

Guam Association of Realtors Survey Response

Candidate: Joaquin (KEN) Leon Guerrero (Email: kenleonguerrero@yahoo.com)
Republican Senatorial Candidate - Ballot #9

Real Estate Specific Questions

- 1. 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?***

I will not, because when everyone is treated special, no one is special. By creating specific treatment for the Real estate Industry, senators will then be challenged to create specific treatment for other industries.

I would favor an approach to change to laws that limit the powers the Governor to shut down the economy. I would introduce legislation placing a two week limit on the Governor's power to shut down any sector of the economy or the entire economy. After a two week shut down period; further shutdowns will require the consent of the Legislature.

- 2. 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 will not introduce special pandemic legislation for GLUC for the same reason as creating a special condition for Government/Real Estate support agencies. What I am in favor of is introducing legislation that fixes the problems of the GLUC, because it does not work efficiently. Sometimes it seems to me the Legislature rezones more land than the GLUC, and that is not in the best interests of the community as a whole.

B. General Government

1. 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?

I will probably be the first on to introduce the Bill having been waging war with the 32nd, 33rd, 34th, and the 35th Legislatures trying to pass Election Reforms. (1) Part Time Legislature, (2) No Primary Election, (3) Plurality Contests (Most votes win – not the 50% + 1 threshold for the Governor’s Office and Congressional Delegate, returning to twenty-one senators, and return to districting to ensure all people are represented in the legislature. I would favor creating three districts:

Northern District (Tamuning, Tumon, Harmon, Dededo, and Yigo) – Ten Senators.

Central District (Barrigada, Mangilao, Chalan Pago, Ordot, Mongmong Toto Maite, Hagatna, Agana Heights, Maina, Inarajan) – 6 Senators.

Southern District (Asan, Piti, Yona, Santa Rita, Agat, Umatac, Merizo, Inarajan) 5 Senators.

2. 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 have fought against raising the BPT at public hearings, and continued to fight against keeping it in place forever. I will introduce a bill to restore the BPT back to 4%.

3. 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?

Over the past ten years the budget of the Government doubled while the economy remained stagnant. And now the economy is in tatters as a result of the pandemic. I am not in favor of raising ANY taxes or fees at a time the economy is circling the drain slowly. We need to start cutting the waste out of Government operations, which will do more to improve the Government’s cash flow than raising taxes.

4. 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?

If the pandemic continues beyond the end of the year and into the era of the 36th legislature; I will look into what it will take, and what it will cost to extend the Federal Unemployment Assistance program beyond the end of the year which I am pretty sure no one in the 35th Legislature will do as their time winds down.

If Guam had a policy to that effect at the beginning of the pandemic, the Government could have shifted ONE MILLION DOLLARS a day payroll costs to the Federally Funded Unemployment Assistance Program helping to stabilize Government of Guam finances.

I am sure that there are a lot of areas expense can be reduced during a pandemic to reduce the drain on Government of Guam coffers. Contracts can be examined and renegotiated, needless positions can be terminated. New hires, and incremental pay increases frozen. Excess personnel transferred to vital position vacancies, or terminated. Government officials can turn in their vehicles and gas cards, and use their personal vehicle and be reimbursed through paid mileage. etc

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

Because of the high cost of living on Guam, we are losing valuable members of our community at both ends of the age spectrum, and no community can grow its economy when the best and brightest leave the island followed by those with experience and assets.

The reason why I am in favor of increasing minimum wage is because working poverty is driving a generation of our young adults off island. They are either joining the military or relocating to the mainland using the education the received – paid for by Guam taxpayers – to get better paying jobs in a lower cost environment, and paying taxes to states that did not invest in educating our children. Many of the parents for our departing young people are selling their assets to follow them (and the grandchildren) to the states, taking the money

from their asset sales with them to purchase new homes, and cars in their new state of residence.

The population flight combined with the destruction of the local retail industry will shrink the tax base to the point the Government will be in serious trouble as we saw happen in Puerto Rico in 2016.

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

Small businesses already have reduced taxes and fees. To reduce them further could further reduce an already reduced government revenue stream leading to growing layoffs that could trigger a local recession or worse.

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

I believe that we should either sell or contract out the operations of the GPA, GWA, and GSWA manage the rates and fees through the CCU and the PUC. The Government should maintain ownership of the well sites and utility right of ways to ensure public ownership of the water and land, renting out access to protect the public interests.

As far as outsourcing/privatizing other government operations; we are still in a pandemic and there has not been any effort by the current Administration to reduce government operations, transferring less critical functions to Contracts.

Coming out of the pandemic, we need to see what shape our economy is in before we start taking a chainsaw to the only major sector of our economy that is still somewhat functional.

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

I am in favor of the Military Build Up and will support what efforts will need to be implemented through legislation.

