



OFFICE OF SENATOR JAMES "JIM" C. MOYLAN

I MINA' TRENTAI SINGKO NA LIHESLATURAN GUAHAN | 35TH GUAM LEGISLATURE

January 7, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SENATOR MOYLAN INTRODUCES LEGISLATION TO REFORM THE GUAM LEGISLATURE

(Hagåtña, Guam) On the first anniversary of the inauguration of the 35th Guam Legislature, Senator James C. Moylan introduced Bill 265-35, which if passed, would enact *The Citizens Legislative Reform Act of 2020*. In all practicalities, this legislation would reform the Guam Legislature to a Part-Time Legislature. With the theme of "*Public Service and not Public Employment*," Senator Moylan emphasized that the legislation would not only provide a savings element by reducing the budget of the legislature, but it would remove many "ceremonial" aspects of the position, so that lawmakers can focus more on policy versus optics.

"40 states have some structure of a Part-Time Legislature, and many of those states have millions in a population and billions in their annual budgets. This legislative structure has proven to work and to be effective," said Senator Moylan. *"For those naysayers who believe that a Part-Time Legislature would take away the public's accessibility to talk to a Senator, or would reduce the checks and balance that the Legislative branch has over the Executive branch, remember that it is the Senator, and not the structure of the legislature, that determines how accessible one wants to be, or how much they want to keep the Executive branch in check. We had Senators for years, and even those today, who choose not to be accessible. As for the checks and balance, ask yourself if we have truly seen a series of oversights or deep questioning over the current administration in 2019?"* added Senator Moylan.

Bill 265-35 would not only reduce the budget of the legislature, but also convert Senators from earning full time salaries and benefits to stipends. It would require two 30-day sessions in a year, with one focused on general issues and executive appointments, and the second focused on the budget. Additionally, nothing prevents the Governor from calling Senators into session for emergency issues. The legislation provides Senators the security from their employers when they are in session, similar to reservists being deployed or citizens being called into jury duty. Bill 265-35 also repeals some of the perks Senators can attain including vehicles, license plates and higher per diems when they travel. The measure further removes Senators from officiating weddings, and even places a monthly cap on the introduction of commendation Resolutions.

The legislation further creates the Legislative Research and Services Bureau, which would be brain trust and functioning entity of the Guam Legislature, comprised of classified employees. Just as the Library of Congress, this Bureau would provide services such as research and bill drafting for all Senators. This entity would be free from political interference, hence be able to effectively do their job. Lawmakers would still be able to hire unclassified legislative and committee staff, who would carry out the daily activities of senators, but because of the reduction in the budget of the legislature, this number would also be greatly reduced.

"By reducing the perks or the glorifying of the title, the community attains more public servants and fewer politicians. By shifting the compensation from a salary to a stipend, the risks of 'not' needing to get re-elected are reduced, which allows senators to focus more on policy versus ceremony. A Citizens Legislature would result in a greater focus on priorities, quality versus quantity, and less on ceremonial activities such as presenting resolutions, officiating wedding ceremonies, or cutting ribbons."

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