

Telo T. Taitague's Responses to the Guam Association of Realtors Questionnaire & Supplemental Questionnaire

A. Real Estate Industry Related

1. 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?

Yes.

More importantly, I urge relevant government agencies to work towards integrating technology in their operations so that we adapt to uncertainties that have been brought on by the unprecedented public health emergency. Aside from casting votes during session, the legislature is conducting most if not all public hearings (including recent FY 2021 budget deliberations) virtually.

2. 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?

Yes.

We should listen to the advice of health experts regarding the novel Coronavirus and the steps we must take to keep Guam safe. In doing so, we must heed their recommendations on how to adjust to this new time including safe and efficient ways to process and review land use applications, allowing economic activity to move forward responsibly.

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?

Yes.

I also strongly support term limits particularly as efforts to shift from a “full-time” to “part-time” legislature haven’t gone anywhere.

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%?

Yes.

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?

No.

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?

Yes.

Whether it’s because of COVID-19, SARS, or an economic recession, GovGuam can’t spend money it doesn’t have.

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

I support a minimum wage increase together with a BPT rate reduction. The decision to increase the minimum wage won’t do much to help working Guamanians if the cost of goods and services continues to go up.

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

Yes.

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

Yes.

Swimming pools, management of certain public parks and sports facilities, maintenance services, improved mass transit, public parking if considered, and perhaps power generation. My support

for outsourcing of certain services will include a review of pertinent information regarding personnel attrition and cost comparisons.

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

Yes.

As I've stated publicly, the buildup must be good for those inside and outside the fence. Thus, I urge military and federal authorities to consider the lens through which a group of Guamanians are seeing this huge development take place. Ignoring concerns related to the destruction of cultural sites and human remains, as an example, doesn't help promote goodwill on the part of the military – and makes it even more difficult to convince more of our local community to support the buildup going forward.

Supplemental Questionnaire:

1. Are there current laws that you believe are not useful and should be repealed? If yes, what are they?

Yes.

A few that come to mind include a Line of Credit Authorization for GMHA, Office of the Suruhanu (Ombudsman), and the Beautification Task Force. Resources assigned to these areas, if any, should be redirected to regulatory agencies for enforcement purposes such as illegal dumping citations.

2. Will you support legislation that will repeal the increase in (doubling of) property taxes levied on improvements on land property valued at \$1 Million dollars or more?

Yes.

3. What new industries should Guam pursue?

I will support the development and expansion of existing aquaculture and agricultural industries specifically through sustainable public-private partnerships using unused public facilities and land. Building on Bill 8-35 which I authored this term to extend the lease term currently allowed under law, I'm confident that efforts to support responsible use of public property by local aquaculture and agricultural businesses will help improve our local economy, while addressing concerns about food security especially in the face of a global public health emergency.

4. Will you support an increase in the number of law enforcement (the police) personnel and attendant equipment and facilities?

Yes.

As I've done this legislative term, I will also support funding additional security cameras to augment GPD and other public safety agencies.

5. Do you support the right to protect one's home and property with a firearm?

Yes.

6. How do you plan to address drug abuse on the island?

I don't know of a good enough solution to this horrible epidemic, but I'm open to redirecting public funds to help an agency or community program provide the necessary supports to individuals dealing with drug abuse. I also think that schools especially in the primary years can serve a critical role in helping to deter bad habits including drug abuse and alcohol addiction. The earlier responsible individuals can intervene in a child's life, the better chance we have in discouraging them from making wrong decisions going forward.

7. What political status option (remain a U.S. Territory, become a state, be independent) draws your support and Why?

I'm seriously considering independence as we can look to other Micronesian islands such as Palau and the FSM which although are independent, they each share a strong political relationship with the U.S. Guam can study further and agree on which federal policies, such as our tax code, should be mirrored if independence is pursued.

8. How has your background prepared you to serve in the 36th Guam Legislature?

My background includes being a small business owner, former agency head, working various jobs including but not limited to Insurance agent, retail, professional musician – and currently a Senator where I've authored and passed several bills including the call for gov't accountability and transparency. If I win the confidence of the people of Guam, I believe my start from simple beginnings and making sacrifices along the way has prepared me to be fiscally responsible and always mindful of how important it is to maintain the trust of others once you've earned it.

9. Do you believe Guam needs a NEW public hospital and if yes, how would you fund its design and construction?

Yes.

Through the help the hospital planning task force which was created by a law that I authored, our government should consider all funding options on the table. An idea I've put out publicly

considers leasing out gov't land and to use proceeds for debt service on the new hospital. Using the same funding source, I'm open to supporting lease-back arrangements as we've done for JFK High School.

10. How would you improve the Government of Guam procurement law so as to avoid the frequent protests involved with the solicitations of major procurements?

If data can prove there's evidence of frivolous protests, I'm open to a discussion on whether protest bonds would help deter these lengthy and unnecessary complaints. I would also work with relevant procurement authorities to identify and improve areas in existing processes to ensure timely review and disposition of future complaints.

11. Which do you prefer: a smaller or bigger Government of Guam?

I prefer a small and more efficient Government of Guam that embraces technology to help improve the delivery of public services.

12. What are your top two (2) legislative priorities?

ECONOMY: I'll concentrate on helping to rebuild our economy by lowering the BPT, permit fees and other costs of doing business, and funding more workforce development programs to help retrain unemployed Guamanians for new occupations beyond tourism, including healthcare, construction, agriculture and aquaculture, and IT. I'll also work with stakeholders to expand capabilities in the submarine cables industry that will create new jobs through data centers and associated economic activity

IMPROVED GMHA FACILITIES: I will continue pushing for safe and modern hospital facilities with adequate personnel, equipment, and supplies - especially as COVID-19 shows no signs of letting up. Although the current emergency has set aside planning efforts, it is important for the next legislature to keep stakeholders focused on the target, in order to help address this and future public health emergencies.