



Office of the Speaker THERESE M. TERLAJE

I Mina'trentai Sais na Liheslaturan Guåhan | 36th Guam Legislature
Committee on Health, Land, Justice and Culture

Speaker Continues to Fight for Faster Refunds of Taxpayer Money

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (August 20, 2021 – Hagåtña, Guam) In her continued effort to get tax refunds out faster and on par with other jurisdictions, Speaker Therese Terlaje again urged her colleagues to support prioritizing additional general fund revenues received to pay tax refunds. Even with the vast improvement by DRT in processing refunds, GovGuam still owes almost \$20 million in processed returns awaiting payment for previous tax years, including 2020, and almost 7000 returns from tax year 2020 that have yet to be processed. If the status quo of setting aside only a minimal amount for tax refunds is not changed in this budget, GovGuam will continue to be behind in refund payments.

An amendment proposed by the Speaker would have set aside excess BPT, Corporate Taxes and Withholding Taxes and lock it up for tax refunds in the middle of the fiscal year and again at the end of the fiscal year based on monthly Consolidated Revenue and Expenditure Reports. In previous years, legislative attempts at appropriating excess revenues solely at the end of the fiscal year for efforts such as GMH roof repairs had been stymied by the administration's disregard for the provisions in previous budgets and laws, and have been instead used to pay "deficits" that have not been publicly itemized.

"My amendment would have at least tried again to lock it up so it would not be used by the administration for any other purposes other than tax refunds, mandating it be deposited into the tax refund trust account.

This is the year that the government of Guam does not need to borrow taxpayers' money to pay for other government obligations first. The Legislature has tried for years unsuccessfully to prioritize the spending of excess revenues. I wanted to lock up the money earlier and give it back to its owners, that's all," stated the Speaker.

The amendment did not pass but did garner the support of Senators Sabina Perez, Telena Nelson, Jose Pedro Terlaje, and Telo Taitague.

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For more information, please contact Speaker Therese M. Terlaje's office at (671) 472-3586 or via e-mail at senatorterlajeguam@gmail.com.

Guam Congress Building, 163 Chalan Santo Papa, Hagåtña, Guam 96910

Tel: (671) 472-3586 | Fax: (671) 969-3590 | Email: senatorterlajeguam@gmail.com | www.senatorterlaje.com

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