

Transcription for Lasia Casil: (2:46:09)

Lasia Casil: Hafa adai Vice Speaker and Senators. Saina Ma'ase for allowing me to speak today. I'm here to testify in support of Resolutions number 51 and 52. Si Yu'os Ma'ase Senator Terlaje for moving swiftly to introduce these bills. My name is Lassia Casil, I'm the founder and president of Save Southern Guam. I am a resident of Santa Rita and Agat; my family is originally from Sumay. In 1865, African Americans were granted 40 acres and a mule as reparations for the newly freed slaves. I'm not going to sit here and compare plight to those of the African Americans that were stolen from their homeland and enslaved. That's not my point. My point is that the president of the United States and the U.S. government took action and make right what was wrong. In 1868, they made all the former slaves U.S. citizens, forbidding the States to restrict their rights. In 1870, the 15th amendment was ratified allowing African Americans to vote; this didn't include African Women but that's not my point. Again, the president of the United States took action to make right what was wrong. In 1941, the U.S. government fled our island and left us to fend ourselves. When they came, there were no reparations, they took our land, there's no citizenship. And even when we were given citizenship, it's a second class citizenship. 67 years later, we're still second class citizens. The U.S. government and the president has not taken any action to make any of these wrongs and make them right. We're still fending for ourselves. We created the Chamorro Land Trust for ourselves. This is our 40 acres and a mule. We created the plebiscite for ourselves; this is our 14th amendment.

We are paying back our own war reparations from our own pockets because the U.S. government still refuses to step up to the plate and make things right. With all due respect to Judge Tydingco-Gatewood and her ruling, this proves that the game is rigged. To systematically oppress our people for over 400 years based on our race and turn around and use those same rules, put in place by foreigners not our people, to deem us racist on a nonbinding vote breaks my heart and my spirit. But it also makes me stronger. Senators there is a monster eating away at our island, bite by bite. Were fighting it in Pago bay, were fighting it in Agat, were fighting it in Talafofo, were going to fight it at Gun beach, Lost pond; it's all going to be gone. This is what we do in Southern Guam. The land that connects us to our culture without the land, we have no culture.

Senators I brought this book today to share with you. It's a book about Sumay. In it is a list of 775 names, I'm not going to read it out loud I'm just going to add it to my testimony. There is many more names that need to be added this. But twice a year, were allowed to visit Sumay. We don't need to add another chapter to this book. We don't need a lost village of Yona, a lost village of Dededo or a lost village of Merizo until, what? We have a lost island of Guam? And then what? Do we get to come twice a year on liberation day and all souls day? When there's nothing left for us. I'm going to be brief, but I want to close with this. My father served in the U.S. military for 20 years and when he came home, all he wanted was land to farm with. This is his land, Chamorro Land Trust Application, he's been waiting. Last year, my father is so old now. He's probably never going to get it. He transferred it over to me. Other than my life, it's the most precious thing my father has ever given me. And I look forward to one day being the steward of this land as so many other people waiting for their lands. So please, I implore you, Senators. Please protect us, our people, our culture, our way of life, from further harm. Si Yu'os Ma'ase.

