Another is making sure our locally owned businesses have greater access to the opportunities created by federal investment on our island.

That is why I introduced the Territorial Small Business Development Act, to establish a dedicated program under the Small Business Administration's Section 8(a) authority for qualifying businesses owned and controlled by residents of Guam and our fellow Pacific territories.

It would help our entrepreneurs pursue federal contracts and get the support they need to grow, hire locally, and keep more of that investment in Guam's economy.

For our workers, access to training is just as important.

The House-passed fiscal year 2027 defense authorization bill includes my provision to expand the SMART scholarship program, which supports education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

My provision would expand eligibility to include technical and vocational education, apprenticeship preparation, and programs that help people earn workforce credentials.

For a young person deciding what comes after graduation, or a working parent looking for a better-paying career, that could open another door into civilian work supporting our nation's defense.

To our next administration, this Legislature, our business community, our educators, and our defense partners: let's make the most of this moment.

We need our schools, Guam Community College, the University of Guam, and our employers working together so that training connects to the skills needed here.

Our local businesses need more opportunities to compete and we need planning that keeps pace with the demands on our housing, roads, and utilities.

The decisions we make today will help determine whether a young person can build a career here, whether a small business can become a lasting local employer, and whether our families can share in the prosperity this investment can bring.

Guam plays an essential role in America's defense. Our people deserve every opportunity to help shape that future and benefit from it.

I support the buildup. And I'll keep fighting to make sure it happens the right way for Guam.

The legislation and funding we discuss tonight matter because of the people they are meant to serve.

But some of the most important work of our office happens one family at a time.

I want to share one story that speaks to the difference this work can make.

For ten years, Joe lived and worked on Guam while his wife and three children remained in the Philippines.

He worked hard to provide for his family, but being so far away meant missing the moments that mattered most: school events, family dinners, and the chance to watch his children grow up.

After ten years of being separated from his wife and children, Joe turned to our office for help with the one thing he wanted most: to have his family together again.

My team listened, contacted the agencies involved, and worked to move the process forward.

Today, that wait is finally over. Joe has been reunited with his wife and children, and they are now together here on Guam.

I'd like Joe and his family who are here with us tonight to stand and be recognized.

Cases like this remind us what public service requires: listening carefully, following through, and staying with people when the process becomes difficult.

Whether it's helping a veteran navigate their benefits, assisting a family with an immigration case, resolving Social Security or Medicare concerns, or following up on delays with a federal agency, our office is here to help.

I want to recognize and thank my hardworking staff, both here on Guam and in Washington, D.C.

Day in and day out, I see the long hours you put in, often behind the scenes, working tirelessly to get answers for our constituents, ensuring their concerns are addressed.

Thank you for the heart and compassion you bring to this work and for being the backbone of this office.

And to the people of Guam, please know that our doors remain open. Whatever challenge you may be facing with a federal agency, I encourage you to reach out.

Your Congressional Office is here to serve you.

We're here to listen, to help, and to do everything we can on your behalf.

The families we serve today also remind us why Guam's long-term future matters. We have a responsibility to help build an island where the next generation can thrive.

The world is changing. The Pacific is changing.

And Guam can't afford to stand still.

For decades, we have carried an unresolved question from one generation to the next: what should Guam's political future be?

Our people hold different views. Those differences deserve respect.

But "unincorporated" can't be the limit of our aspirations.

Our children deserve to inherit opportunity, not an unanswered question.

If we want Guam to reach her full potential, we must come together as an island people. We must decide what we want for our future and equip ourselves with the tools to pursue it.

Your Delegate cannot do this alone. Neither can the Governor nor the Legislature.

Together, we can bring the full weight of Guam's elected leadership to the table.

This is why I introduced H.R. 10408, the Guam-Federal Consultation Act.

Too often, our concerns move from agency to agency, from review to review, while our families wait for answers.

We need a direct line to the White House, backed by law.

My bill would require regular consultation between the President of the United States and the Governor of Guam. It would establish formal talks with the President's designated representatives, with Guam's representatives jointly chosen by the Governor and the Speaker, and your Delegate included.

As our next Governor prepares to take office, let us work to put this framework into law and prepare a common agenda for Guam.

An agenda that addresses shipping costs, air travel, modern infrastructure, reliable energy, and the federal policies that affect our ability to prosper.

President Trump has made dealmaking a defining part of his presidency. With roughly two years remaining in his term, let us bring Guam's priorities to the table with clear proposals and the determination to pursue them.

This process could also open the door to a serious conversation about resolving Guam's political status.

The choice belongs to our people. Our responsibility as leaders is to help create a path for that choice to become reality.

For generations, Guam has helped secure America's future in the Pacific. Let us bring that same determination to securing our own.

We know what our people can accomplish. We endured occupation and rebuilt our communities. We fought for greater self-government and built a tourism industry that welcomed the world.

Through storms, hardship, and uncertainty, our people have kept going because they believed there was a future here worth building.

That responsibility now belongs to us.

To the leaders in this chamber, to our next administration, and to every partner ready to help: let us put our shared responsibilities to the people of Guam first.

There is work before us that will require patience and cooperation. There will be disagreements, and there will be days when progress comes more slowly than any of us would like.

When that happens, let us remember who is counting on us.

The parent working long hours and still struggling to make ends meet. The veteran who has served our nation and is still waiting for the benefits they've earned. The young graduate who wants to build a future on Guam but wonders if the opportunities will be there.

They deserve our effort, our persistence, and our willingness to work together.

And the sons and daughters who left Guam in search of better opportunities deserve to know we are working to make coming home a real possibility.

Let's give them that reason.

Let's build a Guam where a good job can support a family, where our children can pursue their ambitions, and where growing older does not mean having to leave the place we love.

That is the future I will keep working for, with everyone willing to help us get there.

It is an honor to serve you. Through every challenge ahead, my commitment remains:

Guam first. Guam always.

I love our nation, I love our island, I love our people of Guam.

Si Yu'os Ma'åse'. Thank you, and God bless Guam.