

Legislative Candidate Interview Questionnaire
Senator Amanda L. Shelton

Real Estate

The Governor's office has upgraded the classification of the real estate industry as an essential service during COVID-19 "Condition of Readiness" operating restrictions. However, Government of Guam agencies that are part and parcel of the real estate industry remain either closed or inactive. (The real estate industry encompasses private sector real estate activities as well as Government of Guam agencies that are involved in the processing of real estate transactions including taxation, recordation, land management interaction, construction and land use permitting, building inspections, building occupancy and document recordation.). **Will you support the preparation and passage of legislation to classify the whole of the real estate industry encompassing both the private sector and related Government of Guam agencies as TRUE ESSENTIAL SERVICES?**

Fortunately, the real estate industry has been deemed an essential service by Executive Order 2020-29 and GovGuam agencies in the sector are beginning to operate with new conditions. If the opportunity arises, I will support fair and just legislation that does not compromise health and safety to ensure these services are provided to our community. Shelter is essential and I support the efforts of the industry to operate safely for all involved.

The Guam Land Use Commission (GLUC) application processing system has been rendered inactive by GovGuam COVID restrictions since March 2020 with no apparent urgency to restore the system to full operation. The estimated value of development projects currently awaiting Department of Land Management and GLUC-related action since March is nearly \$2 billion. **Will you support the classification of the GLUC application processing system (critical to improving Guam's economic well-being) as an essential service during the COVID-19 Condition of Readiness operating restrictions?**

I support any effort of the Government of Guam to modernize its business processing and ensure we minimize interruptions in service for all its customers to adapt to our new circumstances. I support the continuation of GLUC application processing in the safest way possible for service workers and customers alike, while maintaining the integrity of the process.

General Government

Will you support the creation, introduction and passage of a bill to change the operation of the Guam Legislature from full time to part time?

The people of Guam deserve a legislature that is accessible and responsive to the needs of the island. The focus of the legislative body is wholly to serve the people of Guam to the best of our ability. We have rules and procedures in place to ensure we make decisions with public input in the most transparent way possible.

Will you support the repeal of the 1% increase in the Business Privilege Tax/Gross Receipt Tax rate, i.e. restoring the BPT/GRT rate to 4%?

I support a rollback of the GRT to our small and micro-sized businesses given current market conditions in which our market has drastically changed. That is why my colleagues and I have passed Public Law 35-90, which exempted BPT taxes beyond the first 3% for the first \$250,000 in gross earnings. This exemption was made retroactive to January 2020 and would be in effect until June 2022. We must empower our local businesses to stay the course through this crisis, and just as our government has risen in defense of our most vulnerable communities, our local businesses are now in need of relief and need the support of local government to keep our economy moving. It is our local businesses that are the foundation for a sustainable and self-reliant future economy, so we need to allow our local businesses the opportunity to grow.

Are you in favor of increasing taxes and/fees to deal with Government of Guam revenue shortfall caused by COVID-19 imposed restrictions on private sector business operations?

Our community is hurting, and increases to taxes and fees should be the very last option for creating revenue. Any increase to taxes and fees must heavily involve public input. Our focus must be on developing alternative revenue resources that do not burden small businesses, and help to diversify the economy to be more resilient in the face of crisis.

Will you support a significant reduction in Government of Guam expenditures including payroll during COVID-19 lockdown and PCOR2 periods in order to keep the Government solvent?

GovGuam workers provide essential services and the employment of individuals that make up our GovGuam workforce contribute to the stabilization of our economy,. An arbitrary reduction the size of government means more families will lose income and the ability to provide for themselves. This will place a heavier burden on our social services means to provide for themselves and decrease their buying power to participate in their commercial activities. We must continue to prioritize the mandates of our government agencies, tighten our belt, and leave a reduction in workforce as our last option.

Are you in favor of increasing the local minimum wage and Why?

As a co-sponsor of P.L. 35-38 raising the minimum wage gradually overtime, I support this increase in the minimum wage to close the gaps of the cost of living and allow our families to better support themselves. Increasing the minimum wage gradually and in partnership with the private sector will allow us to increase dollars circulating in our economy and help businesses grow. I support the steady and responsible increase in the minimum wage that meets the needs of the working people of Guam to improve the quality of life for our island

Are you in favor of reducing taxes and fees to assist in the start of small businesses and in maintaining their viability?

I supported both P.L. 35-13 and 35-90 to provide greater tax relief to small businesses. I know our current reality leaves little room for disruption in our existing economic industries, and that's why economic diversity is necessary. We must support and encourage industries we know are promising for Guam, such as affordable housing, agriculture, aquaculture, and telecommunications. We can allow these business ventures to flourish on the island by providing tax credits and abatements as incentives for their continued investment in our island.

What functions of the Government of Guam do you believe should be privatized?

The government belongs to the people of Guam and provides essential services. I am supportive of greater public-private partnerships to better leverage resources and opportunities to improve these services. We cannot put the possibility for profit above the needs of our people. However, I remain open to reassessing the role of government to increase efficiency and productivity.

Are you in support of the impending military buildup and the Marine relocation?

I support healthy and sustainable economic growth for Guam. This means that development related to the military buildup on Guam must be done responsibly and with the input of the local community.