



GUAM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

April 9, 2020

THE HONORABLE TINA MUNA BARNES

Speaker

I Mina' Trentai Singko Liheslaturan Guåhan

Guam Congress Building

163 Chalan Santo Papa

Hagåtña, Guam 96910

Hafa Adai Speaker Barnes,

We all agree that the entire community needs to do our part to eliminate the spread of COVID-19 in our island and our region. With the the entire island, the business community has complied with social distancing and quarantine guidelines set forth by our government at a huge cost to our businesses and the employment of thousands of workers in the private sector.

We have repeatedly and respectfully requested that the Guam Legislature support legislation to support our local small businesses in light of the current crises to save businesses which in turn saves jobs and employee benefits. We implore you to motion to include discussion at today's session on bills that provide any assistance to businesses to sustain their ability to stay open and keep people employed. Among these measures to consider include: unemployment benefits for private sector employees, reduction of the GRT, pay out of tax refunds and raising the threshold for the Dave Santos Act exemption for small businesses. ***We need to act now to support our people and our economy.***

Additionally, we are extremely concerned that the agenda items on today's emergency session will address matters that will affect our civil rights and liberties. We see no reason to impose such drastic measures as to implement curfew laws and vehicle checkpoints on our community. Recent measures to impose what is considered essential for purchase at local retail establishments have also been a source of consternation for many in our community. What may be essential to a young mother to keep her children learning and busy may not be essential to our manåmko'.

We also want to restate our insistence that the Government of Guam implement austerity measures as the private sector has been forced to implement over the past couple of years. The Government needs to reduce wages or hours for non-classified and non-essential employees. We have repeatedly requested that the Government of Guam do its part in cutting costs and it is imperative today - more than ever - to do so with virtually no taxes being paid into government coffers as almost all businesses are closed.

We know that you and the rest of our esteemed body in the Guam Legislature only want to do what is best for our people. We urge you to consider these requests and implore you to have this discussion as you ready for today's emergency session this morning.

Sincerely,


CATHERINE CASTO
President

cc: Senators, 35th Guam Legislature