

A. REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY RELATED ISSUES

1. Increase in Real Estate Tax Rate for Properties with Improvement valued at \$1 million or more. Public Law 35-1 was signed into law by the Governor on March 2, 2019 to correct an error in the previous law created by the 34th Legislature to make clear that the law imposes an additional 100% tax levy on Guam real property with property improvements valued at one million (\$1 million) or more. This additional tax levy has cre-ated a severe financial burden to a certain class of property owners and most especially to residential and commercial tenants whose rental spaces happen to be in buildings valued at \$1 million or more, being that the additional cost of the tax levy will most surely be passed on to the tenants. This tax levy places the financial burden on the backs of middle- and low-income wage earners and owners of small businesses.

Do you support the repeal of this law?

Support

ANSWER: YES! This law should be repealed. It is unfair in creating a disparate treatment among our taxpayers. Property taxes in Guam have been traditionally low in order to accommodate the community and they should remain so. There's never been an appetite or intent to foreclose on hard working Guam family lands due to taxes. Instead we should focus our efforts in improving fair collections of property taxes across the board, not cherry picking the companies that pay or do not pay taxes. Our present system is extremely antiquated and there's a high probability of faulty results that in turn cause unnecessary foreclosure proceedings which have a high cost to our local families to defend.

If the votes were not there to support a permanent repeal, I would also support a temporary repeal of this law. At a time where our people are struggling to pay rent in apartment buildings and condominiums, we should be looking at how we can incentivise development of new affordable housing in our island, not disincentivizing its development by an increased tax burden.

2. Improving the Building Permit Process. Property owners seeking to construct improvements on their property as well as contractors engaged to construct such improvements are confronted by a building permit application and occupancy permit process that is rife with unreasonable and unresponsive review periods, potentially corrupt communication with individual agency review personnel, unreasonable, inconsistent and shifting permit requirements and standards of certain review agencies, and a frustrating linear review process. **What will you do to improve and expedite the building permit application and the occupancy permit issuance process?**

ANSWER: Agreed! The permitting process needs to be modernized! This is a must project for the Government of Guam! Stakeholders need to meet and agree on what

elements are critical to the permit process and resolve how best to proceed in the modernization! The inconsistencies and shifting practices must be erased so that clear and concise direction is understood by all dealing with the Permit sections. Also, I believe the staff at the One Stop center need to be cross trained so that when manpower is thin in any section, the process is not delayed by the lack of personnel and other related personnel can shore up to assist customers.

THIS IS A BUREAUCRACY ISSUE, HARD TO SOLVE WITHOUT NEW Leadership and new TECHNOLOGY. Presently, we have around 20-30 people in Gov Guam tasked with permitting processing. They know their work, the issue is that they are understaffed because they keep being pulled to other duties. If we are to get serious we need to **CREATE ACCOUNTABILITY AND LET THE PROCESSORS DO THEIR WORK ONLY... NO ADDED PROJECTS.**

Lets establish a reporting system where the director is required to provide the Director as well as the legislature a monthly on the PROCESS with each individual permit under consideration.

3. Housing Shortage. Guam is experiencing a severe housing shortage due to a variety of reasons. These include the rising cost of construction labor and materials, rising mort-gage/construction loan interest rates, unresponsive, stifling and potentially corrupt build permit application process, increasing restrictive environmental regulations, and conditions placed on local housing development by competing and more lucrative military construction contracts, and H2 visa labor restrictions.

What legislative action will you pursue with commitment and purpose to address/resolve Guam's severe housing shortage?

ANSWER: I would continue to support efforts to properly subdivide and provide infrastructure on CHamoru Land Trust Properties so that eligible participants can begin to construct housing on these properties. I would like to expand opportunities with the GUam Housing Corporation and Developers using tax credit incentives and other programs to defray the costs of home construction and provide opportunities to first time home buyers.

4. Repeal of Business Privilege Tax (BPT)Rate Increase. In March 2018, Public Law 34-87 increased the BPT tax rate from 4% to 5%. The law stated that the increase was "tempo-rary" and was necessary to combat the loss of revenue caused by Federal tax cuts, but with no sunset date to the increase specified. This BPT Tax increase has resulted in signif-icant increases in construction labor and materials and generally adversely affects the en-tire business environment in Guam. Despite many proposals to repeal this increase con-sidered by subsequent legislatures, private sector businesses effectively paralyzed by Covid 19 operation restrictions, and a change in President's political party, the rate remains at 5%.

Do you support the repeal of the BPT Rate increase and return the rate to 4%?

Support

ANSWER: YES! I have and will continue to support the return to the BPT to 4%. It was never intended to be a permanent increase. With all the Federal money that has come in, there was no need to continue at the rate. Our businesses more than ever need this reduction to help their businesses operate and continue to employ our people.

B. GENERAL GOVERNMENT

1. Full-time or Part-Time Legislature. The Guam Legislature over the past many decades has been a “full-time” legislature. Some candidates aspire to a senatorial position as a career goal that pursues and emphasizes popularity rather than effectuating a smaller and more efficient and cost-effective 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?

Part time

ANSWER: There is a difference between a part time legislature and part time senators. If you look at the current Bill No. 15-36 introduced by Senator Moylan, myself and others, the structure of this bill is for a full time legislature with part time Senators. This bill also calls for a referendum so that the people of Guam will become familiar with the change. Most, if not all, part time legislatures, nationally, have full time legislative staff who are classified employees and a robust legal bureau to properly prepare bills and also manage the legal responsibilities of a legislature. This is the structure I will support.

2. Legislative Priorities. Whether you are an incumbent, a former legislator or a first-time candidate for Senator in the 37th Guam Legislature, what are the top two (2) legislative priorities you will pursue if elected? Please respond to this question under two conditions: (1) if you are in the majority or (2) if you are in the minority.

ANSWER: Whether I am in the Majority or in the Minority, my priorities remain the same. Affordable Housing has always been one of my top priorities. Crime and the associated Drug problem will continue to be a focus. Our people need a safe environment to live and raise their families. As you know, my top priority in the 36th Guam Legislature has been checks and balances in our Government between our legislative and our executive branch. I will continue the fight to ensure that no Governor has unchecked power.

3. Repeal of Useless or Problematic Laws. Are there current laws that you believe are not useful or problematic that should be repealed? If yes, can you list the top two (2) laws that you believe should be repealed?

ANSWER: I believe the beginning of every legislature should involve law review commission participation in order to address this issue.

4. Military Buildup on Guam. Given that there is currently a significant military buildup on Guam and that the U.S. Marine base in Okinawa is in process of relocating to Guam (a “fait accompli” if you will), local legislative support of or opposition to these Department of Defense actions will determine the 37th Guam Legislature’s general political posture vis-a-vis our military community. The membership of the Guam Association of Realtors (GAR) is interested in your position on these current military activities.

As a Senatorial candidate, do you support the current military buildup and relocation of the U.S. Marine base from Okinawa to Guam?

Support

ANSWER: YES! I support the military buildup. Right now our focus should be to continue to ensure that all environmental and infrastructure concerns as well as the terms of the agreement are addressed. Our island and our people must overall benefit from this buildup and it will take a collective effort from individuals working together to ensure a successful outcome.

5. Political Status. The topic of Guam political status is in constant discussion and debate by our island community, i.e., (1) remain a U.S. Territory, (2) become a state or (3) seek independence. Holding a firm position on one of the above options would seem to influence your actions as a Senator.

What political status option draws your support?

Statehood

ANSWER: Why settle for leftovers if you have a chance to sit at the table as an equal member of our Union?

C. PUBLIC AND PERSONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

1. Continuation of the Governor’s Covid-19 Pandemic Emergency Powers. The Governor declared a state of emergency to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020. It is now the fall of 2022, and the state of emergency is still in effect but scheduled to expire October 5th. By law, the Guam Legislature has the authority to terminate or to extend the Governor’s extensive emergency powers.

Discounting a year into the pandemic which most people acknowledge as the public health emergency period, are you in support of the Governor’s continuing extension of emergency powers into October 2022?

OPPOSE

ANSWER: Bill No. 11-36 (COR) - Christopher M. Duenas / V. Anthony Ada / James C. Moylan / AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 19405 (b) OF TITLE 10 GUAM CODE ANNOTATED RELATIVE TO REQUIRING LEGISLATIVE AUTHORIZATION TO EXTEND A DECLARATION OF STATE OF PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY, WHICH SHALL BE KNOWN AS “THE RESTORATION OF SEPARATION OF POWERS ACT.”

2. New Public Hospital. The Governor has determined that we need to construct a new hospital and that the site will be at the former Eagles Football Field in Mangilao along Route 15. Since the Guam Legislature must eventually be involved in the development of a new hospital, your role as a Senator will be to decide your position in determining the location and the funding of a new hospital.

Do you believe Guam needs a new public hospital and, if yes, where do you think it should be located and how do you propose to fund the design and construction of the new facility?

ANSWER: Guam needs a new public hospital. I would explore a leaseback option similar to what has been done currently for GDOE schools under this arrangement. As far as location, there are better options that don't have complications unlike the current proposed location. I would work with all the stakeholders involved in logistics to include the design and location of the new hospital. The last thing we want to see is our people having to wait 30 or 40 minutes for their procedure depending on traffic and time of the day for their surgeon or specialty doctor to make it from their clinic to the hospital.

3. Drug Abuse. Drug abuse is rampant on our island and is no doubt a cause of criminal activity, acts of violence against the public, homelessness, family violence and gradual destruction of the family unit and businesses. As a Senator, you will be in a powerful position to affect public policy changes to prevent or at a minimum mitigate drug abuse and its impact on our community.

As a legislator, what will you do to address the problem of drug abuse on our island?

ANSWER: There is a breakdown in leadership at the Guam Police Department. If reelected, I will enact a policy to reinstate the Mandana Drug Task Force or an organization alike to aid in the combat of the rising drug and crime problem our island is facing. We all, as a community, need to have a focus on the crime threshold because these actions of certain individuals are- and should never- be acceptable by any means. Our precincts are understaffed which has resulted in a public safety failure. If we allow our

public's safety to deteriorate even further; homes, schools, business, and our streets will be mass infected and impacted by the residue of drug and crime.

4. 2nd Amendment Support. Home invasions and predatory acts of violence against the community can succeed only if homeowners and individuals are defenseless. The 2nd Amendment to our U.S. Constitution gives the right to our people to keep and bear arms. Although Guam law has strict licensing requirements governing the exercise of this right, many of our citizens, having met those requirements, do own and bear firearms.

Do you support the right of a Guam citizen to protect one's home and property with a firearm?

SUPPORT

ANSWER:

Our dedicated local police force can't be everywhere. Guam's citizens should have the right to defend their loved ones and their properties. If anything we do need to keep criminals from illegally obtaining firearms and make sure that firearms are only in the hands of licensed, law abiding citizens.