

Desiree Ventura Testimony Public Hearing: (4:59:52)

Desiree Ventura: Hafa adai Senators. Si Yu'os Ma'ase for this opportunity to respond to this resolution, Therese thank you for introducing it. There's not much I can say that has not been said. I think everyone has said many of my feelings. But I can say that I'm here to offer my support for this resolution because I understand that independence in any way and form is an impediment to social justice and peace. Self-determination is the right of the colonized. It's not an opportunity for everybody who benefits from our repeated colonization to weigh in on our future and what happens to our island. That's not what it's created for. Self-determination is to restore justice. We cannot restore justice by asking our oppressor to fix it. It just doesn't work that way. And so I just want to remind everybody that when we vote against the right to self-determination, we actually vote for the continued marginalization of our Chamorro people and our culture. It's a vote for the further destruction of our land and our environment. Our people currently fall victim to the highest rates of poverty, violence, preventable diseases and imprisonment on the island. These problems are the result of systematic oppression through colonial structures that fail to fully recognize the presence and history of our people.

We cannot restore justice by asking the people who created these structures to fix it for us. I don't have much to say except that I support this and I think it's important and I have to get back to work, and I have to pick up my baby. But thank you for this opportunity and just one quick thing I wanted to say is thank you for your patience and I know it's really easy sometimes to dismiss messages and activism when it's not packaged in ways that our comfortable to us or ways that seem inappropriate. Or even uncool but that's an easy, lazy way to be and I really ask that instead of paying attention to the packaging that we focus on the truth of the messages embedded within those pleas to be heard. I'm very grateful for all of you so thank you very much.